



A WILL ETERNAL

BOOK 05

Er Gen

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

A Will Eternal

(一念永恒)

by

Er Gen

(耳根)

Synopsis

One will to ceate oceans. One will to summon the mulberry fields.

One will to slaughter countless devils. One will to eradicate innumerable immortals.

Only my will... is eternal.

Copyright

All rights reserved.

English Translation by DeathBlade @ [Wuxiaworld](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

This is a free eBook. You are free to give it away (in unmodified form) to whomever you wish.

No part of this eBook may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the author.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Book 5: The Peak Of Life!

Chapter 564: A Fated Pair...

The Wildlands were huge, so huge that few people even knew their true extent. However, most cultivators who understood a thing or two about them were able to guess.

If the entire world were circular, then the Heavenspan Sea would be in the very middle, with four enormous rivers stretching out from it in each of the cardinal directions. The tributaries, streams and even the deltas were all like tree branches that grew out from the rivers.

The areas in which the Heavenspan River existed were the Heavenspan Realm. The places where that river didn't exist occupied roughly half of the 'circle' that made up the world. And those locations were known as... the Wildlands.

There was even a well-known saying: Everything beyond the Great Wall is the Wildlands!

In the areas between the four major rivers were the four major sections of the Great Wall, which acted like gates, keeping the Wildlands locked on the outside, and the Heavenspan Realm sealed on the inside.

If one could look down from high enough, the four sections of the Great Wall would make something like a large circle.

More precisely, there were two circles. [The inner circle was the Heavenspan Realm, and the outer circle was the Wildlands.](#) Theoretically speaking, if one kept walking for long enough, they could walk in a huge circle through the Wildlands. As such, it was also possible to reach any of the four major rivers without even setting foot on a boat.

**

Somewhere deep in the Wildlands, there was a boundless jungle, dense to the extreme, filled with countless towering trees that

formed an enormous canopy overhead. Because of that canopy, only scattered bits of sunlight made it through to the rotting marshlands below.

Enormous jungles like this existed in numerous locations within the Wildlands. Although such areas were devoid of the spiritual power of the Heavenspan River, they still teemed with life. In fact, whether it was the plant life or the local savages, everything seemed to be free of certain constraints that spiritual power brought, and thus were especially large and tough.

One particularly large tree in this jungle had bones littering the ground beneath it, many of which had bite marks on them. There were also the scattered feathers of flying creatures. In the middle of all the bones, leaning up against the tree itself, was a person. His hair was messy and knotted, and he was devouring the carcass of some small creature. The crunching sounds of his chewing were terrifying as they echoed out into the jungle; apparently, he was so hungry that he didn't care whether or not he was eating the flesh or the bones, or both!

Considering all the bones surrounding this person, it seemed that he had eaten quite a bit during this meal. It was a really frightening scene....

Not too far away, beneath another large tree, was a corpse! Clearly, that corpse had been laying there rotting for many weeks.

It was so withered up that it was difficult to make out its facial features, but based on the clothing, it had been a cultivator in life. There was even a bag of holding laying off to the side next to the corpse.

The living person devouring the raw meat was none other than Bai Xiaochun.

As for the corpse... not even Bai Xiaochun had any idea who it was.

Bai Xiaochun had been teleported to this location on a stormy night roughly two months before. Considering how badly injured he had been, he had struggled just to crawl over to the base of the tree. Using his last scrap of spiritual power, he had pulled out his damaged Eternal Parasol and stabbed it into the ground next to him, relying on the pressure it emanated to protect himself. Having been completely drained of spiritual power, he simply lay there, unmoving.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun noticed a young man lying on the ground at the base of another nearby tree. At that point, the young man had not been dead. He had stared in disbelief at Bai Xiaochun for a long moment, neither of them talking, until he finally leaned his head down onto the ground and died.

Seeing the young man die had frightened Bai Xiaochun, but at that moment, he had been too weak to even move. The emotion of the moment, combined with his exhaustion, had shoved him into unconsciousness.

He didn't wake up for almost a week. Unfortunately, he was still too weak to move at that time. His injuries were truly severe, and he had been pushed to the very brink of death, leaving him completely empty of any sort of spiritual power. To recover would definitely require time. After all, he didn't even have enough spiritual power to open his bag of holding.

He was surrounded by the corpses of various wild animals, which he didn't remember seeing there when he had passed out earlier. Clearly, the animals had come too close to the Eternal Parasol, and had been killed by the pressure it emitted.

Furthermore, the power of the parasol had also protected the corpse of the young man at the other nearby tree.

“It's a good thing that I ended up pulling the Eternal Parasol out of my bag of holding instead of something else. Otherwise... I would have woken up to find myself eaten.” He sighed bitterly, his

heart filled with anger.

“To think that a magnificent major general like myself would fall to this level.... You’ll get what’s coming to you one of these days, Granny Red-Dust! I’ll show you how awesome Lord Bai is! And as for you Chen Hetian, you and I are now archenemies!

“Ai. I really got hurt badly this time....” Bai Xiaochun wanted to cry, and at the same time, felt his fury building. However, he couldn’t even turn his head, only move his eyes around to examine his unfamiliar surroundings.

Eventually, he forced himself to accept his current situation, and also realized that since there was no spiritual energy, he was obviously not near the Heavenspan River. Clearly, he had been teleported out into the Wildlands.

After a while, he sighed. Feeling bored, he rolled his eyes over to look at the corpse lying beneath the tree.

Earlier, it had been impossible to determine what had caused the young man’s death. But now his skin was pitch black, leading to the obvious conclusion that he had been hit with a poisonous magical technique that had burned his heart and blood vessels until he died.

Suddenly, another wave of exhaustion swept through Bai Xiaochun, and he passed out again. Another week or so went by before we woke up, but this time, he could move his head a bit. Furthermore, he didn’t feel completely numb. In fact, he felt little stabs of pain all over himself, almost like needles. It was a somewhat unbearable feeling, and yet, he could do little more than sigh.

“Well at least I can feel pain. That means I’m slowly recovering.” There were more animal corpses piled up in the area now, and he was so hungry he felt dizzy. Unfortunately, he could only move his head, nothing else. Swallowing, he lay there blankly for a bit before looking back at the corpse to analyze it a bit further.

“It looks like he was in early Foundation Establishment.... Doesn't look like he was teleported here from the labyrinth. More like a local soul cultivator. Seems like he was fleeing for his life from somebody or something.” Bai Xiaochun wasn't too worried about that fact. After all, he had already been laying in one place for about half a month without anyone passing by.

As time passed, and Bai Xiaochun continued to watch the corpse rotting away, he picked up on more and more clues.

“Doesn't seem like a rogue cultivator. Must be from some local cultivator clan....”

“I remember looking at him right before he died. He looked haggard, and defiant. He must have had some aspirations in life that he never fulfilled....”

“Seems pretty young. Smart and good-looking, although not as much as me.”

He often muttered things like this to himself. After all, as he was slowly recovering, he literally had nothing to do except study the corpse.

When he got tired, he would go back to sleep. Eventually, two months later, he was excited to discover that he could move again. The first thing he did was crawl over one of the animals that had been killed because of the Eternal Parasol.

He devoured the entire thing in a single mouthful.

Over the course of the past two months, he had become so hungry he could barely see straight. That was compounded by the fact that his recovery was rapidly emptying him out. Therefore, he ate all of the nearby animals in a single sitting. He even ate the tiny birds, feathers and all.

The more he ate, the warmer he felt, and the more energy he had. In the end, after devouring everything in sight, he rubbed the back of his neck and finally felt alive again.

“I’m back!!” he yelled excitedly. It was a wonderful feeling to escape with one’s life against all odds. As he thought back to everything which had happened in the labyrinth, it truly felt as if he had ended up stepping halfway through the gates of the underworld.

Sighing, he walked over to the corpse.

“Thank you for keeping me company these past two months, my brother,” he said softly. “I guess it was fate that we met here. If I ever have the chance, I’ll do my best to pay you back.” Reaching down, he picked up the bag of holding lying next to the corpse.

Meanwhile, on a barren mountain some distance away from the jungle, someone was sitting cross-legged in meditation, in a cave.

There were seven or eight corpses laid out in front of him, all of them belonging to Foundation Establishment cultivators. They were little more than skin and bones, with their flesh and blood having been absorbed.

Eventually, the cross-legged figure’s eyes opened, although instead of shining brightly, they glimmered with faded life, as if this person had received significant injuries. Ignoring the corpses, he rubbed his forehead and gritted his teeth.

“Even if you’re dead, Bai Xiaochun, one of these days I’ll pay you back for the humiliation you brought upon me. I’ll avenge myself upon your friends and family, a thousand times over!”

He was none other than... Zhou Yixing!

Early descriptions of the lands of Heavenspan refer to how the areas between the rivers are devoid of spiritual energy. I think that the idea is that those areas are within the Great Wall, and are more like “dead zones” as opposed to being part of the Wildlands. If anyone remembers any specific passages which seem to contradict this, or contradict the description in this chapter, please let me know so that I can go back to clarify and adjust the narrative.

Chapter 565: Necromancers!

Bai Xiaochun stood there in the jungle, holding the bag of holding and looking down at the corpse of the young man. For some reason, he really felt as if it had been destiny which teleported him to this location, where this corpse had accompanied him for two months. He sighed.

“Allow me to give you a proper burial, my brother.” Bai Xiaochun could tell that he was recovering rapidly now. However, his spiritual power was still so depleted that he couldn’t even open his bag of holding.

Therefore, he used the Eternal Parasol to dig a pit, into which he lowered the corpse of the young man.

Patting the soil he had filled the grave back in with, he said, “Don’t worry, in a few more days I should have enough spiritual power built up to open your bag of holding. Then we can see what’s inside, and maybe I’ll even learn your name. Then I can put up a proper grave marker for you.”

Then he walked back over to the tree he had spent the last two months under and sat down cross-legged to try out some breathing exercises.

Unfortunately, there wasn’t any spiritual power in this part of the Wildlands, so he was forced to rely only on the restorative powers of his own body, and the bits of spiritual energy which had built up in his flesh and blood over the years.

A few days passed. It was early evening, but because of the darkness that blanketed the jungle floor, it seemed like the middle of the night. As Bai Xiaochun sat there meditating, he slowly opened his eyes, and a brief flicker of light could be seen.

“Got some spiritual power back!” His heart was pounding with excitement. After all, he was in a strange land bereft of spiritual

power, and that left him feeling very uneasy. Panting a bit, he slapped his bag of holding, which flashed with light as a bottle flew out.

It was a bottle of spirit alcohol!

He excitedly poured the spirit alcohol down his throat, whereupon it turned into warm currents that flowed through his qi passageways in a very pleasing fashion. He was like a dried, parched land that was finally receiving rain, and it caused prickling sensations to fill him.

“That’s the feeling!” he murmured, tears welling up in his eyes. Taking a deep breath, he rotated his cultivation base, not allowing a bit of the spiritual power from the spirit alcohol to go to waste.

A few hours later, Bai Xiaochun was laughing madly, his eyes glittering at the small fraction of spiritual power which he had built up, which was only about five percent of his total limit. Although it was only a small amount, it was enough to open his bag of holding numerous times.

Therefore, he opened the bag again to pull out a dozen or so bottles of spirit alcohol, consumed them all, and then sat quietly to perform breathing exercises. For the following three days, rumbling sounds filled him as spiritual power poured through his body.

On the afternoon of the third day, Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, and tears flowed out.

“I’ve finally recovered completely!! Man, that was hard! Whether it’s in terms of body or cultivation base, I’m back to normal!! You just wait for Lord Bai to get his hands on you, Granny Red-Dust!!” Laughing loudly, he stood up and assessed his spiritual power levels. To his delight, he found that he was actually a bit stronger than before.

Thanks to the deadly battle he had fought, his position within

the great circle of the Gold Core stage had advanced, both in terms of fleshly body power and cultivation base.

In fact, when it came to his fleshly body, he felt more than ever that he was on the verge of being able to break through the next shackle!

He couldn't help but sigh, especially when he thought back to how closely he had brushed with death during his fight with Mistress Red-Dust.

Taking a deep breath, he looked around a bit, which was when his excitement began to wane, and he even started to feel a bit anxious.

“I don't even have any idea where I am in the Wildlands. Wherever I am, it's too dangerous here. I need to get back to the Great Wall.” Now that he thought about it, if any of the soul cultivators or savages found out that he was Bai Xiaochun, they would surely skin him alive.

The mere thought of what that would be like left him shivering. Finally, he looked over at the simple grave he had erected, and finally decided to open the bag of holding that had belonged to the young man.

It contained a variety of miscellaneous items, few of which were of any interest to Bai Xiaochun. After all, it was the bag of holding of a mere early Foundation Establishment cultivator.

However, what did interest Bai Xiaochun was the collection of bone slips. Much like jade slips, they could store information, and after skimming through the group in the bag of holding, Bai Xiaochun found three that were of particular interest.

The first bone slip contained a map of the immediate area. After studying it for a while, Bai Xiaochun still had no idea where he was. There was absolutely nothing on the map that indicated how far away the Great Wall was.

“Well that doesn’t help much....” he thought nervously. With that, he moved on to the second bone slip, after which his eyes glittered, and he looked over at the grave mound.

“Your name is [Bai Hao](#)?” he murmured. The second bone slip had some detailed information about the identity of the dead young man, including some dying words he had inscribed.

His name was Bai Hao, and was a bastard son from one of the local aristocratic necromancer clans. Apparently, he wasn’t very well liked in the clan, and had provoked the ire of the wrong people, who plotted against him. That was what led to him perishing when and how he did.

From what Bai Xiaochun could tell, the necromancer clan in question wasn’t considered to be spectacularly famous.

“Aristocratic necromancer clan....” After some more thought, he moved on to the third bone slip, which contained the most intriguing information so far. It was a detailed description of necromancers, with information he had wondered about back at the Great Wall.

Essentially, it was a basic primer to necromancy!

Even the first few sentences left Bai Xiaochun completely shaken.

“Necromancy is an amalgamation! Necromancers use the foundation of spirit enhancement, medicine concocting, and equipment forging as the basis of necromancy!”

Bai Xiaochun had long since noticed that there was something strange about the spirit enhanced treasures wielded by the Wildlanders, and had come to his own conclusions about why that was. Now, the information in this bone slip corroborated his previous speculations. After going on to read through the rest of the information, he was left stunned.

At that point, the Wildlands didn’t seem as profoundly mysterious as they had before. All of the various clues suddenly fit

together to form a complete picture.

The lowest of the low in the Wildlands were the savage tribes. The giants had been the last to become civilized, and were treated mostly like servants. They actually worshipped the soul cultivators, and viewed them as protectors of sorts.

Soul cultivators occupied a much higher position than the savages, and were not very different from ordinary cultivators. The only difference was that they couldn't practice cultivation with the spiritual power of the Heavenspan River, and instead had to rely on the soul vitality provided by the necromancers.

In the sprawling Wildlands, there were far more savages than soul cultivators, and yet, the soul cultivators couldn't be described as few and far between. They had their clans and powerful organizations, and there were also many who were like rogue cultivators.

As for the necromancers, they were like the nobility of the Wildlands. Any necromancer of any sort occupied a very high position. Not only could they produce the soul vitality that soul cultivators needed to advance their cultivation, but they could also forge magical items and bless such items with spirit enhancements!

Because of that, necromancers were extremely important to the Wildlands as a whole.

Of course, necromancers had their own ranking system based on fire. The truth was that although Wildlands necromancers resembled the spirit enhancers from the lands of Heavenspan in some ways, they were actually very different.

In the lands of Heavenspan, spirit enhancers would search for fuel to make multi-colored flame. However, the necromancers didn't need any fuel. Although they also experienced a similar issue of having a high failure rate, they didn't need to rely on fuel; they worked directly with the flame itself.

Of course, such flames didn't exist on their own. Necromancers used different types of souls and special methods to conjure them!

Anyone who could conjure one-colored flame was considered an initiate necromancer. Upon being able to conjure four-colored flame, one was promoted to the journeyman rank. Seven-colored flame was the standard to become a master necromancer.

Most necromancers in the Wildlands fell into those three ranks.

Ten-colored flame was the absolute peak for master necromancers, and not very many necromancers could reach such a level. After going beyond that level, necromancers would experience a period of transformation, after which, they were ranked according to the denominations of terrestrial, celestial, earthly, and heavenly!

Being able to conjure eleven-colored flame made one a terrestrial necromancer! In the Wildlands, any terrestrial necromancer was a person who could dominate the lands wherever he went.

The next level beyond that was the celestial necromancer, of which there were even fewer. In any of the necromancer clans, a celestial necromancer occupied the highest of positions, similar to that of a grand elder or the reserve powers. After all, the hallmark of celestial necromancers was the ability to conjure fifteen-colored flame!

Earthly necromancers were legendary, and in all of the Wildlands, there were only three. To become an earthly necromancer, one had to conjure eighteen-colored flame!

The highest level of all was that of the heavenly necromancer. From ancient times until now, not a single one had ever appeared, and they were considered only a theoretical rank. After all, to reach the heavenly rank, one had to conjure twenty-one colored flame!

Bai Hao's surname is the same as Bai Xiaochun's, which means

“white”. The character “Hao” is the same character as Meng Hao and Fang Hao from I Shall Seal the Heavens. It means “great; vast; grand”

Chapter 566: Necromancy and Spirit Enhancement Are The Same!

“Necromancy and spirit enhancement are basically the same thing....” Bai Xiaochun murmured to himself as he looked at the information in the bone slip. From what he was reading, all of the various types of multicolored flame in the Wildlands were produced by necromancers, a fact which caused Bai Xiaochun’s heart to leap with excitement.

After generations of experimentation and research, the formulas for everything from one-to fourteen-colored flame had been well-established. In fact, there were multiple variations on how to conjure each of those types of flame.

Such formulas weren’t exactly secret within the Wildlands. Although not every necromancer had the skill to use all of the formulas, all of the aristocratic necromancer clans had the formulas in their records.

However, the formula for fifteen-colored flame was a tightly-kept secret that not even mid-level necromancer clans had access to. Only the large clans and other major powers had them.

As for sixteen-colored flame, that was a secret among secrets.

In any case, because of all these factors, when it came to spirit enhancement, the Wildlands existed on a far higher level than the lands of Heavenspan.

The information in the bone slip made it clear that simply possessing a certain level of flame didn’t guarantee success in using it to perform a spirit enhancement. The more colors in the flame, the higher the chances of failure. That was one area in which there was no difference between the Wildlands and Heavenspan cultivators. Also similar was how failure led to complete destruction of all the materials involved. From what Bai Xiaochun

could tell, that was a sort of equalizer between the two sides.

However, what he had learned about how the necromancers could conjure their own flame was still very shocking.

“If I could learn the formulas for producing multicolored flame....” Bai Xiaochun was aware that his biggest advantage was his turtle-wok. After all, just because someone could conjure fourteen-colored flame didn’t mean that they could successfully perform a fourteenfold spirit enhancement. But for Bai Xiaochun, it was the exact opposite!

As a result, he felt completely and utterly shaken.

The bone slip also had information about so-called soul vitality, which was really just soul medicine. Soul medicines were much like spirit stones in that the soul cultivator not only used them for cultivation, but as currency.

In terms of how to make soul medicine, it wasn’t very difficult. The initial process was the same as when conjuring multicolored flame, except that in the end, the final result became soul medicine instead!

Soul medicines made from ten-colored flame or less were considered low-grade, and were further classified according to how many flames had been used to make them. For example, soul medicine made from one-colored flame was a level one low-grade soul medicine. If it was made from ten-colored flame, it was a level ten low-grade soul medicine.

Soul medicine made from eleven-colored flame was known as mid-grade, and was much more expensive. Furthermore, mid-grade soul medicine could only be conjured by terrestrial necromancers.

In terms of high-grade soul medicines, they were very rare, and could only be produced with fifteen-colored flame or higher. They were what was referred to as soul vitality.

There was also a type of soul medicine referred to as supreme-grade, but was mostly something of a legend that was conjured using twenty-one colored flame!!

Soul medicine and soul vitality were the main reasons that necromancers had risen to prominence in the Wildlands!

In terms of services they performed for others, they could conjure soul medicine for use in cultivation, and could use their necromancy to place spirit designs onto magical items, transforming them into spirit enhanced soul treasures.

In terms of their own powers, there was one thing that necromancers could do that no one else could, and that was use their necromancy to create soul slaves. By transforming large groups of vengeful souls into slaves, and then directing their movements and actions, they could use them as powerful weapons to kill the enemy. Furthermore, they could use their soul slaves as a basis with which to conjure soul medicine and make multicolored flame....

After reading all of the information in the bone slip, Bai Xiaochun realized that necromancers truly were strong in all areas.

“Necromancers... can do just about everything!!” He couldn’t help but think back to everything that had happened when he was performing spirit enhancements back in the trial by fire. Then he thought about how all-encompassing the powers of the necromancers were. From what he could tell, necromancers weren’t just nobility in the Wildlands, they were like... the direct descendants of the land itself!

“I have to become a necromancer!!” Eyes burning with passion, he gripped the bone slip hard in his hand and reviewed the information therein. Then he searched through Bai Hao’s bag of holding again. However, there were no bone slips which had formulas for multicolored flame.

“I guess Bai Hao’s cultivation base wasn’t high enough to have

formulas like that. Or perhaps his position in the clan was too low?" Looking over at the grave mound, he reached out and inscribed some words into the tree above it.

Here lies Bai Hao.

Then he clasped hands and bowed to the grave. After that, he turned and burst into motion. Although he was moved by what he had learned about necromancers, he knew that the most important thing for him to do at the moment was to get back to the distant Great Wall.

"I guess I have to rely on my appearance-changing trick again." With that, he used his mask to change his appearance to that of Bai Hao.

"I'll use Bai Hao's identity temporarily." With that, he picked up speed.

"There are some odd things about this mask, though...." he thought with a frown. After all, the mask itself came from the Wildlands, where there was some powerful group that could theoretically track him down by means of it.

"The fact that they could locate me with the mask before indicates that there is some branding mark on it that I can't detect." Although that powerful group had never shown much hostility toward him, Bai Xiaochun didn't want to bet his life on their lack of interest. A moment later, his eyes glittered as he recalled the change which had occurred back in the trial by fire, when he performed an elevenfold spirit enhancement on the leaf. Not only had its appearance changed, but his own branding mark had been wiped away from it, forcing him to bond it again.

"That sounds like a good way to handle the situation!" Having made up his mind, he continued onward, using the map in the bone slip to navigate his way toward the edge of the jungle.

Not long after he had left, a mysterious gray mist began to build

up in the area surrounding the grave mound.

Then, sounds could be heard like someone walking along a bed of brittle leaves.

Soon, a figure appeared, walking slowly through the mists to come to stand in front of Bai Hao's grave.

It was an old man in a long gray robe, with an expressionless face. If Bai Xiaochun had been there, he would have recognized him immediately. He was... the gravekeeper!

The old man looked at the grave mound for a long moment, then turned to look in the direction Bai Xiaochun had taken before. A moment passed, and then the old man turned and walked away.

**

As Bai Xiaochun sped through the jungle toward its border, Zhou Yixing walked out of the cave on the mountain some distance away.

He looked much healthier than before, and his eyes shone brightly. Although he wasn't completely back to normal, he was mostly recovered. However, when he thought back to the losses he had sustained in the labyrinth, depression gripped his heart, and he gritted his teeth in frustration.

"It's all the fault of that Bai Xiaochun! The world will be a better place with him dead!" Snorting coldly, he looked around, and then began to reinforce the spell formations he had set up in the area.

Despite the two months that had passed, he still wasn't fully recovered from the injuries he had suffered in the labyrinth. However, after being teleported to this place, he was lucky enough to encounter a few wandering Foundation Establishment soul cultivators.

After killing them, he used a secret magic to consume their flesh, blood, and cultivation bases, which helped him recover quite a bit. However, as a necromancer, he was well aware that this location

was far beyond his own clan's territory, and that he was a stranger here. Even he was in great danger here.

During the two months in which he had stayed in place, he had used spell formations to trap a few more soul cultivators, who provided nourishment for his recovery.

“If I'm not mistaken, this is the Jungle of Lost Souls, which would mean I'm very, very far away from home....” Frowning, Zhou Yixing looked around again, and then sighed.

“That means I'm in the territory of the giant ghost king, one of the four great kings of the Wildlands, a demigod with five devas under his command.... If I want to get home, I'm going to have to pass through Giant Ghost City at some point. That's where the teleportation portal will be.” After some thought, he finished his work with the spell formations.

“There won't be as many soul cultivators out in the open once I leave the region of the Jungle of Lost Souls. I'll capture a few more and restore my cultivation base, then head to Giant Ghost City.” Having made his decision, he was just about to go back into the cave when his expression flickered as he noticed a figure speeding through the jungle some distance away.

Chapter 567: I Hate People Named Bai!

"Not a bad cultivation base, this Core Formation soul cultivator!" Eyes widening and heart beginning to race, Zhou Yixing looked at the figure speeding out from the jungle and licked his lips. After weighing matters, his eyes shone with determination.

"If he goes in a different direction, then I'll ignore him. But if he enters the range of my restrictive spells, I can consume him with ease!

"Absorbing him would be the equivalent of consuming over a hundred Foundation Establishment soul cultivators. Not only would that completely heal me, but it would push my cultivation base to the peak!" He quickly backed up into the darkness of the cave, keeping his attention focused on the incoming figure, who was none other than Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun followed the map out of the jungle, and upon emerging into the open, he saw the evening sky up above, and a barren landscape stretching out in front of him. There were mountains everywhere, all of them the completely inhospitable type that left one with a choking sensation.

Occasionally, spheres of mist that were vengeful souls could be seen floating here and there. The entire area seemed very sinister....

"This place looks wilder than the places I visited outside the Great Wall!" Sighing, he proceeded forward.

Meanwhile, Zhou Yixing was crouching in his cave on the barren mountain. When he realized that the cultivator who had just flown out of the jungle wasn't heading in his direction, he hesitated for a moment, after which a brutal gleam appeared in his eyes.

"I'm thinking too much into it. I just need to consume him, and then I'll be back to normal.... Considering that I'm a necromancer,

and he's just a soul cultivator, I should be able to crush him with ease!" Having reached this point in his train of thought, Zhou Yixing's expression turned even more fierce. Waving his hand, he summoned his ninefold-enhanced black greatbow, and then leaped out from the cave, shooting eighteen arrows in quick succession at Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun sensed him as soon as he leapt out in the open. Spinning, he looked in Zhou Yixing's direction, and when he saw him, his jaw dropped.

The eighteen soul arrows screamed through the air, eighteen beams of light that bore down so quickly on Bai Xiaochun that, before he could react, they were right in front of him.

"Zhou Yixing?" he thought. Almost immediately, excitement rose up in his heart. How could he have possibly imagined that he would actually run into a familiar face here? Even more surprising was that the familiar face was none other than his lucky star! Bai Xiaochun was already exuberant at how considerate Zhou Yixing was to show up in such a way.

However, he quickly came to a decision. "I can't let him figure out who I am...."

Not hesitating any further, he waved his right index finger at the eighteen soul arrows.

Instantly, a vortex sprang up to meet the arrows, and intense rumbling sounds rang out as the arrows exploded. The resulting shockwave blasted out, sending dust up in all directions. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun continued forward, completely unharmed.

Zhou Yixing's eyes nearly popped out of his skull, and his heart began to pound so hard he started shaking. All of a sudden, a very bad feeling filled him.

"Dammit," he cursed inwardly, "this guy's way stronger than

me!” Already regretting his impulsiveness, he shot back toward the safety of his restrictive spells on the mountain.

However, that was when Bai Xiaochun chuckled darkly and strode forward. As he did, his visage blurred, and in the blink of an eye, his wood clone stepped out and shot toward the barren mountain in a blur of light.

At first, Bai Xiaochun hadn't noticed the restrictive spells on the mountain, but now that they had caught his attention, he could see how deadly they were. And yet, that didn't bother him. Waving his hand, he sent another clone speeding toward the mountain.

Because he was currently wearing his mask, the clones he produced also looked like Bai Hao.

When Zhou Yixing saw all of this happening, his face fell dramatically.

“Clones!!” From what Zhou Yixing understood, anyone with a clone was an extraordinary individual, and shockingly, this person had two. Then he remembered whose territory he was currently in, and came to the conclusion that this person must somehow be connected to the giant ghost king. It probably wouldn't have mattered if he absorbed him, but now that it was obvious he wasn't a match, his regret only continued to grow more profound.

“Stay your hand, Fellow Daoist! I'm Zhou Yixing from the eastern Zhou Clan. This was just a misunderstanding! I mistook you for an old enemy of mine!”

Bai Xiaochun chuckled. Intentionally keeping his voice a bit raspy, he said, “Misunderstanding? Is that what you say to everyone surnamed Bai? I was just passing through here, and I'm supposed to believe this little ambush of yours was a mere misunderstanding?”

Then he waved his hand, sending his two clones slamming down onto the mountain peak, where they began to batter the restrictive

spells into oblivion.

However, these were no ordinary restrictive spells, so the two clones couldn't accomplish the task immediately. Overall, it took them the time it takes half an incense stick to burn before breaking through them all.

From Bai Xiaochun's perspective, things were going very slowly, but to Zhou Yixing, it was the opposite. The restrictive spells he had used were a specialty of his clan, and were particularly powerful. The fact that this person could break the formations so easily left him completely shocked.

Even as he tried to keep his restrictive spells operational despite the onslaught of the two clones, he nervously called out, "Fellow Daoist Bai, please, just listen... I'm a necromancer, and a master necromancer at that! I can compensate you with some soul medicine...."

At the moment, the fact that this person was surnamed Bai didn't really make him pause for thought. After all, Bai was a relatively common surname.

Inwardly, Bai Xiaochun was smiling broadly; dealing with Zhou Yixing actually gave him a warm feeling of familiarity. On the outside, however, he maintained a proud expression as he waved his hand and caused shocking soul power fluctuations to roil out. The fluctuations were so domineering that it was instantly obvious that they weren't from a soul cultivator, but rather, a necromancer.

"I'm a necromancer too!" he said in a cool voice that abounded with dignity. When Zhou Yixing heard it, he shivered, and his eyes turned more bloodshot than before.

"You think I'm scared of you or something!?" he roared. Performing a double-handed incantation gesture, he sent a black mist pouring out of his greatbow, which formed into a black arrow with a vicious ghost face on it. Then, Zhou Yixing pulled back the

bowstring.

“Feeling a bit cocky, huh?” Bai Xiaochun responded loftily. He blurred again as his water clone stepped out, transforming into a third beam of light that shot toward the mountain.

“You have another clone!?!?” Zhou Yixing blurted. With three clones battering at the restrictive spells, it was obvious they wouldn’t last for much longer. Finally, Zhou Yixing let out a shout as he unleashed a black arrow toward Bai Xiaochun.

The ghost face arrow howled as it closed in. As it did, Bai Xiaochun proudly lifted his chin, fully confident that even Zhou Yixing in his peak state wouldn’t be a match for him. Considering that he was currently injured, he was even less in a place to fight him. After all, Bai Xiaochun was now even stronger than he had been back in the labyrinth.

As such, he didn’t even pay attention to the arrow. He simply reached out and grabbed it forcefully.

The arrow lurched to a halt, and the ghost face screamed miserably. However, no struggles on its part did any good. Zhou Yixing’s mind was already spinning by this point.

“Impossible!!”

Even as he gaped in shock, a series of explosions rang out as the three clones finally broke through the last of the restrictive spells, and then surrounded Zhou Yixing.

Zhou Yixing struggled a bit, but within moments, had been subdued, and his cultivation base sealed. Then, Bai Xiaochun’s true self stepped over into the cave, clearing his throat as he looked him up and down.

Zhou Yixing’s heart immediately began to beat wildly. Glaring up at Bai Xiaochun, he gritted his teeth and said, “My Zhou Clan has served the nine serenities king to stand guard over the east for years. Plus, I’m from the clan’s direct bloodline! If you kill me, the

Zhou Clan will definitely avenge my death!!”

Smiling faintly, Bai Xiaochun ignored Zhou Yixing’s threats and picked up his bag of holding. After erasing the branding mark, he opened it and looked inside.

Unfortunately, it was mostly empty except for some miscellaneous objects. There were four tongues of seven-colored flame, which Bai Xiaochun was happy to collect, along with the greatbow.

Zhou Yixing stared angrily at Bai Xiaochun as he rifled through his bag of holding, grief pulsing in his heart. He simply couldn’t figure out why he would be bullied by Bai Xiaochun in the labyrinth, only to escape and be bullied by someone else named Bai.

“I hate people named Bai!!” he wailed inwardly, tears streaming down his cheeks.

Chapter 568: Bring It On! Let's See Who's Scared of Whom!

After looking through Zhou Yixing's bag of holding inside and out for quite a bit, he found little else of interest.

Glaring in irritation, Bai Xiaochun said, "If you're a direct bloodline clan member of the Zhou Clan, what's the deal with your bag of holding? It's virtually empty!"

"You're too late!" Zhou Yixing replied angrily. "Before I ran into you, some other damned brute took away all my stuff!" To have someone rob him and then look down on him with disdain was pushing him to the brink of madness. Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined ending up this poor state. Once upon a time, his bag of holding had contained nine-colored flame, a fire soul arrow, plenty of soul slaves, and a huge collection of soul medicine.

However, all of that had either been stolen from him or used up in the labyrinth....

When Bai Xiaochun saw how angry Zhou Yixing was getting, he narrowed his eyes. He had noticed Zhou Yixing's use of the term 'damned brute', and was fairly certain who he was referring to. Clearing his throat, he ignored Zhou Yixing and then began to examine a few bone slips that he had found in his bag of holding.

There was quite a bit of information, but most of it was already known to Bai Xiaochun. After quite a bit of searching, he didn't find any formulas for multicolored flame, which was the main thing he was interested in at the moment.

However, what he found in the last bone slip left him feeling a bit better. It had a map much larger than the one he currently possessed, which showed almost the entire Wildlands. Although it wasn't very detailed, it at least made his current situation a bit

clearer.

One thing he noticed was that there were five enormous cities marked on the map. Four of the cities were located in the cardinal directions of east, west, south and north. Those four cities were Nine Serenities City, Giant Ghost City, War Champion City and Spirit Advent City!

Those four huge cities controlled large areas within the Wildlands. Furthermore, far away in a location between War Champion City and Spirit Advent City was a fifth city, which was listed as the imperial city!

Lost in thought, he put the bone slip away. After a moment, he looked back at Zhou Yixing.

Seeing the look in his eye, Zhou Yixing knew that his life or death would be decided within the next few moments. Glaring back angrily at Bai Xiaochun, he snarled, “If you’re gonna kill me, kill me!”

Chuckling, Bai Xiaochun squatted down in front of Zhou Yixing and said, “Calm down, I just want to ask you some questions. If you answer them well, then I might be pleased enough to spare your life.”

Worried that his clones might be frightening Zhou Yixing too much, he waved his hand, and they faded away into motes of white light that merged back into his body.

“If you think I'm going to tell you anything, you might as well stop dreaming right now!” Zhou Yixing shouted, spraying a bit of spittle out of his mouth as he did. “If you’ve got what it takes, just kill me! The necromancers from my clan will definitely avenge my death!” Zhou Yixing knew that this necromancer would likely want to use his soul for necromantic purposes. Therefore, he didn't believe at all that his life would be spared.

Bitterness filled Zhou Yixing’s heart, but he was ready to die, and

therefore, decided to throw caution to the wind and take a stand.

Zhou Yixing's raving reaction actually startled Bai Xiaochun, but when spittle almost landed on his face, he started to get mad.

"You really think you're tough stuff, don't you Zhou Yixing!? I didn't even ask you any questions, you fool, and you've already refused to answer!?!?" Bai Xiaochun almost couldn't believe how brazen Zhou Yixing was acting. Here he was, a prisoner of war, and yet he dared to act like a bully!

Zhou Yixing chuckled coldly. Convinced that he was about to die, he didn't even attempt to conceal the scorn in his eyes as he said, "Hmph! I don't care what questions you have. You can forget about getting even a scrap of information out of me. By the way, I might as well tell you that the Zhou Clan has made interrogation and torture into an art. People like me train in that kind of thing from childhood! If you have what it takes, go ahead and see if you can get me to open my mouth. I can't wait to see you try!"

That scorn touched a nerve in Bai Xiaochun, whose eyes widened as he slapped his bag of holding. Suddenly, an Aphrodisiac Pill appeared in his hand, and before Zhou Yixing could even see what it was, he shoved it into his mouth. Then he bopped him on his chest, whereupon the pill slid down Zhou Yixing's throat.

"I'll show you what true terror means," Bai Xiaochun raged, "and then we'll see if you talk or not!"

Zhou Yixing was immediately alarmed at the warm currents of energy that began to flow through him. Although he maintained a calm front, inside he began to get nervous. However, he managed to maintain his angry glare at Bai Xiaochun.

It didn't take long for an unnatural expression to appear on Zhou Yixing's face as he felt himself growing hotter and hotter. At the same time, an explosively impulsive urge began to fill him, causing his eyes to turn red. He also began to pant heavily. The torturous feeling caused him to start shaking, and yet, he seemed to possess

incredible tenacity that allowed him to endure the feeling. He even managed to continue to stare hatefully at Bai Xiaochun.

After enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, Zhou Yixing seemed like he was about to catch on fire, and yet, he hadn't uttered a peep. Bai Xiaochun was actually somewhat moved.

“Why are you being like this? I just want to ask you a few questions.” Sighing, Bai Xiaochun was just about to try to talk some sense into him when Zhou Yixing suddenly began to cackle madly.

“Cut the crap! Is this all you can do? What else ya got? Bring it on!” Although his voice quavered a bit, he seemed to brim with self-confidence, and even went so far as to spit a glob of spittle at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun dodged out of the way, his fury burning. The two of them faced off angrily for a long moment, until finally Bai Xiaochun pointed at him and said, “Alright, you’re forcing my hand, Mr. Zhou!”

Even as he spoke the words, his wood clone stepped out and flew down the mountain toward the nearby jungle. He returned moments later, whereupon he waved his sleeve, sending a three-meter-long pig-like creature flying toward Zhou Yixing. Its skin was covered with long, thick fur, and it was clearly male.

The pig-creature looked around warily, and even let out a few squeals, but underneath the pressure that emanated from Bai Xiaochun, it couldn't even move.

Zhou Yixing stared at the creature in shock, unsure of exactly what Bai Xiaochun was planning to do. Next, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, removing Zhou Yixing's bonds but leaving his cultivation base sealed.

Zhou Yixing's expression flickered at the sudden return of mobility, but then his eyes fell onto the pig-creature, and he almost

couldn't hold back from pouncing onto it.

As he stood there, his eyes crimson, his entire body shaking, beads of sweat popped out all over him. He looked like he was burning up inside, to a degree that far surpassed anything from before.

“Talk,” Bai Xiaochun said with a sigh. “There’s no reason to be like this. Don’t worry, all you have to do is tell me what I want to know, and I won’t kill you.”

“I’ll die before I talk. You might as well forget about learning anything from me!!” Zhou Yixing felt like he might explode at any moment. His expression was distorted, and blue veins were bulging out all over him. The intense heat inside of him was something he had never felt in his entire life.

“You’ve vastly underestimated Lord Zhou’s willpower! It's so strong that even my clan patriarchs praised me for it!” Zhou Yixing was soaked in sweat, and was clearly on the verge of burning up. However, he still managed to back up a bit, and finally, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously, more disdain in his eyes than ever.

Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered in surprise, and even some heartfelt admiration for Zhou Yixing. Based on what he could tell, he really did have terrifying willpower and endurance, something that was beyond the grasp of ordinary people.

“I understand, Fellow Daoist Zhou. Your willpower surpasses that of common folk. Quite amazing. All I wanted to do was ask you a few questions, I really had no choice but to push things this far. Please don’t hold a grudge over what happens next....” Sighing deeply, he looked over at the pig-creature, and then back at Zhou Yixing.

“I just hope this pig-creature has as much willpower as you do....” Shaking his head, he pulled out an Aphrodisiac Pill, crushed it into powder, and prepared to feed it to the creature.

When Zhou Yixing saw this, he stopped laughing and stared with eyes so wide they looked like they might explode. He began to pant and even grunt, and the blood drained from his face. His legs were shaking, as if he might collapse at any moment. Although he wasn't sure exactly what type of medicine he had been given that had driven him into this madness, the thought of the same thing happening to the pig-creature caused his scalp to tingle violently. He didn't even dare to think about what might happen next.

He didn't dare to bet that the pig-creature had any level of willpower, and before long, the thought of what was to come filled his mind with indescribable bitterness. And yet, his lip curled....

“Bring it on! Let's see who's scared of whom!!”

Chapter 569: Make It Stop!

“Ah, a true man!” Yet again, Bai Xiaochun was moved by how Zhou Yixing was still refusing to give in after things had gone so far. In Bai Xiaochun’s estimation, there were few true men like this in the world, other than himself of course.

It was quite a shock to find another true man, and yet that was exactly what was happening right now. Sighing, he couldn’t help but feel that he and Zhou Yixing were actually quite similar in certain ways.

Sighing deeply, he said, “It pains me to put a true man into a situation like this. However, in order to respect your wishes, I will comply with your request. Furthermore, I will look away so that I don’t see your ignominy.”

After all, he simply couldn’t bear to watch a true man shed tears.

“If you can endure what happens next, then I won’t ask you any questions!” Gritting his teeth, Bai Xiaochun looked at Zhou Yixing one last time, fully convinced that he deserved to be called a true man. With that, he held the powder of the crushed pill out in front of the pig-creature’s snout....

After consuming the powder, the pig-creature began to tremble, and much more quickly than Zhou Yixing had. Then its eyes turned red, and it began to squeal over and over again, as if in arousal. And then it began to look around.

In response, Zhou Yixing shivered, and no matter how stiff he tried to keep his upper lip, it didn’t stop him from letting out a shriek.

Even more terrifying was how the pig-creature suddenly turned and looked at him, its eyes shining with madness and fire. It began to stamp its hooves into the ground and squeal even louder, the sound of which intensified Zhou Yixing’s shaking.

Were it not for the fact that Bai Xiaochun had placed his hand restrainingly onto the pig-creatures' back, it would have already pounced....

Because of the horrifying nature of the situation, Zhou Yixing's shriek was filled with incomparable terror. By this point, he was completely devolving into fear, to the point where he was losing control....

He could very clearly imagine what would be happening in the moments to come, and knew that he wouldn't last for very long....

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with both determination and admiration as he slowly removed his hand from the pig-creature's back, then turned and walked toward the mouth of the cave.

He truly did admire Zhou Yixing, and was determined to keep his promise. Considering how much he respected him, if he said he wouldn't watch the outcome, then he definitely wouldn't. He sighed again, a sigh filled with no small amount of grief.

"I really can't bear to watch a true man cry.... Why did you have to push me into doing this?" Shaking his head, he walked out of the cage. As he did, he heard the pig-creature squeal loudly, and heard the miserable shrieks of Zhou Yixing as he tried to dodge the thing.

"Lord Bai, I'm sorry!" he shouted, "Stop this! Ask me whatever you want, I'll tell you anything you need to know!!" Zhou Yixing was using every scrap of energy he had to dodge back and forth, completely cognizant of the fate in store for him if the pig-creature managed to pin him. By this point, he had completely abandoned any attempt to look brave, and was shrieking miserably.

In response to his words, Bai Xiaochun stopped in place, a look of pride flashing through his eyes. Face lighting up, he turned to look at the scrambling Zhou Yixing.

“You agree to answer my questions?”

Zhou Yixing was so terrified that tears were already leaking out of his eyes. Scrambling backward, he shrieked, “I’ll talk! I’ll tell you anything you want to know. Just make it stop!”

Pleased and yet somewhat disillusioned, Bai Xiaochun shook his head at the sadness of the world’s loss of another true man.

“It seems that I really am the only true man in this heaven and earth. Ah, whatever.” Sighing, he stepped forward and grabbed the pig-creature, then gave it to one of his clones to take back to the jungle.

After the pig-creature left, Zhou Yixing leaned up against the cave wall and then slumped down to the ground, panting, his face completely ashen. His clothing dripped with sweat as he looked up at Bai Xiaochun, feeling very much like he had just sidestepped an utter catastrophe.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun didn’t even seem human to him, but rather, like one of the most evil and wicked beings in existence....

Squatting in front of Zhou Yixing, Bai Xiaochun put a look of complete sincerity on his face as he placatingly said, “See, Zhou Yixing? I never had any ill intentions. I just wanted to ask you some questions, that’s all. Come, come, be a good boy and tell me all of the flame formulas you know. Let’s start with one-colored flame.”

Zhou Yixing’s eyes went wide with shock.

“Th-that’s... that’s all you wanted to ask me?” Zhou Yixing almost couldn’t believe that he had heard correctly.

Bai Xiaochun shot to his feet and angrily barked, “Of course that’s all I wanted to know! What, don’t tell me you’re going to go back on your word, are you?! That pig-creature can’t have gone very far....”

“I’ll tell you! Of course I’ll tell you!!” Zhou Yixing looked up at the cave ceiling and forced the tears of frustration and anger back into his eyes. He felt like he was going crazy, to the point where his heart was palpitating. He had assumed this necromancer wanted to ask him about top secret information, and never even considered that he would simply want to know some flame formulas. Virtually all the aristocratic necromancer clans had formulas for everything from one-to eleven-colored flame. Furthermore, such formulas were available for purchase at the cost of soul medicine in all of the cities of the kings....

If he had known that these were the questions he was to be asked, he would never have held out for so long. When he thought back to the pain he had endured, he felt like the entire world was spinning around him.

But then, his mind suddenly trembled as he realized that something about the situation seemed off. If this Necromancer Bai was from one of the necromancer clans, then it would be impossible for him to be unaware of the formulas for various multicolored flames. The fact that he was asking questions about the formulas meant that he wasn’t telling the complete truth about what he wanted.

Obviously, he was simply playing games!!

Zhou Yixing’s eyes flashed as he became more and more convinced that his analysis was correct. Glaring at Bai Xiaochun, he contemplated resisting, but the mere thought of the pig-creature’s blazing eyes caused his heart to tremble. Gritting his teeth, he began with the formula for one-colored flame, and explained everything up to fourteen-colored flame.

Bai Xiaochun was in very high spirits as he took out a jade slip and took notes about everything. After Zhou Yixing finished, he even had quite a few detailed follow-up questions. Zhou Yixing’s explanations seemed quite satisfactory, and in the end, Bai Xiaochun was beaming with joy.

Of course, this caused Zhou Yixing to curse inwardly. All of the formulas he had explained were genuine; he didn't dare to give any false information. After all, this was a necromancer he was dealing with. And yet, this Bai fellow seemed completely immersed in his little act.

“Fudge, this guy sure can put on a good show!” Zhou Yixing thought, grinding his teeth. The humiliation he was enduring had him completely seething with anger.

Bai Xiaochun happily put the jade slip away and asked a few more questions, each of which further convinced Zhou Yixing that he was being cruelly toyed with....

After all, many of the questions seemed completely random and superfluous, to the point where Zhou Yixing couldn't even imagine why they were being asked. His humiliation continued to fester.

Finally, Bai Xiaochun asked, “Hey, wait a second, Zhou Yixing. What about the formula for fifteen-colored flame? Spit it out.”

With that, he stared expectantly at Zhou Yixing.

At this point, Zhou Yixing couldn't take it anymore. Eyes burning with flames of anger, he shouted, “Enough with the act, Bai! What's going on here?!?!?! You expect me to believe you don't know we're in Giant Ghost City territory?! You really don't know that the giant ghost king is one of the four great kings?!?!? You really don't know that the teleportation portal is in the city itself?!?!?”

“Is this some kind of game to you?!?! I can't believe you asked me how old I am and how many Daoist partners I have. What's the point?!?”

“You're a necromancer, but you don't know that only the great clans have the formula for fifteen-colored flame? Dammit! How long are you going to keep toying with me?!?!?!?” Zhou Yixing was so angry he was weeping.

His outburst left Bai Xiaochun feeling a bit embarrassed. Many of the questions he had asked were just things he was randomly curious about, with others being completely inane and pointless. Seeing how angry Zhou Yixing was, Bai Xiaochun chuckled and then smacked the back of his head, rendering him unconscious.

Ignoring him, he walked to the entrance of the cave and stood there, looking solemnly out at the lands in front of him.

“At long last I understand how the Wildlands’ forces are organized,” he murmured. “Strange. Why didn’t the information back at the Great Wall make this clear? A lot of these things are obviously not secret. I wonder if someone intentionally got rid of some of the details....”

Chapter 570: Flame Conjuring Techniques

In the Wildlands, the five great powers were split among five enormous cities!

Of those five cities, four were the cities of the kings, and one was the imperial city! Those cities were Nine Serenities City, Giant Ghost City, War Champion City, Spirit Advent City, and lastly... Arch-Emperor City!

The Wildlands was structured in the same ancient fashion as the lands of Heavenspan. At the peak of everything was the current arch-emperor, and beneath him were the four kings!

The four kings were like feudal vassals, who controlled the four major cities, and raised and kept armies.

In the imperial city, there were also lords and marquis who were ranked lower than the kings. Essentially, the Wildlands was structured very much like a feudal empire.

Bai Xiaochun had learned all of this information by asking one question after another of Zhou Yixing earlier. Although he was surprised by some of the new things he had learned, it all made sense based on what he had known before. After all, he had long since come to understand that the soul cultivators and the necromancers were the true rulers of the Wildlands.

However, what he hadn't known was that years and years ago, the Celestial from Heavenspan Island had overthrown the current empire. Afterward, the surviving members of the overthrown dynasty had fled to the Wildlands, which led to the current situation.

He was currently in territory ruled by one of the four great kings, the giant ghost king. As for the jungle behind him, it was called the Jungle of Lost Souls, and was relatively close to Giant Ghost City.

Furthermore, Giant Ghost City lay in the western regions of the

lands of Heavenspan, whereas the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was in the east. That put him very, very far away from home.

If he wanted to get back to the eastern branch of the Heavenspan River, he would have to cross the Heavenspan Sea, which was something that not even Nascent Soul cultivators could do. Only people with Deva Realm cultivation bases could do such a thing.

Of course, there were other methods of travel, such as using teleportation portals. It wouldn't be extremely difficult to get to the eastern Heavenspan region via that method. Unfortunately, by means of a very vague line of questioning, Bai Xiaochun was able to learn from Zhou Yixing that only people born in the Wildlands could use those teleportation portals.

The foundation of such teleportation portals was soul power, which gave them many other strange properties.

And yet, not even Zhou Yixing had been absolutely sure about all of that. Most of the information he provided was based on things he had heard but couldn't personally verify. In the end, Bai Xiaochun lapsed into silence for a bit, staring out at the sky outside the cave.

"Ah, whatever," he thought with a sigh. "I might as well give it a shot. Who knows, maybe I'll get lucky and be able to teleport out of here." Shaking his head, he looked back at Zhou Yixing, who was lying there unconscious after being bopped in the head.

Despite the fact that Zhou Yixing had tried to kill him three times, simply ending his life here didn't seem like the right thing to do. If they were back at the Great Wall, it would have been a different story, but out here all alone in an unfamiliar place, it seemed like a better choice to keep him as a traveling companion.

Besides... Bai Xiaochun was absolutely convinced that Zhou Yixing was truly his lucky star. With him to lead the way, the Wildlands didn't seem like such a perilous place after all....

That thought left Bai Xiaochun even less inclined to kill him. After a bit more thought, his hand flashed in an incantation gesture, and he put a few hundred restrictive spells onto Zhou Yixing. Having accomplished that, he held Zhou Yixing's life in his hands, and could kill him with a mere thought.

“It wouldn't be good to keep him completely cut away from his cultivation base. What would happen if we ran into some trouble and he got killed? That wouldn't do.” After some more thought, he unsealed ten percent of Zhou Yixing's cultivation base. However, that still left him feeling a bit uneasy, so he reduced him to only half of that.

“With only five percent of his cultivation base, he's essentially a Foundation Establishment cultivator. That gives him a bit of freedom, but will ensure that he doesn't try to escape.” Marveling at how well he treated his lucky star, he ignored him, settling down cross-legged to experiment with one of the flame formulas Zhou Yixing had explained to him.

In order to make sure nothing unexpected happened, he summoned his three clones, sending one to the cave entrance, and having the other two sit on either side of him as Dharma protectors.

Three days went by in a flash. Zhou Yixing had long since regained consciousness, and was lying there motionless. He could sense that ninety-five percent of his cultivation base was sealed away, and yet, was still very relieved. Obviously, his captor didn't plan on killing him, and had instead sealed his cultivation base. For the moment, he was safe.

However, when he thought of how unlucky he had been since going to the labyrinth, he couldn't stop the grief from welling up inside of him, and simply lay there, staring at the cave ceiling.

As Zhou Yixing lay there in a daze, Bai Xiaochun was fully immersed in studying the flame formulas. The more he did, the

more shocked he grew, to the point where he began muttering to himself.

“So that’s how you conjure multi-colored flame.... Different types of flame require different types of souls as the ingredients. Actually, there are very strict requirements in that regard.

“To make two-colored flame, you need to start out with one-colored flame.... After you get two-colored flame, you can put more souls into it and thus conjure three-colored flame....” The more he studied, the more his eyes began to sparkle with interest. There were many differences between conjuring flame and concocting medicine, but there were enough similarities that it made it easy for him to gain a basic understanding of the process.

“Interesting....” he thought, licking his lips. He knew that concocting medicine was one of his best skills, and therefore, the idea of getting good at conjuring flame was very enticing.

For the moment, he decided to forget about two-colored flame and focus on one-colored flame. He even decided to do some tests to see if he could perform a conjuring himself.

After carefully studying the formula, he had his water clone take his bag of holding outside to capture some vengeful souls.

Zhou Yixing watched all of this happen with flashing eyes. He was especially shocked by Bai Xiaochun’s clones, and couldn’t stop thinking about how they had crushed his restrictive spells as easily as dried weeds.

“Just what kind of divine ability does this Bai guy cultivate? It’s not like I’ve never seen clones before, but most of the time they’re illusory, and usually only have about ten percent of the true self’s cultivation base. Even that is extraordinary. But this guy’s clones seem to be just as powerful as his true self. It’s... completely impossible!”

Zhou Yixing pondered the subject for a couple of hours, until it

was dark outside. Then, a figure suddenly burst into the cave, startling him. However, it turned out to be the clone which had left earlier.

The clone walked over to Bai Xiaochun's true self and handed him the bag of holding, then sat down cross-legged next to him and continued meditating.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes opened, and he waved his hand, causing eight vengeful souls to emerge from his bag of holding. They were blurry balls of mist that occasionally took the shape of savages or beasts that growled at Bai Xiaochun.

After studying them briefly, a very serious expression overtook Bai Xiaochun's face as he sank into the same state he often did when concocting medicine. Reaching out, he grabbed all eight of the souls and crushed them down into his palm.

Almost immediately, it felt as if some natural law were at work. To his surprise, streams of fiery light began to seep out of the cracks between his fingers, which quickly faded away. When he opened his hand a moment later, it was completely empty.

Off to the side, Zhou Yixing's lip curled into a sneer.

“He's using Zhou Clan flame conjuring techniques.... Hmph! The techniques of our clan were bestowed upon us by the nine serenities king. Although we don't have the best techniques available, they're still incredible. Most people need to practice for a decade to use them with skill, and sometimes even a few sixty-year-cycles. Even one-colored flame usually takes people a year to master. The clan chief praised my abilities as being exceptional, and I took three months and thousands of sessions to succeed. This guy is obviously used to other techniques, but is still trying to master Zhou methods. Doesn't know his own limits!”

Bai Xiaochun frowned as he looked down thoughtfully at his palm. After analyzing matters a bit, he pulled out eight more souls, and then grabbed them into his hand to try again.

The same thing happened as before, as fiery streams of light escaped his hand. However, this time, they didn't fade away. They actually began to glow more brightly, and then, transformed into a tongue of one-colored flame, burning right there in his palm!!

Zhou Yixing's eyes went wide with shock, and his jaw dropped. He was very well aware of how different the various flame conjuring techniques were. It was a very difficult thing for a necromancer familiar with one system to master the techniques of another, and would usually require a lot of fine-tuning in the process.

But this Necromancer Bai... had used the time it takes an incense stick to burn to master it on the second try!

Zhou Yixing was so shocked he started panting.

“Beginners luck, that's all. This guy is just lucky!” Despite the way he comforted himself, he swallowed hard and stared at the one-colored flame Bai Xiaochun had conjured.

Chapter 571: Just Who Exactly Are You!

“It’s not that hard!” Bai Xiaochun said proudly, looking at the one-colored flame. Conjuring flame and concocting medicine really were similar in a lot of ways.

Although the specific techniques were different, there were plenty of commonalities. For example, when conjuring flame, one mixed together certain types of souls, and then made adjustments based on the subsequent transformations.

The main difficulty lay in the fact that all the adjustments needed to be made in one fell swoop, when the souls were crushed together into the palm. The slightest mistake at that point would lead to a failure.

Of course, the process also required the use of one’s cultivation base. Both spiritual power and soul power counted as energy of heaven and earth, and were a required element.

To a novice, all of those different factors would require time to get used to. But Bai Xiaochun’s first failure had only been because he didn’t make the proper adjustments in the necessary moment. Afterward, he had analyzed the situation, and then decided to simply think of the souls as medicinal plants with unique properties, his hand as the pill furnace, and his spiritual power as the fire to heat the furnace!

After that, everything became clear.

Therefore, he succeeded on his second try!

The sight of the one-colored flame in his hand got him very excited, as if a huge door had been opened, leading to a new road to follow.

“Necromancers are like the direct descendants of heaven and earth! And I’m a necromancer!” He laughed heartily, aware that his ability to conjure one-colored flame made him an initiate

necromancer in the Wildlands.

“Next up, two-colored flame....” Eyes glittering, he produced some more souls from his bag of holding, then followed the formula. Treating the souls like medicinal plants, he combined them according to the required ratios, adjusted his spiritual power, and then closed his hand over the souls to act as the pill furnace.

It might have seemed complicated, but Bai Xiaochun had been concocting medicine for years, and was very familiar with such tasks. His eyes shone as he immersed himself in his work, and soon, the one-colored flame and the various souls combined, and a second color appeared within the flames.

Zhou Yixing couldn't help but rise to a sitting position, his eyes wider than ever as he stared at the two-colored flame forming in Bai Xiaochun's palm. He almost couldn't believe what he was seeing.

“Impossible! It took me a full three years to succeed at conjuring two-colored flame!!” Zhou Yixing almost looked like he'd seen a ghost, and the disappointment in his heart was very uncomfortable.

“Well, it's not like it's that amazing. It's just two-colored flame, right? Not really a big deal. This Bai guy is just really lucky, that's all!!” Even as Zhou Yixing stewed in his irritation, the two-colored flame finished forming.

However, things weren't over yet. Bai Xiaochun pulled out some more souls, roughly fifty this time, and used what seemed to be an even more complicated method to feed them into the two-colored flame. Gradually, a third color appeared, and he had a three-colored flame!

Bai Xiaochun didn't seem very impressed with the three-colored flame. Without even pausing, he waved his sleeve to produce a few hundred vengeful souls. Then, eyes glittering, he fed the souls into the three-colored flame, which roiled like a sea of fire. Although it

seemed like he was simply throwing them in, he actually put them in according to a very specific order, making adjustments the entire time. However, the overall process happened in a flash.

A moment later, the sea of fire shrank back down into a tongue of flame, this time... with four colors!!

“How is this possible?!?!” Zhou Yixing exclaimed inwardly, his eyes wider than before as he stared at the four-colored flame. Before, he had chalked everything up to luck, but by now, he couldn’t continue to convince himself that it was mere chance.

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had produced four-colored flame in almost one smooth action indicated to Zhou Yixing that he was actually dealing with a journeyman necromancer!

However, everything was happening so quickly that Zhou Yixing began to wonder if this was someone from his clan that he didn’t know....

But he quickly quashed the idea. Glaring at Bai Xiaochun, he gritted his teeth, unable to conceal the envy which flickered in his eyes.

“I refuse to believe that this guy is really this amazing. That’s nothing but a trifling four-colored flame. There’s no way he’s going to be able to conjure a five-colored flame using Zhou Clan techniques. After all, when trying to conjure five-colored flame, there is an extremely difficult factor that most people--” Before he could finish that thought, Bai Xiaochun produced over a thousand vengeful souls, combined them, and fed them into the four-colored flame. The flame danced wildly as though it were about to wink out, and yet, Bai Xiaochun somberly closed his hand over it. Then, moments later, he opened his fist to reveal... a fifth color!!

Zhou Yixing was struck numb, and his scalp started tingling madly.

“I don't care how amazing his guy is, there’s no way he can

conjure nine-colored flame!! He can't! I don't care how awesome he thinks he is, or how talented, he still needs time to stabilize the flame!"

Bai Xiaochun had no way of knowing that Zhou Yixing was virtually going crazy. Had he known, he would have been very pleased, but at the moment, he was fully focused on the five-colored flame in his palm. Instead of continuing on to try to conjure more flames, he spent time pondering why the five-colored flame had almost winked out earlier.

After a bit of time passed, he reached a conclusion....

"There was a conflict with the soul ingredients. The formula isn't perfect! When five-colored flame forms, some of the souls clash with each other. If the disturbance is contained, the flame is conjured. If not... then it's a failure.

"So, it seems that I can't really trust the formulas after all." After some more thought, he proceeded to try to conjure six-colored flame, and did just as the formula required, which was produce 3,000 souls.

Generally speaking, it was very important to maintain the proper ratio of souls, and also mix them together at the right time. For many journeyman necromancers, that was a very difficult thing to do, but for Bai Xiaochun, it was a simple thing, even with 3,000 souls.

Before long, the 3,000 souls were all arranged and adjusted properly, and were pouring into the five-colored flame. Before long, he had his six-colored flame!

Next was seven-colored flame. By this point, Zhou Yixing couldn't have been any more shocked, and was in fact wracked with feelings of intense jealousy, and at the same time, despair.

It was simply impossible for him to imagine how someone could be so talented that they could use his clan's flame formulas to

conjure everything up to a seven-colored flame in one single session.

It was simply inhuman.... What was even more amazing was that Zhou Yixing had been the one to tell him the formulas, and yet, hadn't mentioned the most important things to pay attention to. One example was how important it was to contain the disturbances that arose in five-colored flame. And yet, despite leaving such things out, this Necromancer Bai had figured everything out on his own. Zhou Yixing couldn't help but be a bit terrified.

When eight-colored flame appeared in Bai Xiaochun's palm, Zhou Yixing felt a bit numb, and simply stared in shock, unsure if he was seeing things or not....

But then, rumbling sounds echoed out as a nine-colored flame appeared, and Zhou Yixing shrieked involuntarily. Leaping to his feet, he pointed at Bai Xiaochun, his face as ashen as if he had just seen a ghost, his heart filled with such astonishment that he was about to faint.

“This is impossible!” Zhou Yixing shrieked hysterically. “It's simply impossible.... You failed on your first try at one-colored flame, but after that, succeeded with everything up to nine-colored flame! I... I don't know a single master necromancer who would dare to claim to be able to do that. Only terrestrial necromancers are capable of such a thing!! Just who exactly are you!?!?”

The miraculous performance he had just witnessed seemed unbelievably preposterous.

Bai Xiaochun frowned at being interrupted, and looked over at Zhou Yixing with an angry glare. Of course, at the same time, he was feeling very pleased at having just conjured nine-colored flame.

“Pipe down!” he said in his best imitation of someone from the Senior generation. Trying to suppress his excitement at having a nine-colored flame in his palm, he calmed himself and pulled out

30,000 souls. Then he opened his fingers, allowing the nine-colored flame to transform into a sea of fire. Carefully arranging the 30,000 souls, and pouring in his spiritual power in just the right way, he began to feed the souls into the fire. Some went in alone, others in groups of three to five. Before long, they were all inside.

Of course, the speed at which he did all of that defied description. Within about ten breaths' of time, the souls were merged into the fire, whereupon Bai Xiaochun extended his hand and closed his fist.

RUMBLE!

His hand became like a black hole that sucked in all the surrounding flame. Then, when he opened his fingers, he saw... a ten-colored flame!!

Chapter 572: I Refuse To Believe!

The instant the ten-colored flame appeared, the entire cave was illuminated by brightly-colored light. In fact, the light even pierced through the walls of the cave, making the entire mountain light up brightly.

An intensely strong pressure emanated out from the flame, causing Bai Xiaochun's eyes to go wide with excitement. He even started to tremble visibly.

"I did it! I concocted ten-colored flame!!" He even felt more excited about personally conjuring multi-colored flame than he usually did when concocting medicine.

In contrast to Bai Xiaochun's excitement, Zhou Yixing's mind was struck as if by lightning. He simply stood there gaping, his thoughts wiped clean by the sight of the ten-colored flame.

He wanted to believe that he was simply hallucinating... but unfortunately, wasn't able to fool himself in such a way. He had just witnessed his own clan's formulas used to conjure everything from one-to ten-colored flame.

It was a matter that had already turned his world upside down. Back home, even patriarchs who were terrestrial necromancers wouldn't be able to do such a thing.

Even more shocking was that this necromancer had only just learned his clan's formulas. Despite that, he had still succeeded, something that left Zhou Yixing feeling completely lost.

"This is impossible... impossible.... How could this be happening...?" His face was as white as a sheet of paper as he muttered crazily to himself. It was a huge blow to him, after all, and when he compared himself to this Necromancer Bai, he couldn't help but feel like he himself was little more than trash.

"Inhuman! He's really and truly inhuman!!!"

Disappointment surged through him, washing away the jealousy from before. The difference between him and this necromancer... was like the difference between the clouds and the mud beneath them. He didn't even qualify to be jealous.

Ten-colored flame marked the absolute peak of the master necromancer rank. In all of the Wildlands, the number of necromancers who could conjure ten-colored flame was very limited. Any person like that was capable of dominating the field virtually anywhere they went.

Master necromancers at the peak of their level could attract other large numbers of soul cultivator followers. Furthermore, considering that they could conjure ten-colored flame, when they made soul medicine, it would be considered level ten low-grade soul medicine.

Most necromancers welcomed soul cultivator followers. After all, it took a lot of souls to conjure flame. For example, ten-colored flame required 30,000 vengeful souls. For a necromancer to get all those souls single-handedly would be quite troublesome. Therefore, having followers to help was the natural way of things.

Although, not all necromancers liked having followers. A few of them liked to do things on their own for various reasons. In terms of getting souls, it was also possible to go to the cities of the kings, or the necromancer clans, and trade soul medicine for what they needed.

In any case, necromancers who reached the master rank were generally well-known if not famous. If destiny was on their side, they could achieve a heaven-shaking, earth-toppling advance and become terrestrial necromancers. Terrestrial necromancers were even more famous, and were high above master necromancers in terms of standing.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath as he tore his gaze away from the ten-colored flame to look over at Zhou Yixing. When their eyes

met, all of Zhou Yixing's pride and defiance crumbled, completely destroyed by the ten-colored flame. Mumbling bitterly, he didn't even dare to hold Bai Xiaochun's gaze.

Bai Xiaochun's heart thumped happily. Clearly, it would be much easier to get Zhou Yixing to do what he said in the future.

"Well, since I've already scared him this much, I might as well keep going. I bet that when I conjure an eleven-colored flame and become a terrestrial necromancer, Zhou Yixing will be so shocked he'll end up half dead." Filled with anticipation, Bai Xiaochun chuckled darkly to himself and then pulled out the jade slip with the information about the flame formulas. Even as Zhou Yixing stood there watching, he reviewed the eleven-colored flame formula.

Zhou Yixing hesitated for a moment, then whispered, "Fellow Daoist Bai, there's a big difference between ten-colored flame and eleven-colored--"

"You just sit quietly and watch," Bai Xiaochun interrupted proudly. His previous ten successes left him feeling very confident. From what he could tell, conjuring flame was actually a very simple matter.

The way Bai Xiaochun responded to Zhou Yixing caused his heart to begin to pound. The truth was that if he could actually personally witness an eleven-colored flame being conjured, it would be a good thing for him. That was especially true considering that the techniques being used were his own clan's. To Zhou Yixing, it would be almost the same as watching one of his clan's patriarchs conjuring flame.

Zhou Yixing sucked in a breath and sat there stock still, gaze fixed on Bai Xiaochun's hand.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased by Zhou Yixing's reaction. Making sure to look very impressive, he contemplated the formula for eleven-colored flame, then slapped his bag of holding to produce

60,000 vengeful souls, which erupted like a tempest into the cave. Then, he waved his right hand and sent the souls into the fire.

After about ten breaths of time passed, his expression flickered. Although he was able to control the way the 60,000 souls merged together, as they poured into the ten-colored flame, he realized that an unforeseen transformation was underway. The pressure of the flame power was too intense. Bai Xiaochun wasn't too familiar with the fluctuations of flame conjuring, but could clearly sense them.

“Not good!” Bai Xiaochun's face fell. Losing control of even one of the souls meant losing control of the entire ten-colored flame. The souls suddenly all poured into the fire at the same time, causing the flame to flicker wildly. Then, a popping sound could be heard... as the flame winked out.

A green wisp of smoke rose up and then faded away. Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped, and Zhou Yixing was equally stunned.

Bai Xiaochun's breath caught in his throat. To have just finished bragging only to fail dramatically caused his face to burn as if with fire. Roaring angrily, he slapped his bag of holding to produce more souls, and then began to conjure flame, starting from the one-colored variety and going all the way back up to ten. Then he stared at the ten-colored flame and reviewed everything that he had done so far, and then, started another attempt at eleven-colored flame. Soon, rumbling sounds could be heard as... he failed again!

“I refuse to believe that I can't succeed!” Bai Xiaochun furiously smacked his back of holding, only to realize that he was running out of souls.... Then he slowly looked over to Zhou Yixing, who had recovered from his earlier shock and was staring at Bai Xiaochun with a strange expression on his face.

Feeling both humiliated and even more angered, Bai Xiaochun said, “What are you looking at?! Go get me some more souls!! If

you don't come back with at least 100,000, then don't come back!"

Giving Zhou Yixing one last good glare, he waved his sleeve, sending him flying out of the cave.

Once outside, Zhou Yixing gnashed his teeth in anger at the domineering ways of this Necromancer Bai. Clearly, he just wasn't skilled enough to conjure eleven-colored flame, and Zhou Yixing had even tried to warn him. Not only had he ignored him, but he had even started bragging. Then when he failed, he vented his anger on Zhou Yixing.

Chuckling coldly, he said, "Hmph! You really think it's that simple to become a terrestrial necromancer?!" Unfortunately, because of the restrictive spells Bai Xiaochun had placed on his cultivation base, he had no choice other than to follow orders and go catch some souls.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun's clone had already captured all of the nearby souls, so no matter where he searched in the area, he couldn't find a single one. Gritting his teeth, he expanded his search. As he walked along, evening began to fall. At the same time, dark clouds filled the sky, and rain began to fall, rain that was acrid in odor and hurt when it touched his skin.

Occasionally, green bolts of lightning would crackle across the sky above.

At any other time, Zhou Yixing would simply have rotated his cultivation base and ignored the rain. But having ninety-five percent of it sealed, he was forced to endure it in misery and cursing.

"I hate people named Bai! If only the hell-emperor would notice what was happening, send down a bolt of hell-lightning and wipe that guy off the map!"

After sending Zhou Yixing out to hunt for souls, Bai Xiaochun sent his three clones out to do the same thing, except that he told

them to search in the jungle.

His clones had the same cultivation base as he did, and were also equipped with Soul Convergence Pills, which made things a bit easier for them than it was for Zhou Yixing. As for Bai Xiaochun himself, he sat there silently, analyzing his previous failures and working on some more conjurings.

One day, two days, three....

Soon, seven days had gone by, and Bai Xiaochun had successfully conjured more than ten tongues of ten-colored flame. However, he hadn't been able to push a single one to the eleven-colored level. Every time, he met with failure.

As his fury and humiliation grew, his eyes became more bloodshot. His hair was disheveled, and he seemed bedeviled as he madly tried to determine the reason for his failure. As more time passed, he began to change the formula he was using for eleven-colored flame, even though he didn't realize it.

Thanks to the changes, his skill in flame conjuring advanced steadily. However, he continued to face difficulties at every turn, the reason being that there was actually a bottleneck between ten- and eleven-colored flame.

Not only did one need to adjust the formula, but one also had to have perfect control over ten-colored flame. Days passed, and Bai Xiaochun continued to descend into a state of bedevilment....

Chapter 573: Help Me, Fellow Daoist Bai!

As Bai Xiaochun went about his flame conjuring, eight days went by....

Meanwhile, some distance away, Zhou Yixing was flying along through the air, his hair disheveled, coughing up blood.

Chasing him was a group of more than a hundred savage giants.

“You people push things too far!!” Zhou Yixing howled in frustration. Bai Xiaochun had asked him to bring back 100,000 souls, but with his cultivation base sealed, that was an almost impossible task. Although he was actually in late Core Formation, he had never recovered completely from the labyrinth, and that meant that the five percent of his cultivation base he had access to gave him battle prowess roughly equivalent to early Foundation Establishment.

At one point, he had considered taking advantage of his relative freedom to flee. However, he soon discovered that if he went too far away from Bai Xiaochun, the restrictive spell inside of him would begin to show signs of detonation. As such, he had no choice but to abandon such thoughts of fleeing, and continue to curse Bai Xiaochun even more than before.

At one point, he realized that he was being stalked, or perhaps even hunted. Just when he had turned to flee, he found that a group of savage giants had appeared to block his path. He fought and killed some, but their numbers continued to grow until he was virtually surrounded. As of that moment, he realized that he was like a weak animal being assaulted by vicious predators.

Because of the dangerous crisis, he finally resorted to using a secret magic to break free, something that drained him of some of his life force but gave him a huge burst of speed. Unfortunately, his use of the secret magic only got the savage giants more interested in him, and they began to dog him relentlessly.

Zhou Yixing couldn't have been more frustrated. If his cultivation base wasn't sealed, then he would never have let these Foundation Establishment giants off the hook. He would have cut them all down with a mere thought.

But now, his soul power was sealed, and most of his magical techniques were unusable. The predicament had tears leaking out of his eyes as he realized that if the giants caught him, he would definitely die.

"I'm a master necromancer!" he shouted. "How dare you do this to me!!" Even as Zhou Yixing's voice rang out, two soul blades suddenly screamed through the air toward him, a powerful attack that slammed into him and sent him staggering to the side, coughing up blood.

The more than one hundred savages behind him were all completely focused on chasing him, and there were even two soul cultivators with them, who were eying Zhou Yixing as if he were some sort of treasure.

However, once they heard him call himself a master necromancer, their expressions flickered with hesitation. A similar reaction could be seen among the savages.

"Necromancer?" one of the soul cultivators said. "His soul power fluctuations are weak, so even if he's a necromancer, we should still be able to take him. But what if he's hiding his true cultivation base level? What if he's really in Core Formation, but injured? That means that if we don't kill him now, we could be bringing a huge disaster on us in the future...."

After a long moment of hesitation, the two soul cultivators exchanged a glance, and then one of them called out, "If you're really a master necromancer, then make some seven-colored flame! Then we'll believe you. In fact, we'll even offer an apology and give you some gifts of compensation!"

Zhou Yixing was instantly more frustrated than before. He had

no seven-colored flame on him, and because his cultivation base was sealed, he couldn't conjure any. Having no way to prove who he was, he simply roared in fury and then used his secret magic to flee again.

To see Zhou Yixing flee actually left the two soul cultivators feeling quite relieved.

“How dare he impersonate a necromancer!!”

“He can't get far. Chase him down! If we kill him, the current crisis our Blackmountain Tribe is facing can be solved! Besides, he's injured and only in the Foundation Establishment stage. He's a gift from the hell-emperor to our Blackmountain Tribe to help us pass this difficult time!!”

With that, they began to chase after him again.

The chase continued, with Zhou Yixing using all the power he could muster to flee. Soon, he was so angry and tired that he felt like he was going to explode.

“I hate people named Bai!” he cursed inwardly. “Everyone in the world named Bai is on my hate list now!!! I kindly told him that eleven-colored flame was very hard to summon. If he wanted to ignore my warning, fine, but why did he have to get so angry when he failed!?”

“If it weren't for him getting pissed off and forcing me to go find souls, I would never be in this situation!”

More and more enemies were joining the chase, giving the infuriated Zhou Yixing no other choice than to continue to use his secret magic to race back toward Bai Xiaochun in the cave, coughing up blood the entire time.

This was a day that Zhou Yixing would never be able to forget for his entire life. Only by repeatedly drawing on his life force to fuel his secret magic was he able to stay alive. By now, some of his hair was turning white, revealing the true price he was paying to flee.

Eventually, he caught sight of the barren mountain where Bai Xiaochun was located. Never could he have imagined that he would be so overjoyed at the prospect of returning. Tears leaking out of his eyes, he looked back at his pursuers and shouted, “You people just wait!”

The two soul cultivators, and the giants they led, got a bad feeling when they looked at the mountain that was Zhou Yixing’s destination, but didn’t stop chasing him. The soul cultivators even gritted their teeth and performed incantation gestures to unleash a joint soul power attack.

Instantly, two soul blades appeared, each one a dozen meters long or more. Even as they appeared, they fused together, becoming a 30-meter long weapon. At the same time, the savages howled in fury, causing streams of qi and blood to erupt from their bodies, a black mist that merged with the soul blade, causing it to grow even larger. By this point, it was fully 150 meters long as it slashed toward Zhou Yixing.

As a result, the two soul cultivators were significantly drained, and the more than one hundred savages all had ashen faces. And yet, they were looking toward Zhou Yixing with keen anticipation.

“Tribal secret magic!!” Zhou Yixing exclaimed, shocked. Wracked with anxiety, he coughed up eight mouthfuls of blood as he again unleashed his secret magic, narrowly staying ahead of the soul blade as he shot toward the mountain.

“Help me, Fellow Daoist Bai!!” he shouted. At the same time, the 150-meter long soul blade bore down on both Zhou Yixing and the mountain itself, clearly moments away from reducing everything to dust!

Bai Xiaochun’s three clones were still out collecting souls, so his true self sat alone inside the cave on top of the mountain. Currently, a vicious expression could be seen on his face; his hair was wildly disheveled, and his eyes were completely bloodshot, as

if with madness.

Right in the middle of his palm was a tongue of ten-colored flame, into which he was feeding a seemingly endless stream of vengeful souls. He was completely and utterly focused, and didn't dare to allow himself to be distracted. His eyes were bloodshot, and he didn't even know how much time had passed. All he knew was that his repeated failures had come at incredible cost. Because of all that, he had no idea what was happening outside the cave.

“This time it's definitely going to work. It has to!!” The ten-colored flame gobbled up all the souls, and an eleventh color was just about to appear in the flames, when all of a sudden, the flame destabilized. Bai Xiaochun's face fell, and he quickly performed an incantation gesture with his left hand and then pushed his finger into the flame.

However, the flame only flickered more wildly, and then powerful fluctuations began to roll out of it that caused Bai Xiaochun's expression to flicker.

It was in that moment that Zhou Yixing's scream reached his ears, as did the howling of the more than one hundred savage giants.

Then, all such sounds were drowned out by the massive explosion which occurred when the ten-colored flame completely destabilized and detonated!

Shrieking, Bai Xiaochun shot backward, pulling out his Eternal Parasol to protect himself as the entire mountain shook violently!

Before the soul blade could even reach the mountain, the top blew off, and massive flames shot out in all directions!

Flaming rubble and even lava spewed out, completely destroying the soul blade as if it had never even existed.

Chapter 574: Successor of the Hell-Emperor

Everything was happening too quickly. Whether it was Zhou Yixing or his pursuers, none of them even had a chance to react before the entire mountain in front of them erupted like a volcano.

The way the mountain collapsed, even to the point where lava was streaming out of it, made them feel as if they were suddenly facing some vicious monster. Shrieking, everyone began to back up.

Thankfully, the flame and lava didn't shoot out very far, and soon began to fade away. Zhou Yixing had been blackened a bit, and that was even after he had shot backward at full speed for fear of being incinerated.

Everyone was completely shocked, and all hearts began to pound in astonishment.

It was then that an enraged voice echoed out from within the remaining sea of flames.

“How dare you people!! I can't believe you would actually interrupt my flame conjuring!!” Even as the fury of the words continued to float in the air, the last of the fire faded away, and Bai Xiaochun appeared, a very unsightly expression on his face as he strode forward.

His robes were in tatters, but the rage in his heart couldn't have been more intense. He had been absolutely convinced that he was about to succeed, and was sure that the only reason he had failed was because he had been interrupted.

As soon as his bloodshot eyes caught sight of the savages and soul cultivators, Bai Xiaochun slapped his bag of holding to produce a seven-colored flame.

“A master necromancer!!” As soon as the savages saw the seven-colored flame, they began to instinctively tremble and pant in fear.

As for the two soul cultivators, they were in the great circle of Foundation Establishment, but even they were staring at Bai Xiaochun with pale-faced astonishment.

They knew that seven-colored flame was the hallmark of master necromancers, and that people such as that were the type who could gather large groups of soul cultivator followers. Furthermore, it was now obvious that the person they were chasing must be the follower of this master necromancer.

Not only had they tried to kill the follower of a master necromancer, but they had interrupted that very master necromancer when he was conjuring flame.... The two soul cultivators, who were already sweating profusely, then noticed how bloodshot Bai Xiaochun's eyes were, and that he was clearly enraged. Immediately, they clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Please quell your anger, Master Necromancer....”

“We really didn't know that you were here conjuring flame, Master Necromancer. Please, quell your anger. We... we can offer compensation!” After hearing the soul cultivators' trembling words, and seeing them bowing, the savages behind them all dropped down to kowtow.

When Bai Xiaochun saw all of that, his fury began to subside. After all, the interference during the critical moment of flame conjuring was not the main reason his eleven-colored flame had failed. The biggest fault lay in his lack of control.

Although he had solved all the previous problems he had encountered, a new problem had suddenly arisen, which led to the explosion moments ago that had shocked even him.

“There were obviously some internal instabilities. But there were instabilities before, and never such an explosion....” Muttering thoughtfully to himself, he pondered the situation in search of an answer. Meanwhile, the two panicked soul cultivators offered profuse apologies. However, then they considered the crisis their

tribe was facing, and suddenly exchanged a glance.

“Grandmaster,” one of them said, “now that your immortal's cave is destroyed, could it be that you are temporarily without a place of residence? If so, why not come to our tribe to rest up a bit?”

Bai Xiaochun glanced back at the destroyed mountain cave, and then nodded. What he needed right now was exactly that; a quiet place to analyze the problem with the eleven-colored flame.

Considering how the soul cultivators and the savages were treating him, Bai Xiaochun finally understood what kind of a position necromancers occupied in the Wildlands. It was definitely beyond anything he had imagined before.

Off to the side, Zhou Yixing was stewing in his own anger. After all, he had mentioned that he was a master necromancer, and yet the savages and soul cultivators had refused to believe him.

Soon, the soul cultivators and savages were cautiously leading Bai Xiaochun back to their tribe. It wasn't a very large tribe, with only about a thousand members, who made their home in one of the local mountain valleys.

The tribe was fortified, but in a very primitive fashion, with immortal's caves dug into the sides of the mountains. Bai Xiaochun was immediately treated as an honored guest, and was personally given an immortal's cave that had previously belonged to one of the two soul cultivators. Even better, they constantly provided him tribute in the form of vengeful souls.

There were other forms of compensation as well. Yet again, Bai Xiaochun was struck by how important necromancers were in the Wildlands. Whenever he ran into any of the savage giants, they looked at him with a mixture of fear and respect. Bai Xiaochun was quite sure that if he asked them to, they would do anything he wanted.

As for the two soul cultivators, they clearly respected and feared him, but at the same time, wanted something of him, although they seemed hesitant to speak of it openly.

Everyone assumed that Zhou Yixing was one of Bai Xiaochun's followers, and therefore, they also treated him with great respect, and gave him handsome compensation, although not quite to the same level as Bai Xiaochun.

After being in the tribe for only about half a month, his daily usage of souls ensured that the two soul cultivators couldn't prevent from gritting their teeth when they handed them over. Finally, Bai Xiaochun started to feel bad about it.

The next time they came to deliver souls, he sighed and said, "Alright, spit it out. What do you want my help with?"

The two soul cultivators couldn't conceal their excitement. They had been holding back this entire time, so now that Bai Xiaochun took the initiative to bring up the subject, they exchanged a glance and then revealed the truth.

Two months before, the hell-emperor had issued a proclamation indicating that he would be selecting a successor to receive his legacy. Very demanding qualifications had been put in place for the successor, and virtually everyone in the Wildlands was going mad to prepare, including people in the city of the kings, as well as the necromancer clans.

There was a cultivation base limitation for those who could compete to become the successor, and for many, that meant that a vast quantity of soul medicine was needed to improve their cultivation base. As a result, the three great clans that lived under the control of Giant Ghost City were going all out in their preparations, which included issuing strict orders to the tribes in their respective areas of influence to provide large amounts of soul medicine. Any tribe who couldn't meet the requirement would face potential execution.

Because of an event which had occurred recently, the Blackmountain Tribe was particularly weak, and was temporarily incapable of producing any soul medicine. As a result, they had come up with three ways to solve the problem: sell other products produced in their tribe; find a necromancer to help them; or resort to banditry to try to get soul medicine.

They were currently utilizing all three different options to try to escape from this disaster....

Bai Xiaochun found the whole explanation a bit confusing. However, Zhou Yixing's eyes went wide. In fact, the news that the hell-emperor was looking for a successor caused his eyes to shine with unprecedented brightness.

Bai Xiaochun maintained a neutral expression, and managed to casually ask for some more details in a way that didn't reveal his lack of understanding. Of course, Zhou Yixing was so excited about the whole matter that he didn't notice that at all, and proceeded to tell Bai Xiaochun everything he knew.

It was only at this point that Bai Xiaochun finally came to understand that, in addition to the arch-emperor from the imperial city, there was also a hell-emperor in the Wildlands!

There was a legend about the hell-emperor which stated that after the first generation arch-emperor died, his soul didn't vanish, but instead, became the Underworld River. It went on to control the aspect of death in the world, and was the spirit of the Underworld River. That was the origin of the hell-emperor!

From generation to generation, the faith of the people ruled by the arch-emperor would bolster the hell-emperor's strength. In fact, over the years, the savages had been influenced by the soul cultivators to the point where they also began to exercise faith in the hell-emperor.

Essentially, the arch-emperor was a physical leader who everyone could see, whereas the hell-emperor was a symbolic

luminary!

Also according to legend, the hell-emperor's palace existed deep within the Underworld River, which was where the hell-emperor resided. Occasionally, he would send emissaries out into the world of the living, people who were always treated with the utmost respect, even by the reigning arch-emperor.

Two months before, the Underworld River had appeared above the imperial city, and a stone stele descended with a Dharmic decree. According to that decree, a successor was to be chosen within one sixty-year-cycle, a successor who could become the next generation hell-emperor!

The Wildlands were fully shaken; after all, this was the first time in countless years that there had ever even been mention of the hell-emperor choosing a successor.

All of the clans, marquis, and lords in the imperial city, as well as the powerful forces in the four kingly cities and even other influential groups, were profoundly moved. Everyone wanted the hell-emperor's successor to come from their group!

Two prerequisites had to be met to be a potential successor: First, to have a Nascent Soul cultivation base. Second, to officially acquire candidacy qualifications!

Chapter 575: Spirit Enhancement Nascent Soul!

Of the two requirements, the latter was the most important.

After all, even in the Wildlands, Nascent Soul cultivators were no rarity. That was especially the case because powerful necromancers could make soul medicine that gave them an advantage over the soul cultivators. For them, it was much easier to break through from Core Formation into the Nascent Soul stage.

Therefore, the most difficult of the prerequisites was to gain candidacy qualifications!

“How do you get the candidacy qualifications?” Zhou Yixing asked, looking very serious, his heart pounding in his chest. The matter of the hell-emperor choosing a successor was a monumental one for the entire Wildlands, so even Zhou Yixing, despite not having a Nascent Soul cultivation base at the moment, was still thinking of trying to join the competition.

Bai Xiaochun sat there listening thoughtfully as the two soul cultivators explained everything they knew. After all, the matter was no secret.

“To get candidacy qualifications,” said one of the soul cultivators, “you have to be a necromancer. Most importantly, you must have performed at least a fivefold spirit enhancement on your Nascent Soul. That’s the only way to get candidacy qualifications!”

As soon as Zhou Yixing heard this explanation, his face fell. “How are you supposed to do that?!?! Nascent Soul spirit enhancement is a high-level skill, legendary even among necromancers! It’s true that doing such a thing can lead to explosively quick cultivation progress, and also incredible power. But... very few people can even attempt to do such a thing! And a fivefold enhancement...

isn't that courting death!?!?"

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered brightly. He had never heard of anything like this before; the idea of performing a spirit enhancement on one's own Nascent Soul seemed unimaginable, and also incredibly difficult.

After all, there was always the chance of a spirit enhancement failing, and that probability would increase with each enhancement from the first to the fifth. If an enhancement on a magical item failed, then the item would be destroyed, but if an enhancement on one's own Nascent Soul failed... then presumably, the outcome would be the same.

A failure leading to the destruction of one's Nascent Soul would result in being obliterated from existence. Not very many people would dare to attempt such a thing.... Bai Xiaochun was shocked, and at the same time, realized why Zhou Yixing's face had drained of blood. Obviously... the only people who would make such an attempt would either be supremely self-confident, or utterly crazy.

"That's definitely the requirement," said the soul cultivator. "Even still, the chance to become the successor of the hell-emperor has already got many Nascent Soul experts preparing to compete.... Don't forget that in Arch-Emperor City, there is that mysterious stone stele that came from the Underworld River itself. Supposedly, it can sense if anyone in the Wildlands comes close to meeting the two prerequisites, and will then list their names publicly, showing how many spirit enhancements have been performed on their Nascent Soul.

"The name list on that stone stele is right out in the open for everyone to see. I heard that the names of seven or eight chosen Nascent Soul experts are already there.... After a sixty-year-cycle passes, whoever occupies the 1st place spot on that stone stele will become the successor of the hell-emperor...." After hearing this next set of information, Zhou Yixing's ambitions were instantly crushed. The entire thing seemed completely insane. The idea of

performing five spirit enhancements on his Nascent Soul seemed more like trying to play chicken with death five times in a row.

On the other hand, Bai Xiaochun blinked and said, “A fivefold spirit enhancement on your Nascent Soul? That doesn’t seem very hard.”

“Not very hard?” Zhou Yixing blurted, staring at Bai Xiaochun with wide eyes, clearly having forgotten his place for the moment. By now, Zhou Yixing was convinced that there was no way he could ever participate in a competition like this, and his excitement from before began to wane.

“Even if you think a fivefold spirit enhancement isn’t hard,” he said tartly, “do you really think that all you have to do to stay in 1st place is that? The Nascent Soul chosen are definitely going to be fighting it out to the last man. The fivefold spirit enhancement is just the beginning. If you want to get into 1st place and stay there, you’ll probably have to perform more spirit enhancements than that!

“When the time comes, think about the fact that all of the chosen in the competition will come from powerful organizations and groups. Five definitely won't be the limit. I bet we'll see seven or even eightfold enhancements!

“You know, there’s even a legend that if you can perform a fifteenfold spirit enhancement on your Nascent Soul, you can break through into the mid Nascent Soul stage. An eighteenfold enhancement will get you into the late Nascent Soul stage. A twentyfold enhancement is the great circle. There probably isn’t even a need to mention the legendary realm of a twenty-onfold spirit enhanced Nascent Soul, which is guaranteed to push you into the Deva Realm! But who would possibly dare to attempt such a thing!?”

By this point he realized that he had just spoken a bit impetuously, and his heart began to pound. Worried that he might

have pushed the boundaries too far, he said, “It’s definitely a dead end. Literally. Besides, if you want to fuse with heaven and earth and reach the Deva Realm, you can also use fifteenfold spirit enhanced magical items. Although there’s always a chance of failure using that method, it’s still a much more stable path to take.”

An imperceptible flicker of light ran through Bai Xiaochun’s eyes as he suddenly came to a deeper understanding of how Wildlander necromancers became devas.

For one thing, it had to do with the ranking of the necromancer in question. After all, the requirement to make a cultivation base breakthrough in such a fashion was to perform a fifteenfold spirit enhancement on a magical item, and to fuse with heaven and earth.

And only celestial necromancers could conjure fifteen-colored flame....

“It seems that everything in the Wildlands has to do with necromancers....”

Necromancers could progress their cultivation by performing spirit enhancements on their nascent soul. However, it was a path in which one step could lead to the heavens, but a misstep could lead to the Nine Serenities underworld. Life or death would be determined in the briefest of moments.

At least... that was how it would be for most people. As for Bai Xiaochun, his heart was already racing madly as he contemplated his turtle-wok and its spirit enhancement abilities.

“If I ever reach the Nascent Soul stage one day... then maybe I can use my turtle-wok to advance my cultivation base by leaps and bounds. In fact... it might not even be impossible to become a deva.”

Of course, he knew that such matters were for the distant future.

Right now, the most important thing was to get back to the Great Wall, and also, get more deva souls.

He had already formed three deva soul clones, which meant that he couldn't achieve cultivation base breakthroughs with deva beast souls anymore. The only option he had now was to find metal-and earth-type deva souls.

The more he thought about deva souls, the more anxious he got.

By this point, the two soul cultivators had finished all of their explanations. Looking at Bai Xiaochun with pleading eyes, they clasped hands and bowed.

“Exalted one, the entire Wildlands has been shaken by this matter recently. Whether it's the princes in the imperial city, or the chosen from the cities of the kings, or the necromancer clans, they've all gone crazy.... They're using every method they can think of to fight for the chance to become the successor of the hell-emperor.

“It's the same in Giant Ghost City. Not only is the city itself demanding large amounts of soul medicine, the three great necromancer clans are also doing the same thing in the hopes of improving the cultivation bases of their clan members. Because of that, the taxes have been raised very high recently....

“In fact, the orders only came down recently that our soul medicine tribute requirement had been more than doubled.... Our Blackmountain Tribe really can't meet the requirement, so we had no choice but to try to think of some other way to pay up.” The more they talked, the more the Blackmountain Tribe soul cultivators seemed to sink into despondency.

“Grandmaster Bai, we beg of you to help us. If you can concoct five hundred portions of low-grade soul medicine for us, we would be more than willing to pay a soulhoarding pagoda in exchange.” The two soul cultivators clasped hands and bowed deeply, and then one of them pulled a small gray pagoda out of his garment

and respectfully held it out toward Bai Xiaochun.

A gray mist pulsed out of the little pagoda, completely surrounding it and making it difficult to see it clearly. At the same time, it emanated a feeling of ancientness, as though it had existed since primeval times.

The five levels of the pagoda were all integrated smoothly, making it look more like a conical tower than a traditional pagoda. Even more surprising to Bai Xiaochun, he could sense the power of spatial magic within it, something very similar to bags of holding.

“Soulhoarding pagoda....” he murmured to himself. Although he had never seen a soulhoarding pagoda before, at a single glance, he could tell that this was an item used in the Wildlands to collect and hold vengeful souls!

If you put vengeful souls into a bag of holding, they would slowly deteriorate in much the same way that food would rot away if left out in the open. Only the legendary soulhoarding pagodas could keep vengeful souls fresh indefinitely.

As Bai Xiaochun examined the [soulhoarding pagoda](#), Zhou Yixing looked on enviously. Although soulhoarding pagodas weren't exactly rare, they were still very valuable, and were highly prized by necromancers. As for this particular pagoda, it was clearly very well crafted, and very old.

Although a five-story soulhoarding pagoda might not be anything particularly amazing to extremely powerful necromancers, to ordinary necromancers, they were like precious gems. However, to Bai Xiaochun, it seemed like little more than a bag of holding.

“What so amazing about that?” Zhou Yixing grumbled inwardly. “I had one before too....” And yet, he couldn't help but be a bit envious. His previous soulhoarding pagoda, which had been gifted to him by his clan patriarch, only had three stories. Unfortunately, after being injured by Bai Xiaochun in the labyrinth, he had encountered another powerful enemy, and in the resulting fight,

the pagoda had been destroyed....

As Zhou Yixing stewed in his envy, Bai Xiaochun looked thoughtfully at the soulhoarding pagoda. Then, his eyes flashed as if with lightning.

“Now I understand why I kept failing at conjuring eleven-colored flame!!”

The Chinese character I’m translating as “hoard” is the same as the character in “bag of holding.” So it could also be a “soul holding pagoda.” Or conversely, you could change bags of holding to “bags of hoarding”

Chapter 576: I'm Looking At You!

Bai Xiaochun almost couldn't control his breathing as he reached out and made a grasping gesture, causing the soulhoarding pagoda to fly out of the soul cultivator's hand and fly toward him.

As soon as he had it in hand, he sent some divine sense inside, and detected a strong spatial power that was uniquely designed to nourish souls!

Now that his speculations were confirmed, his eyes began to shine with bright light.

“So, I was right! Soulhoarding pagodas really are like bags of holding! Except, they're specifically designed to hold vengeful souls. If you put souls into a bag of holding, they slowly degenerate and eventually just fade away. But if you put them in a soulhoarding pagoda, they'll stay in perfect condition forever!

“Furthermore, the reason I couldn't conjure eleven-colored flame wasn't a lack of proficiency with the technique, nor any problems that cropped up during the process. The reason... was because the souls I was using to try to make the eleven-colored flame had already begun to degenerate!!

“Although they had only degenerated a small bit because they were in a bag of holding, a little bit of degeneration with such a large group of souls would eventually build up into a major instability!

“The instability would only get more intense until eventually... it leads to detonation!!

“So basically, if I keep the vengeful souls inside of a soulhoarding pagoda, then when it comes time to conjure flame, I shouldn't have any problem at all. I should definitely be able to conjure eleven-colored flame!!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun was more excited than ever, and couldn't

wait to test out his theory.

When Zhou Yixing and the two soul cultivators saw how excited Bai Xiaochun was, none of them were really sure what was going on. Zhou Yixing was a bit taken aback, but the two soul cultivators were starting to get excited, convinced that this grandmaster necromancer was going to help them.

Deciding that it was best to strike while the iron was hot, they exchanged a glance, then clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Grandmaster,” one of them said, “there are plenty of vengeful souls in that soulhoarding pagoda. As for the extra beyond what it will take to concoct the soul medicine in question, please keep them as our means of apologizing for everything that happened before.”

Ignoring Zhou Yixing and the two soul cultivators, Bai Xiaochun continued to examine the soulhoarding pagoda with his divine sense, and then began to count how many souls were inside.

From the number, he could tell that the Blackmountain Tribe was both anxious about the matter they had brought to his attention, and also sincere in their offer.

Feeling very pleased, he nodded and said, “Alright, I’ll help you concoct the--”

Before he could finish speaking, though, he suddenly looked up into the sky.

Soon, a beam of light became visible, streaking through the air at incredible speed as it headed directly toward the Blackmountain Tribe.

Even before it arrived, the aura of the great circle of Core Formation erupted from inside, causing the beam of light to shine radiantly in the evening sky.

Everyone in the Blackmountain Tribe was shaken, and countless savages gasped. As for the two soul cultivators standing near Bai

Xiaochun, their faces fell as they looked up.

Zhou Yixing was clearly shocked, and his pupils constricted as he realized that whoever this newcomer was, he had a profound cultivation base that was on par with his own.

Everyone watched as the beam of light reached a position above the Blackmountain Tribe, and then faded away to reveal a middle-aged man with long black hair that flowed over his shoulders. He had average features, but his murderous aura was especially strong. Furthermore, he was surrounded by a black mist, within which could occasionally be seen twisted faces that were apparently vengeful souls.

The fluctuations emanating off of the man were not the soul power fluctuations of a soul cultivator. No, this man... was a necromancer!!

Everything and everyone in the area was shaken by this lofty figure who gazed out of the corner of his eye at what was happening down below. After looking at Zhou Yixing, his gaze fell onto Bai Xiaochun for a moment, and then he noticed the soulhoarding pagoda. At that point, a cold gleam appeared in his eyes, and he looked over at the two soul cultivators.

“Are you the leaders of the Blackmountain Tribe?” he said coldly. “Step forward and offer greetings!” From his tone of voice, he seemed like the ultimate ruler of this area, as if his mere presence was good fortune for the Blackmountain Tribe.

Almost immediately, the two soul cultivators stepped forward nervously and then clasped hands and bowed deeply in formal greeting.

“Greetings, exalted necromancer,” they both echoed.

“I, Li Feng, am here to solve the problem of your Blackmountain Tribe’s five hundred portions of low-grade soul medicine. So hand over that soulhoarding pagoda!” Li Feng was clearly not making a

request, and expected his words to be obeyed immediately. If not, he would raze the entire area to the ground.

Actually, the entire reason he had come here was because he had been passing through the area and had heard the news that the Blackmountain Tribe was offering a soulhoarding pagoda in exchange for a large batch of low-grade soul medicine.

The prospect of getting a soulhoarding pagoda was very enticing to Li Feng. After all, soulhoarding pagodas were relatively commonplace among necromancer clans, but Li Feng was a rogue cultivator. To him, paying the price of five hundred portions of low-grade soul medicine to get a soulhoarding pagoda would definitely be well worth it.

As soon as he'd heard the news, he'd hurried over to the tribe's headquarters. Unfortunately, as soon as he saw that the soulhoarding pagoda was in Bai Xiaochun's hands, he realized that he had probably arrived a bit too late....

And yet, it was too important of an opportunity for him to just give up. And besides, he was still confident that he could get the soulhoarding pagoda for himself, regardless of whether or not he had come late.

Bai Xiaochun simply stood there, blinking a few times but withholding any comment.

The two Blackmountain Tribe soul cultivators were a bit stunned. Before Bai Xiaochun had shown up, they would have been ecstatic at Li Feng's arrival. But now that there were two necromancers to deal with, they weren't sure what to do. Obviously, they didn't want to offend either one of them.

After a long moment of hesitation, one of them said, "Um... exalted one, this other grandmaster already agreed to help us. Er...."

In response, Li Feng's gaze sharpened, becoming something like

sword light that shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

“The affairs of this region have nothing to do with you,” he said. “Furthermore, I want that soulhoarding pagoda. Give it to me immediately.” His glare was terrifying to behold, and his words were spoken with the utmost arrogance. From the cold look in his eye, he would obviously fly into a complete rage if Bai Xiaochun didn’t do exactly as he said.

There was also a certain disdain in his coldness, a disdain birthed from supreme self-confidence.

Bai Xiaochun glared back up at Li Feng in irritation. As far as he was concerned, he had done the right thing by refraining from going around bullying people, and yet, here someone had come to try and bully him. That was especially true considering that the soulhoarding pagoda was at stake. That pagoda was very important to him, and was not something he would simply abandon.

“What are you looking at?!” Li Feng said, his eyes flickering icily.

“I’m looking at you!” Bai Xiaochun replied, popping his neck. “Got a problem with that?!” As he stared, he mused that, in his entire life, he had never been bested in a staring contest. Considering that, he actually made his gaze look even more fierce as he stared up at Li Feng.

The two soul cultivators from the Blackmountain Tribe looked at Li Feng and then Bai Xiaochun, and finally just sighed. By this point, they knew that they couldn’t do anything about the situation, and would just have to wait and see how things played out. Besides, as long as they got what they were looking for out of the deal, it didn’t matter to them who won out in the end.

After a few breaths worth of time, Li Feng suddenly laughed out loud. However, it was an icy, disdainful laugh that seemed to say he didn’t want to lower himself to the level of speaking at length with Bai Xiaochun. With that, he extended his right hand, within

which appeared... a ten-colored flame!!

Almost immediately, the ten-colored flame caused the fading evening light to grow even dimmer. The Blackmountain Tribe savages almost immediately began to cry out in surprise.

“Ten-colored flame!!”

“Heavens, he’s... he’s at the peak of the master necromancer rank!!” The savages all began to drop to their knees to kowtow.

The savages weren’t the only shocked ones. The two soul cultivator’s minds were reeling, and they immediately rushed forward to kowtow, feeling completely shaken.

“The peak of the master necromancer rank! Necromancers like that are very rare. With only a bit of progress, he’ll reach the terrestrial rank!!”

“A necromancer like that agreeing to concoct soul medicine for us is good fortune for our tribe!!”

“I can’t believe that this Li Feng is at the peak of the master necromancer rank!! Wonderful, wonderful! Looks like we have a chance to survive after all!”

Off to the side, Zhou Yixing was feeling very excited at the chance to gloat at Bai Xiaochun’s misfortune. If Li Feng could crush this Necromancer Bai in battle, then Zhou Yixing would finally be free of his current situation. “Come on,” he thought, “start fighting. Take him out!”

Li Feng was very pleased at the crowd’s reaction. The truth was that he had only recently succeeded in conjuring ten-colored flame, so the feeling of being virtually worshipped for showing it in public was quite new to him. Looking down at Bai Xiaochun with a cold sneer, he said, “Screw off!”

Chapter 577: Bullying...

Li Feng really was extremely confident in himself. He could tell that Bai Xiaochun had an extraordinary cultivation base, but he didn't care. The fact that he had the power of ten-colored flame on his side made him fully confident in being able to look down on almost anyone in the same cultivation level as himself.

He was a necromancer who relied mostly on soul fire when it came to magical combat. As long as his opponent wasn't a higher ranked necromancer than himself, and had a similar cultivation base, then he was confident in being able to secure victory.

Li Feng looked down at Bai Xiaochun, chuckling coldly in his heart, completely confident that as long this opponent of his wasn't completely foolish, he wouldn't dare to cause problems.

Bai Xiaochun frowned as he looked up at the openly aggressive Li Feng. At the same time, the words being spoken by the onlookers reached his ears. As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, Li Feng was being far too overbearing. Obviously, he was pulling out a ten-colored flame in an attempt to steal Bai Xiaochun's thunder!

Shaking his head inwardly, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but think that Li Feng didn't match up to him at all. "This Li Feng has a Core Formation cultivation base, but his personality clearly doesn't match. We cultivators should emphasize inner qualities, and should refrain from bombastic showboating. Even if you want to show off, you shouldn't do it in such crude fashion."

At the same time, he was wondering whether he should just exterminate him with a single blow, or show him by example what it meant to make a big scene.

As he tried to decide what to do, the two soul cultivators from the Blackmountain Tribe began to make vague requests of Bai Xiaochun to return the soulhoarding pagoda. Considering that he could only conjure seven-colored flame, whereas Li Feng could

conjure ten-colored flame, it seemed obvious who was in the superior position.

However, they kept their requests extremely vague, as they didn't want to offend Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun simply ignored them, prompting Zhou Yixing to clear his throat and whisper, "This is not the type of person you want to mess with, exalted one. Why don't we just back off...?"

Bai Xiaochun's glare intensified. More displeased than ever, he decided that it was indeed time to show, not only Li Feng, but everyone else present, what it meant to make a scene!

"I hate it when people try to show off in front of me!" he thought. Sticking his chin up and looking around with disdain, he waved his hand to produce a tongue of seven-colored flame.

The instant the seven-colored flame appeared, strange looks could be seen on the faces of the savages and the two soul cultivators. As for Li Feng, he chuckled softly and said, "I think you've bitten off a bit more than you can chew."

Bai Xiaochun snorted. "Li Feng, when you run into necromancers in the Wildlands, you would do well to hold back from saying things like that. You should really take this advice of mine to heart."

The words sounded very profound and meaningful, and coupled with the way his hair floated around him and his clothing rippled in the wind, it made him seem very elegant and beyond ordinary.

There was something archaic to his voice, something that echoed about in heaven and earth. It almost seemed rueful, as though he were thinking back to memories of the past. The entire picture he presented was instantly etched deeply into the minds of those present.

"Allow me to elaborate," he continued. "You see, in a situation like this, you have no idea who exactly you are dealing with, and

no clue as to what incredible individual you might be facing.” Shaking his head, he waved his left hand, causing a vast quantity of vengeful souls to pour out from the soulhoarding pagoda.

As soon as the souls appeared, Bai Xiaochun threw the seven-colored flame out in front of him, causing it to spread out into a sea of fire. Then, he sent the vengeful souls pouring inside.

It happened very quickly. In the blink of an eye, rumbling sounds could be heard as the sea of flames rushed back into Bai Xiaochun’s palm, transforming into a single entity. It was... a tongue of flame with an additional color!!

It had become eight-colored flame!!

All of the savages looked over with wide eyes.

“Eight-colored flame! He... he just conjured flame!!”

“The wave of a hand turned seven-colored flame into eight-colored flame. This... this....”

The two soul cultivators were completely shaken. They had seen necromancers conjure flame in the past, but had never seen anyone do it as casually as Bai Xiaochun just had. He had moved with utmost fluidity, seemingly transforming seven-colored flame into eight-colored flame with almost no effort!

They weren’t the only shocked ones. Up in midair, Li Feng was equally stunned. After all, when he conjured eight-colored flame, it was always a very difficult process. All of a sudden, he had a very bad feeling, and almost lost control of his facial expression. Chuckling coldly, he said, “You must have had a lot of practice with eight-colored flame, right? So what if you’ve been stuck at that level for a long time? You still don’t qualify to stand in front of me!”

Bai Xiaochun looked up at Li Feng, his expression placid as he said, “If eight-colored flame isn’t enough for you, how about nine-colored flame?”

Casually waving his hand, he spread the eight-colored flame out into a sea of fire, then sent more vengeful souls pouring out of the soulhoarding pagoda. No time passed at all before the sea of flames began to swallow up the souls.

Despite the speed with which it happened, there was obviously some pattern involved in the way that the souls were fed into the sea of flames. Then, Bai Xiaochun slowly closed his palm into a fist, causing the sea of fire to fall back in upon itself within his grasp. After the fire was all contained between his fingers, he opened his hand again, revealing a flame with... nine colors!!

“Nine-colored flame!!” The savages were no longer stunned, but were left gasping in shock. The two soul cultivators' eyes were popping out of their heads, and they were panting, their minds reeling out of control.

Li Feng was beginning to shake as he stared at the flame in Bai Xiaochun's hand. The casual way that he had conjured the nine-colored flame was something that Li Feng had never seen before, and left him feeling as if unprecedented levels of pressure were weighing down on him. It seemed almost unimaginable that someone could conjure nine-colored flame with such ease.

If he wanted to conjure nine-colored flame, he would have to go into secluded meditation and spend significant time clearing his thoughts before making an attempt. And even then, he wouldn't succeed every time.

“This is impossible....” he muttered, panting.

“Nothing is impossible,” Bai Xiaochun said with a slight shake of his head. “Just because you think something is hard doesn't mean that everyone will feel the same. I mean, it's just nine-colored flame, that's all....” Looking as calm as ever, he sent more vengeful souls flying out of the soulhoarding pagoda, filling everything within a 300 meter area and forcing the crowd to back away as his nine-colored flame spread out into a raging sea.

It was a shocking sight. The vengeful souls merged into the sea, a process which took a few breaths worth of time, after which Bai Xiaochun once again closed his palm into a fist.

Within moments, the raging sea of fire had shrunk down and was hidden within his hand.

Everyone was devolving into madness at Bai Xiaochun's performance, which made him seem like the ultimate ruler of flame! It was as if all types of fire would capitulate and acknowledge allegiance to him!

“Even ten-colored flame isn't really a big deal!” Bai Xiaochun said, smiling faintly. When he opened his hands, all faces fell as scintillating light exploded out in all directions to reveal... ten-colored flame!

Furthermore, this ten-colored flame seemed particularly vibrant and lively, its heat so intense that the air rippled, almost as though it were about to ignite!

Everyone in the area was forced to back up again, expressions of profound shock on their faces as they looked at Bai Xiaochun.

Clearly, Li Feng's ten-colored flame was much dimmer than Bai Xiaochun's. Despite being of the same level, it was obviously weaker by far!

Along with the appearance of the ten-colored flame came shocked exclamations from the savages, expressions of complete and utter astonishment.

“The peak of the master necromancer rank!!”

“Heavens, Grandmaster Bai... is actually at the peak of the master necromancer rank!”

The two soul cultivators were completely stunned, and looked like they had seen a ghost. Never in their wildest imaginations could they have guessed that Bai Xiaochun would conjure a ten-colored flame, the quality of which clearly surpassed that of Li

Feng's.

Li Feng was shaking visibly, and his hair was already disheveled. As he stared at the flame in Bai Xiaochun's hand, his mind began to turn into a blank.

“Impossible. This is just impossible....” Moments ago, he had been hovering there with a feeling of complete superiority, but now he suddenly found that there was someone present who was far superior to himself.

Zhou Yixing was similarly shocked. He had known before that Bai Xiaochun could conjure ten-colored flame, and yet, the flame currently dancing in his palm caused Zhou Yixing's heart to pound wildly.

“Is... is that really ten-colored flame? I've never seen ten-colored flame that dazzling....” Zhou Yixing looked up at Bai Xiaochun's face, terror written on his own.

Chapter 578: Terrestrial Necromancer!

Bai Xiaochun was quite pleased by all the looks of shock among the crowd that surrounded him. However, he didn't allow any hint of that to show on his face, and in fact, pretended as if he couldn't care less about what was going on.

After glancing at the tongue of flame in his palm, he looked up at the shocked Li Feng and said, "If ten-colored flame isn't sufficient, well then... how about eleven-colored flame?!"

In response, the savages of the Blackmountain Tribe erupted into wild cheering, and the two soul cultivators let out shouts of surprise.

"Eleven-colored flame.... Only terrestrial necromancers can conjure that! No wonder...."

Zhou Yixing gasped, and up in the air, Li Feng was trembling.

Before any of them could say anything, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered with profound light. The time had come to test out whether his previous analysis was correct or not. He sent some divine sense into the soulhoarding pagoda, which shivered as it began to belch out large quantities of vengeful souls.

As they filled the area, coldness spread out, an ill wind that made the place seem like a land of death. Even as the vengeful souls howled and attempted to flee, Bai Xiaochun said, "Flame, disperse!"

He waved his hand, and the ten-colored flame spread out in all directions to form a huge sea of fire. Yet again, the onlookers backed away in fear.

Ten-colored light filled the sky, and the wind screamed as the intense power of the flame exploded out in all directions. The sea of fire was like a cyclone whipping about as it devoured all of the vengeful souls.

The mist-like strands that were the fleeing souls could not possibly have been fast enough to escape the flames, and it took only about thirty breaths of time before the entire 3,000-meter area surrounding Bai Xiaochun was completely devoid of any vengeful souls.

The sea of fire raged in shocking fashion around Bai Xiaochun, making it almost impossible to see him. Everyone in the area looked on with shock and terror, their hearts battered by waves of astonishment.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun truly looked like a sovereign of flame!

That was even more the case when he extended his right hand and said, "Form!"

It was only a single word, but it seemed to contain the power of magical law, a power that forced the fire in the area to begin to converge onto Bai Xiaochun's palm, a process which took only the briefest of moments.

As he closed his fingers, every last bit of fire disappeared into his hand, after which, the entire audience looked on with baited breath and quivering hearts.

No one spoke. Zhou Yixing stood there, heart pounding, almost unable to believe what he was seeing, and at the same time, more nervous than ever before.

Bai Xiaochun's expression was the same as ever, as if everything which was happening was beneath his interest. Of course, the truth was that he was feeling immensely proud of himself, and was reveling in the gazes of the audience. He even intentionally slowed his movements as he opened his fingers.

The moment his fist opened up... a tongue of flame appeared, the heat of which caused everything in the surrounding 3,000-meter area to ripple and distort. An intense sensation of deadly crisis

filled the hearts of all present, and everyone was certain that the slightest touch of that flame would reduce them to nothing but ashes.

At the same time, thunder rumbled in the sky above; the appearance of the flame had provoked a heavenly sign!

All eyes were fixed dead on the flame, which had become the most dazzling and eye-catching thing in existence to the people present!

At the same time, the ground beneath Bai Xiaochun's feet began to melt, as if it couldn't endure the intense heat of the flame.

However, Bai Xiaochun himself wasn't harmed in the least!

The numerous colors within the flame danced and leapt, making it difficult to see the number of colors clearly. However, anyone who focused the power of their cultivation base on their eyes would quickly be able to tell that the flame... had eleven colors!!

Shockingly, it was... eleven-colored flame!!

A short silence prevailed, after which the entire audience erupted into shouts of excitement and praise, causing a sound wave to roll out in all directions.

“Is that really eleven-colored flame!? I've never seen eleven-colored flame in my entire life!!”

“Eleven-colored flame. Eleven-colored flame! Grandmaster Bai isn't at the master rank, he's a terrestrial necromancer!!”

“A terrestrial necromancer... A person like that would be welcomed with full honors in any necromancer clan. In fact, it would be the same even in Giant Ghost City!!”

The savages were completely overwhelmed, and as for the two soul cultivators, they were virtually struck mute. Shaking physically, they looked at Bai Xiaochun in disbelief, feeling like they might collapse at any moment.

“Terrestrial... terrestrial necromancer...?”

“He’s a terrestrial necromancer!!” Upon recovering their wits to some extent, they immediately flopped down and began to kowtow, their hearts filled with awe and reverence. To them, a terrestrial necromancer... was the type of grand entity that could shake all the lands with the single stomp of a foot!!

And just such a person was standing right in front of them! Then the two of them contemplated how they had just suggested that he return the soulhoarding pagoda they had offered. Despite how vaguely they had made the suggestion, the mere fact that they had struck them both with deep levels of fear and panic.

If they had such a reaction, it almost wasn’t necessary to mention Li Feng, whose eyes were on the verge of popping out of his skull. Shivering physically, he suddenly dropped out of the air and landed onto the ground.

“Grandmaster, please calm yourself....” he said, ashen-faced, his fear going so deep that his soul began to tremble. The fact that he had possibly offended someone he should never have offended caused his hair to stand on end, and filled his heart with a sea of bitterness and grief.

At the same time, he was stunned that an illustrious terrestrial necromancer would concoct soul medicine for a small tribe just to get a soulhoarding pagoda....

Zhou Yixing was equally flabbergasted, and was staring with brightly shining eyes at Bai Xiaochun. Earlier, he had had his doubts, and had even felt scorn for Bai Xiaochun, but now, he was fully convinced of what kind of person he was, and his heart began to burn with fervor.

He knew for a fact that this necromancer hadn’t been able to conjure eleven-colored flame before. Then, after not much time passed at all, he conjured that very flame with complete ease, even perfection. It left Zhou Yixing completely shaken and in awe.

More than that, he actually felt that it was good fortune for him to have become the follower of a terrestrial necromancer! That was especially because of the ease with which he conjured flame. Clearly, this Necromancer Bai was spectacularly talented, and that meant that there was always the possibility that he would reach the celestial rank! Since Zhou Yixing was his first follower, and had no one else to compete with, that meant it would be easier to curry favor.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Zhou Yixing's zeal and devotion grew.

Bai Xiaochun stood there for a moment, basking in the gazes, and then cleared his throat and looked over at Li Feng.

“Alright, alright, an important person like me wouldn't stoop to the level of causing problems for someone like you. Although, considering how talented you seem, you really need to listen to me when I tell you to keep a low profile.... Look at how awesome I am! And yet, did you ever see me going around trying to show off?” He waved his hand, storing the eleven-colored flame away in his bag of holding. Then he swished his sleeve, keeping his chin stuck up as he sauntered back toward his immortal's cave.

Li Feng chuckled bitterly in his heart. As far as he was concerned, if this grandmaster considered himself to be keeping a low profile, then he obviously had no idea what it meant to do the opposite. However, he didn't dare to speak such words aloud. All he did was gratefully voice his agreement. At the same time, he had similar thoughts to the ones Zhou Yixing had just had.

“If I could become a follower of this terrestrial necromancer, and receive some occasional pointers, that would be good fortune for me.... And what if he even agreed to teach me some things...?” Life as a rogue cultivator was hard, and people like Li Feng would rarely get a chance to even see a terrestrial necromancer. Therefore, he gritted his teeth and decided that, no matter what happened, no matter how much fawning or fighting it took, he

would become this necromancer's follower.

At that point, he subconsciously glanced over at Zhou Yixing and thought, "This guy must already be one of his followers. I've got to do better than him!"

Zhou Yixing noticed Li Feng's glance, and could guess what he was thinking. Less than pleased, he decided to keep his guard up even more than before. "There's no way I'm going to let this guy surpass me as a follower!!"

Both of them could see the hostility in each other's glances.

Chapter 579: Rebranding The Mask!

Instead of leaving, Li Feng chose to stay in the Blackmountain Tribe, where he planted himself at Bai Xiaochun's side and leapt to meet his every demand, even if it meant going through hell and high water.

It put a lot of pressure on Zhou Yixing, and also served to increase his own zeal and devotion.

Bai Xiaochun didn't drive Li Feng away. Instead, he wallowed in the wonderful feeling of having two people fawning over him.

"Ai. I really am just too outstanding. Wherever I go, people kowtow to me left and right. It's really hard to reject such treatment. I guess I'm just too much of a softy." Of course, the savages were even more fanatical about Bai Xiaochun than before, and the soul cultivators had begun treating him as if he were some sort of god.

All the energy of the tribe was focused on fulfilling any request that Bai Xiaochun made, which he found to be a wonderful thing. At the same time, he didn't forget that he had promised to concoct soul medicine for them.

However, before taking on that task, there was something very important to be done, something that could not be delayed. That very night, he sent his three clones out into the darkness to stand guard, and then sealed his immortal's cave with numerous restrictive spells. Finally, he sat down cross-legged and carefully took off his mask.

After the mask was off, he looked around vigilantly. Outside, his clones did the same thing. Only after they were all sure that the coast was clear did Bai Xiaochun relax a bit.

"Now that I can concoct eleven-colored flame, it's time to perform a spirit enhancement on this mask and see if I can remove

the branding mark inside and replace it with my own!

“If I do that, then nobody should be able to find me through it!” Eyes sparkling, he pulled out his turtle-wok and prepared everything from one-to eleven-colored flame. After performing the first ten spirit enhancements, he put the eleven-colored flame into the wok.

Almost instantly, the wok began to shine with bright golden light that instantly filled the entire immortal's cave. The energy which pulsed within that golden light left Bai Xiaochun feeling completely shaken.

Thankfully, this wasn't his first time using eleven-colored flame; he had also done so in the illusory world of the trial by fire. Therefore, he settled his qi and calmed his mind, then waited for the turtle-wok to suck in all of the golden light. When the time was right, he put the mask into the wok.

“It's definitely going to work!” The mask was very important, so of course Bai Xiaochun was very concerned with how things could turn out. His eyes were glued to the mask as the golden light in the wok grew more dazzling and boundless, transforming into countless golden threads that converged on the mask itself.

Then, they rapidly merged together, covering the mask and causing deep rumbling sounds to echo out in the immortal's cave. Finally, right before his eyes, the mask... began to melt!!

Within moments, it had transformed into a milky white liquid that emanated a fragrant aroma, a mere whiff of which left Bai Xiaochun feeling enlivened.

“An elevenfold spirit enhancement returns the object to its essence. That leaf transformed into a tree, whereas this mask... became a drop of essence liquid.” The milky white liquid rapidly formed into a pearl that glowed with soft light. Shockingly, on the surface of that pearl was... a golden design!!

As the turtle-wok went dark, Bai Xiaochun's anxiety mounted. Finally, he picked up the pearl, whereupon he could sense an aura within it that contained the power of illusion.

By merely sensing that aura, he suddenly felt as if he were surrounded by an illusory world. No longer was he in his immortal's cave; he was in a celestial paradise, filled with immortal mountains, immortal cranes, spirit flowers, and mystical mists. It was almost impossible to tell whether it was real or not.

Thankfully, the sensation quickly passed, and he regained his senses. Then, he looked suspiciously at the pearl he held in his hand.

“This thing's powers of illusion surpass that of the old mask by far!! There are probably even more differences that I will have to discover over time.” Heart pounding wildly, he examined the pearl further to ensure that there were no branding marks on it. Only then did he place his own branding mark onto it.

The white pearl flickered as a link was created between him and it.

“It worked! I never felt anything like this with the mask!” Laughing heartily, Bai Xiaochun pushed the pearl down onto his forehead, whereupon it vanished into his Heavenspan Dharma Eye. Moments later, his facial features blurred, and then transformed back into Bai Hao's.

As of this point, there wasn't the slightest crack in his mask disguise. Whether it was his soul fluctuations or any other aspect of him, not a single shred of evidence that he was Bai Xiaochun remained.

In the past, certain almighty figures such as demigods might have been able to notice some abnormalities caused by the mask. But now, not even demigods would pick up on any clues.

Meanwhile, in the very moment that Bai Xiaochun transformed

the mask into a pearl by removing the previous branding mark and replacing it with his own, something happened in a location a vast distance away in the Wildlands.

In that location was a shocking city that was completely golden and matchlessly large. It almost looked like a golden dragon, emanating an intense pressure that would suppress anything in the area.

That city... was none other than Arch-Emperor City!

In the very middle of Arch-Emperor City, floating high in the air, was an area filled with floating clouds that seemed to contain a city of its own within them. It was... the location of the imperial palace!

Inside the palace, in an extravagantly decorated hall, an old man sat cross-legged in meditation. He wore luxurious clothing, and was the type of person who seemed threatening without being angry. He occupied a very high position, the type who could determine the fates of tens upon tens of thousands of people with a single word.

His cultivation base was profoundly enigmatic, and even from a distance, he looked like a divine, godly being!!

The moment the branding mark was erased from the mask, the old man's eyes opened, causing golden light to spill out. Anyone who looked into those eyes would be shaken to the core. As soon as the old man's cultivation base fluctuations began to roll out, the entire imperial palace began to shake.

"It's gone...." he murmured, frowning. A moment later, he waved his hand, causing the main door of the palace hall to swing open noiselessly and reveal a middle-aged man, who bowed and scraped his way inside.

"Grand Heavenmaster, his excellency was startled by your cultivation base fluctuations just now. He has asked your humble

servant to come and inquire as to what aroused your wrath....”

“It seems his excellency is a bit too high strung,” the old man replied. “Now that I think about it, it’s the perfect time for him to go into secluded meditation. That way he can increase his cultivation base a bit and build up some courage. Pass down orders that his excellency will enter a ten-year period of secluded meditation, starting immediately.” With that, the old man closed his eyes.

Back in the area near Giant Ghost City, Bai Xiaochun was in the Blackmountain Tribe, feeling at his face. Pleased, he called back his three clones, then studied the soulhoarding pagoda for a bit before summoning a large group of vengeful souls.

Then he waved his hand and pinched his fingers together, creating something like a gravitational force that caused the cloud of souls to converge on his palm. As they formed into a one-colored flame, he spread his arms wide, causing the flame to transform into something that looked like a piece of crystal.

“So, this is soul medicine?” Bai Xiaochun grabbed the crystal, and could immediately sense the soul power fluctuations coming from it. Then he began to study it a bit more closely.

“Seems simple enough. The only difficulty lies in how many colors are in the flame.... So, only people who can conjure flame can concoct soul medicine. I just wonder... if you can use real medicine concocting techniques to make the soul medicine even better?” After some thought, he produced a pill furnace, tossed the soul medicine inside, and began to use some of the concocting methods he knew.

However, nothing happened. Bai Xiaochun even took out some medicinal pills and tried to combine them with the soul medicine. He put quite a bit of effort into it, even adding in some plants and vegetation, and yet, in the end, got little out of it.

“Well, that doesn't work. It adds a bit of medicinal mist to the

soul medicine, but that won't do much of anything at all. Definitely too much of a waste of resources to provide any help in cultivation. Not worth it.... However, it seems I can get a bit of effect by adding toxic elements." In the end, he just gave up. Although it seemed like a pity, there really weren't any significant changes to the soul medicine. In fact, only grandmaster alchemists would even notice the slight changes inside. However, all of this made sense considering the Wildlands was a place devoid of medicinal plants and vegetation.

Chapter 580: Demigod Soul!

Even after further study, Bai Xiaochun was left with no other option than to give up on the idea of combining soul medicine with ordinary medicinal pills. Although he was a bit disappointed, there was simply no way to get these two completely different types of medicine to work together.

“Oh well. At least I know how to add toxic elements. Perhaps that will prove to be useful one of these days.” With that, he continued on with the task of concocting soul medicine.

After all, he had promised the Blackmountain Tribe that he would do this for them, and he was the type of person who lived up to his promises. Therefore, the following days were focused mostly on that task.

All of the work was done with the souls they provided. Considering the predicament they were in, and how soft-hearted Bai Xiaochun was, he didn't impose any further requirements on them.

A few days later, Bai Xiaochun was looking at 500 full portions of low-grade soul medicine, and feeling very pleased at how impressive he was.

“I guess it isn't that bad that I'm stuck away from the Great Wall temporarily. Since I'm good at concocting soul medicine, I should be able to dominate the scene out in the Wildlands just as well as back home.” He was immeasurably self-satisfied, and couldn't help but sigh at how outstanding he was; no matter where he went, he always managed to come out on top.

“Perhaps that's just my biggest strong suit.” He closed his eyes to revel in the feeling, but then, he couldn't help but think back to the scene back in the labyrinth when everyone was teleported away. That got him wondering about where Master God-Diviner, Song Que, and Zhao Long had ended up.

“I wonder where they are now...?” All of sudden, he was filled with anticipation at being reunited with them somewhere in the Wildlands. For some reason, that made him feel less lonely.

After thinking about it for a bit longer, he cleared his throat and then reached up to feel his disguised face. In the past few days, he had come to find that, not only did the power of the pearl mask cover his own aura, but it also disguised the fluctuations that were caused by conjuring flame. Now, he could conjure flame whenever or wherever he wanted, and no one would be able to detect it.

“What a lovely treasure!” Eventually, he put the matters of the mask aside for the time being and pulled out his soulhoarding pagoda to examine it.

“After I give the 500 portions of low-grade soul medicine to the Blackmountain Tribe, my task here will be accomplished. Although this place isn’t bad, there’s no reason to stay here.” With that, he settled into contemplation. On the one hand, he really needed to figure out how to get back to the Great Wall, but on the other hand, he also wanted to acquire the formula for fifteen-colored flame.

Most importantly, he needed to find more deva souls. If he didn't, he would be unable to break through from the Gold Core stage into the Nascent Soul stage.

“It’s all the fault of that damned Mistress Red-Dust!” The thought of who had pushed him into this predicament caused him to gnash his teeth. Furthermore, he was now determined to make sure that, one day, Mistress Red-Dust and Chen Hetian knew exactly how awesome he was!

Before, he had scanned the soulhoarding pagoda a bit with divine sense, but had never taken the time to study it in detail. Now that he was finished with his soul medicine task, he calmed himself down to do just that, his goal being to figure out how soulhoarding pagodas worked.

However, after a detailed inspection, he couldn't come up with any clues. The soulhoarding pagoda was filled with a mist that his divine sense had a hard time piercing. However, he could sense a profound sensation of age within the pagoda.

“There's too much of that mist.... That's what's making it hard to see inside.... Alright, soulhoarding pagoda, you just watch and see how I handle you! Hmmmphh! Since you belong to me now, I'll use spirit enhancement techniques to clean you up a bit! I don't care whose branding mark is hiding inside of you, I'm going to erase it for good!” What had occurred with the mask had impressed upon Bai Xiaochun what exactly he could do with magical items that had been given to him by others. Therefore, it was with great secrecy that he sent his three clones out to collect more vengeful souls.

On top of that, he ordered Zhou Yixing and Li Feng to do the same thing, as well as the rest of the Blackmountain Tribe.

A few days later, his three-pronged method of attacking the matter resulted in him having enough souls to produce everything from one-to eleven-colored flame. That very evening, he conjured the eleven-colored flame he needed!

Without the slightest hesitation, he then produced his turtle-wok and tossed the soulhoarding pagoda inside to give it an elevenfold spirit enhancement!

Golden light flashed, and the soulhoarding pagoda changed appearance. Instead of being gray, it was now crystalline and exquisite. Furthermore, it had a single golden design on its surface. The little pagoda was now completely different, and would be extremely enticing even to the most powerful necromancer.

Bai Xiaochun grabbed the crystalline soulhoarding pagoda and then elatedly branded it with his mark. When he felt the invisible connection that came into being as a result, he could finally relax.

“Now this soulhoarding pagoda truly belongs to me, and me

alone.” Laughing heartily, he sent some divine sense inside it to examine it again. This time, there was no obscuring mist blocking his ability to clearly see it through and through.

But then, his expression turned very serious. “Eee?”

He sent more power into his divine sense, causing it to fill the entire soulhoarding pagoda.

There, very deep inside, in an area which had once been covered by mist, Bai Xiaochun could now see... evidence of a restrictive sealing spell!!

The sealing mark was very faint, and wouldn't be detectable except upon close examination.

“A sealing mark....” His first thought was that the members of the Blackmountain tribe must have been courting death by trying to con him. But soon, he realized that that was probably not the case. Based on what he could detect, the sealing mark seemed to be just as ancient as the soulhoarding pagoda itself.

After a bit of thought, his eyes glittered, and he attempted to open the sealing mark and see what exactly was inside. But after a few tries, he found that the mark was apparently fabricated from an aura of death. Without a massive blast of divine sense, it would be impossible to open. In fact, Bai Xiaochun could tell that he was currently incapable of getting past it!

“Interesting. A seemingly-ordinary soulhoarding pagoda turns out to have an ancient sealing mark inside....” He retracted his divine sense and then sat there thinking, his eyes shining brightly.

“If I want to open it, I have to blast it with incredible power.... My cultivation base isn't strong enough at the moment, but... that doesn't necessarily mean I'm out of options!

“Alright, soulhoarding pagoda, you just watch and see how Lord Bai does things!” With that, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a large bucket!

It was as tall as a person, and almost two meters wide, and as soon as it appeared, it erupted with powerful spiritual power. Shockingly, that bucket was filled to the brim with... Heavenspan River water!!

Back during the haunting of the River-Defying Sect, Bai Xiaochun had, in his fear, submerged his mask in this very bucket. Even he had forgotten about that matter for a while. Considering that he needed a big blast of spiritual power to deal with the soulhoarding pagoda, this was the perfect item to retrieve from his bag of holding.

“Heavenspan River water is a major rarity in the Wildlands. This bucket might not make me the richest person here, but definitely a big moneybags.” Licking his lips, he looked at the bucket and then back at the crystalline soulhoarding pagoda.

“With the spiritual power in this bucket, I should be able to blast open that sealing mark.” Eyes sparkling, he performed a right-handed incantation gesture and then waved his finger at the soulhoarding pagoda. Instantly, a gravitational force sprang up, causing more than half of the water in the bucket to surge toward the sealing mark in the depths of the pagoda.

The soulhoarding pagoda shook physically as Bai Xiaochun sent his divine sense inside to watch the sealing mark falling apart under the barrage of Heavenspan River water. And yet, even as it broke apart, it began to heal itself.

Bai Xiaochun quickly performed another incantation gesture, sending more water into the pagoda. The healing signs vanished, and more cracks appeared; it looked like the sealing mark would fall apart at any moment.

However, it was in that very moment... that suddenly, a terrifying aura leaked out that caused Bai Xiaochun's face to immediately fall!

Even just brushing against that aura with his divine sense left

him utterly shaken and gasping for air. Leaping to his feet, he exclaimed, “That’s... that’s....”

He quickly performed an incantation gesture to pull all of the Heavenspan River water back from inside of the pagoda.

Thankfully, after he did that, the sealing mark ceased collapsing. However, it had apparently lost its ability to repair itself, and now remained in a dilapidated state, as if only a bit more power could destroy it.

Bai Xiaochun got his breathing under control and then stared back into the pagoda, his eyes shining with fear....

“That aura surpasses anything I’ve ever felt from any person, even from devas.... It’s very similar to the aura I sensed back in the trial by fire in the labyrinth, when I performed the twenty-onefold spirit enhancement on that leaf.... That’s an aura which surpasses devas. Don’t tell me it’s... the Demigod Realm! What exactly is sealed inside of this pagoda!?”

Chapter 581: Trump Card

Bai Xiaochun was so nervous his throat was completely dry. After a long moment passed, he carefully sent his divine sense back into the soulhoarding pagoda and inched it toward the sealed area.

From the perspective of his divine sense, the sealed area looked like it was covered with countless cracks, as though the slightest nudge would break it. Bai Xiaochun remained there hesitantly, analyzing the faint pulses of energy which occasionally emerged from the other side.

“I'm finished. Kaput. I've caused another disaster....” Depressed, he realized that it wasn't an option to just run away, and that he really needed to take a look to understand what he was dealing with. Exercising utmost caution in his control of his divine sense, he slowly sent it into one of the cracks.

He didn't send much in, only a teeny bit, but that was enough to give him a general idea of what was inside the sealed area!

Shockingly, there was a dimension inside!

It was an empty space filled with gray light, in the depths of which could be seen... an old man sitting there cross-legged in meditation!!

His face was a mass of wrinkles, and he had no hair. Shockingly, he was being tightly restrained by 999 chains formed from magical symbols.

His aura vastly surpassed that of a deva, and to Bai Xiaochun, he looked like some sort of god or deity. The mere pressure emanating off of him left Bai Xiaochun trembling!

“Is he... a demigod...?” Bai Xiaochun thought, barely able to breathe. What he was seeing via his divine sense almost defied belief. Fearful of attracting the old man's attention, he carefully began to retract his divine sense. At the same time, he decided that

he didn't really want this soulhoarding pagoda after all....

However, it was in that same moment that the old man's eyes snapped open to reveal light as bright as a shining sun. At the same time, he suddenly transformed into a crimson, three-headed python. Bai Xiaochun couldn't hold back from letting out a shriek.

"Spare me, Senior...." he wailed as he pulled his divine sense back. However, a moment later, he stopped his divine sense from moving.

"Eee?" he murmured. It was only at this point that he realized the chained old man didn't seem corporeal. Rather, he was partially translucent, almost as if he weren't complete....

Even more telling was that his gaze, despite being fiercely powerful, was somewhat blank, almost as if he weren't conscious....

"He's a discarnate soul?" Bai Xiaochun gasped and looked a bit closer. "A discarnate demigod soul!!"

After confirming what he was looking at, Bai Xiaochun carefully retracted his divine sense. Then, he sat there, heart pounding, looking at the crystalline soulhoarding pagoda he held in his trembling hands.

"If there are deva souls, then it makes sense that there would be demigod souls.... Although the soul in the pagoda is discarnate and incomplete, it still counts as a demigod soul!

"Clearly, it didn't originally belong to a cultivator, but rather, to a demigod-level beast.... It must have been some almighty entity in ages past, which was killed by some cultivator. Its discarnate soul was then sealed, either by whoever killed it, or perhaps even by itself. Whatever exactly occurred, it ended up in this soulhoarding pagoda...."

Bai Xiaochun licked his lips at the thought of how precious this treasure was that he had acquired. Unable to hold back his

curiosity, he sent his divine sense back into the pagoda to study it further. The following day at noon, he finally finished his inspection, whereupon his eyes shone with enlightenment.

“It really is an unconscious discarnate soul that was fused into the pagoda.... If the pagoda were to be destroyed, the sealed soul would also be destroyed. However, that would simultaneously result in a blast of destructive energy that would probably kill even a deva, or at least inflict serious injuries....

“This thing is essentially a disposable magical item!! The soulhoarding function is just a secondary feature, or perhaps something to disguise its true function!” Bai Xiaochun was completely shaken, and couldn’t even imagine what entity would be able to turn a discarnate demigod soul into a disposable magical item.

It almost didn’t seem real that he could so casually acquire an item that would be threatening even to a deva.

However, that wasn’t necessarily a good feeling. More like a hair-raisingly terrifying one.

“Was it really a coincidence...?” he thought, recalling everything that had led up to him being teleported out into the Wildlands.... The more he thought about everything, the more it seemed like something fishy was going on....

After a bit more thought, he put the soulhoarding pagoda away and then summoned the two soul cultivators. They quickly rushed into his immortal's cave and bowed in greeting, nervous about what was going on.

Looking at the two soul cultivators with eyes that flashed like lightning, he cut right to the chase and asked, “Where did you get this soulhoarding pagoda!?”

In order to make sure they didn’t lie to him, he cracked open his Heavenspan Dharma Eye just a bit so that he could sense any

changes in their auras and fluctuations.

The soul cultivators were trembling under the might of the pressure weighing down on them, and didn't dare to hold anything back; they went on to tell him everything about the soulhoarding pagoda in extreme detail.

As it turned out, the pagoda was an ancient legacy heirloom in the Blackmountain Tribe. Not even the two soul cultivators were really sure of its origins. After all, most savage tribes in the Wildlands would have some object left behind by a founding ancestor. Some would be incredibly valuable, while others would be relatively insignificant.

After hearing this, Bai Xiaochun called over the leaders of the savages in the tribe and asked some detailed questions. In the end, he dismissed everyone and sat there, frowning.

Clearly, the soulhoarding pagoda was nothing more than something passed down from generation to generation in the Blackmountain Tribe. It, like other similar legacy items, had been around for such a long time that no one knew much about where it came from.

He still didn't feel confident based on what he knew, though, so he went back to the leaders of the savages and asked to see the other things left behind by their ancestors.

After examining them all closely, he couldn't find any useful clues. Eventually, he was forced to abandon his search for information about the origin of the soulhoarding pagoda.

Late that night, he stood outside of his immortal's cave, studying the sky, the lands, and the mountains. Eventually, his eyes began to shine brightly.

“I hope I'm just overthinking things.... Well, in any case, this soulhoarding pagoda can at least be a powerful trump card! It's too bad I can only use it once, though!” Sighing, he put the matter

aside and stopped thinking about it.

A few days later, he chose to leave the Blackmountain Tribe. Upon his departure, all of the savages kowtowed, their eyes filled with awe and reverence.

The two soul cultivators behaved similarly.

Bai Xiaochun looked around, heart swelling at how popular he was.... Back in his home village, everyone had gathered to see him off with great fanfare. It was the same in the Spirit Stream Sect, the River-Defying Sect, and of course Sky City in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect....

Now here he was in the Wildlands, where the Blackmountain Tribe was similarly seeing him off with great fanfare.

A moment later, he swept the crowd with divine sense to make sure that none of them had any gongs or drums hidden in their clothing, after which he was convinced that they were sincerely seeing him off.

“You’re all dismissed,” he said with the wave of his hand. Then, he stuck his chin up and strode off, looking as grand as possible.

Zhou Yixing followed close behind, his eyes shining with determination. He had long since vowed to follow this Grandmaster Bai wherever he went. Of course, he continuously cast vigilant glances at the person who was walking next to him.

That person was none other than Bai Xiaochun’s other follower, Li Feng....

Li Feng could see Zhou Yixing glancing at him, and it made him just as vigilant. Considering that this Grandmaster Bai hadn’t driven him away, it indicated his approval. Therefore, Li Feng knew that at the moment, his greatest competition was none other than the damnable Zhou Yixing.

The three of them proceeded along for a bit before Zhou Yixing finally couldn’t take it anymore. Spinning, he glared at Li Feng and

shouted, “What are you following us for?! Screw the hell off already!”

Then, he turned and bowed to Bai Xiaochun at the waist, plastering onto his face a fawning expression that he had been practicing lately....

“Grandmaster,” he said, “this guy is up to no good. He's obviously following us because he has some sort of nefarious plan!”

Bai Xiaochun gave a noncommittal grunt, but nothing more. Taking out a map, he checked to see which direction Giant Ghost City was.

Li Feng looked over scornfully at Zhou Yixing as he clasped hands and bowed to Bai Xiaochun.

“Please don't misunderstand, Grandmaster. Your humble servant has no such intentions. Because of my deep reverence for you, I sincerely wish to be your follower!” Li Feng was telling the truth. He wanted so much to be Bai Xiaochun's follower that he almost had to hold back from grabbing his leg so that he wouldn't be sent away.

However, Bai Xiaochun didn't pay much attention to him. Instead, he just turned to leave.

Zhou Yixing, on the other hand, felt wonderful. Casting another glare at Li Feng, he hurried after Bai Xiaochun, his expression more fawning than ever.

Chapter 582: Bai Clan, East Outskirts

Li Feng was getting very, very nervous. After all, this Grandmaster Bai was a terrestrial necromancer, the most powerful necromancer Li Feng had ever met.

The benefits of being a follower of a person like that defied description, and Li Feng knew that if he didn't seize this opportunity, he would regret it for the rest of his life. Aware that he had to do something to make himself valuable, he quickly cried, "Wait for me, Grandmaster Bai! I can be of a lot of use. For example, when you need souls, I can go looking for them for you. I can also--"

Bai Xiaochun paused midstride. After all, the things that Li Feng was saying made sense.

As for Zhou Yixing, his heart was starting to pound with anger. Back before Bai Xiaochun had proved to be a terrestrial necromancer, he had felt that being his follower was somewhat of an insult. But now things were completely different; as far as he was concerned, Bai Xiaochun was almost like a deva.

Zhou Yixing had done a lot of boot-licking to try to get Li Feng kicked away, only to have him shamelessly offer to do the same things that he himself was responsible for.

"I can do that too!" he shouted, worried that Bai Xiaochun would agree.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, but maintained his calm. He could tell that these two viewed each other as competition, and the truth was, he was actually pleased by that. Without saying anything, he continued along.

Feeling a bit better, Zhou Yixing glared over at Li Feng and pondered how he would stomp him to death if his cultivation base were unsealed....

Li Feng couldn't just sit around and let Zhou Yixing act like this. Turning anxiously toward Bai Xiaochun, he raised his voice and said, "Grandmaster Bai, I... I know a place where you can get a huge amount of souls!!"

"So do I!" Zhou Yixing shouted immediately. "I know lots of places like that!"

"I can concoct soul medicine for you, Grandmaster!" Li Feng said. "I'm at the peak of the master necromancer rank, so I can make plenty of soul medicine to keep you safe, your majesty!!"

"I can concoct soul medicine too!" Zhou Yixing said through gritted teeth.

"You're pushing things too far, Zhou Yixing! I know a place where you can get Heavenspan River water! That stuff is incredibly valuable! Even a single drop can get you tons and tons of soul medicine! Can you match that, Zhou Yixing?!" Li Feng shouted.

"I...." If Zhou Yixing were back home, he could definitely do that, but here, there was no way....

Bai Xiaochun's eyes brightened. He had been aware that Heavenspan River water was rare in the Wildlands, and that it was valuable, but he had never really put much thought into exactly how valuable it would be....

Seeing that Zhou Yixing appeared to be at a loss for words, Li Feng started to get excited, and immediately began to list out all his selling points in the hopes that he could get Bai Xiaochun's attention.

"I know somewhere you can get a deva soul!

"I can gather all kinds of information from the area!

"I can--"

Eyes bloodshot, Zhou Yixing was just about to offer a retort when Bai Xiaochun suddenly stopped and turned around.

Then, Zhou Yixing's heart began to pound as he realized that Bai Xiaochun was staring at Li Feng.

“Did you just say that you know the location of a deva soul?”

Bursting with excitement at Bai Xiaochun's reaction, Li Feng immediately clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Grandmaster Bai, your humble servant absolutely has some information about a deva soul. According to the rumors, the giant ghost king himself has one. In addition to him, each of the three great necromancer clans within Giant Ghost City territory also has one!”

Bai Xiaochun frowned. From what he could tell, this information might as well be a complete fabrication.

Zhou Yixing was delighted to see Bai Xiaochun frowning, and decided that he had to counter attack. “Hmph. The giant ghost king is a demigod expert. How could you possibly just take a deva soul from him?! And as for what you said about the necromancer clans, that's pure speculation!”

Li Feng stared at him coldly for a moment, then chuckled. Putting a very respectful expression onto his face, he looked at Bai Xiaochun and said, “How could I possibly do anything to deceive Grandmaster Bai? Obviously, the deva soul possessed by the exalted giant ghost king is not something to go after. As for the necromancer clans, there are two who I can't say for certain have a deva soul. But one of them does. I'd stake my life on that fact!

“I was once a vassal in that very clan, and during one of their ceremonies, I had the honor of seeing that deva soul with my own eyes. It bore the semblance of sandy soil, and instantly caused incredible pressure to weigh down in the entire area!” As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard Li Feng's complete description, his eyes sparkled.

Deva souls were precious treasures in the Wildlands just like they

were in the lands of Heavenspan. They were the type of thing that few people could ever lay eyes on, and as such, few people knew what they would look like. However, Li Feng's description matched the description exactly.

“If he's telling the truth, then that means he saw an earth-type deva soul. I already have fire, wood, and water.... I'm just missing metal and earth!” Bai Xiaochun's heart was palpitating in eagerness.

“Which clan are you talking about?” Bai Xiaochun asked, his eyes sparkling.

Li Feng hesitated for a moment, but considering that his chance to be Bai Xiaochun's follower was at stake, he finally said, “The Bai Clan, on the east outskirts of the city!”

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened in surprise. The clan Li Feng had just mentioned sounded very familiar, and when he realized why, his jaw dropped....

“The east outskirts of the city...” he thought. “Three great necromancer clans... the Bai Clan.... Isn't that the clan Bai Hao came from?” Such thoughts got his heart pounding. “But a clan like that, a great clan attached to Giant Ghost City... they must have a deva patriarch!”

Bai Xiaochun licked his lips, and yet, was still hesitating. However, he absolutely had to get more deva souls, and considering that he was already masquerading as Bai Hao, it would probably make things easier.

As he hesitated, the nervous Li Feng began to give more information about the Bai Clan. As far as he was concerned, even offending the Bai Clan would be worth it if he could be Bai Xiaochun's follower.

Although he had served at the Bai Clan as a vassal, he had never noticed Bai Hao during that time. After all, Bai Hao was only in

early Foundation Establishment, and wasn't considered an outstanding member of the clan. It would only be natural for Li Feng, a master necromancer, to ignore him.

Bai Xiaochun's mind spun as he considered the matter for a long moment. Finally, he gritted his teeth and thought, "I might not succeed in the end, but I should at least give it a shot. After all, I do have my demigod pagoda.... Even if my identity gets exposed, I shouldn't be in too much danger."

At the same time, his anger toward Mistress Red-Dust smoldered. After all, if it weren't for her, he wouldn't need to get deva souls to step into the Nascent Soul stage.

"It's all the fault of that shrew Mistress Red-Dust. Once I'm awesome enough, I'll definitely teach her a lesson! And the same with Chen Hetian!" Finally, he made his decision, and formally agreed to let Li Feng be his follower. With that, the three of them flew off in the direction of the Bai Clan.

Along the way, Bai Xiaochun reviewed the bone slips he had found in Bai Hao's bag of holding, and also thought about the circumstances surrounding Bai Hao's death. Obviously, returning to the clan as Bai Hao would probably cause something of a stir.

"Very well, Bai Hao. If I get a chance, I'll figure out who's responsible for your death and get revenge!"

A few days later, they were closing in on the Bai Clan. Obviously, it wouldn't do to take Li Feng and Zhou Yixing with him, so at a certain point he stopped and arranged for them to stay in the vicinity and work on their cultivation, ready to come the instant he called for them.

He dropped his cultivation base from the great circle of Core Formation down to where Bai Hao's had been, in early Foundation Establishment, and also flew a bit slower than before, doing everything he could to make himself look like Bai Hao should. He even put a taciturn expression onto his face.

“Bai Hao was a bastard son, so the clan probably doesn’t care about him very much....” It only made sense to him that Bai Hao wouldn’t look very happy to come back to the clan after almost being killed.

This area was considered the outskirts of Giant Ghost City, and all of it was controlled by the Bai Clan. It was a huge area, populated to the point where it was essentially a huge city.

The city was violet, and almost looked like it had been imprinted into the earth itself from above. The city wall was formed by statues of dragonsnakes, which formed together to make four huge gates, the entrances to the clan!

There was clearly a spell formation at work, which emanated terrifying pressure that both filled the Bai Clan and made it stand out among the lands that surrounded it.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun entered the vicinity of the city, he felt eyes on him from all directions, although no one looked at him for too long.

As for the power of the spell formation, it caused his heart to tremble. “The Bai Clan... definitely has a deva patriarch!”

Chapter 583: Bai Hao, Bastard Son

“Am I still me...?” Bai Xiaochun thought. Even he could tell that he had changed in a fear-inspiring and dangerous way. “There’s a deva patriarch here! I... I can’t believe I’m actually attempting to steal a deva soul right out of the tiger’s mouth....”

He rubbed his eyes a bit, but no tears came away. He really was at the point where he wished he could cry, but there were no tears to shed. Inwardly, he sighed.

There was no question that a younger version of himself wouldn’t have entered this place even upon the threat of being beaten to death. Yet... here he was, taking the initiative.

“It’s all the fault of Mistress Red-Dust and Chen Hetian! They’re forcing me to do this.... Dammit, when I get angry, I frighten even myself!” No matter how he sighed, though, there were no other options available. Settling his thoughts, he tried to make himself look even more taciturn as he headed into the city.

“The Bai Clan is one of the three great necromancer clans attached to Giant Ghost City. Of course they have a protective spell formation.... It’s hard to say whether or not the spell formation will check whether people have the blood of the clan in their veins. And it’s also hard to say whether or not my mask will be able to deceive it if it does.... I’m guessing it can.” Bai Xiaochun proceeded forward nervously, prepared to flee in an instant if necessary.

More and more gazes seemed to pass over him, until he was roughly 300 meters away from the city entrance. At that point, the extremely lifelike dragonsnake statues opened their eyes and looked in his direction!

Their sinister gazes were coupled with a terrifying aura that left Bai Xiaochun certain that if they decided he wasn’t a member of the Bai Clan, and tried to enter uninvited, that he would be struck with lightning-like destructive power.

Bai Xiaochun stood there thoughtfully for a few breaths' worth of time, then walked forward, entering the perimeter of the clan spell formation. Almost immediately, Bai Hao's identity medallion in his bag of holding began to glow with a soft light. At the same time, his mask unleashed imperceptible fluctuations that completely fooled the spell formation, ensuring that it believed him to be Bai Hao, and not Bai Xiaochun!

As soon as he entered the perimeter of the spell formation, the gazes which had been resting on him vanished, and the eyes of the statues grew dark. Then, a creaking sound could be heard as the huge main gate slowly opened.

A middle-aged man walked out who was in the great circle of Qi Condensation. He had his hands tucked into the opposite sleeves of his robe, and was extremely gaunt. Eyes anything but kind, he frowned as he looked Bai Xiaochun up and down.

Bai Xiaochun was finally relaxing a bit now that he had passed the first step of entering the Bai Clan. Steeling himself, he headed toward the main gate.

However, the middle-aged man quickly stepped in front of him, scorn written on his face as he coolly said, "Well, you're back, Young Master Bai Hao. Did you forget the madam's orders? Bastard sons are only allowed to enter through the side door! I can't believe you triggered the clan spell formation and even forced the dragonsnake gate open! You've obviously forgotten your place! This gate is not for the likes of you to enter."

Bai Xiaochun looked over at the man with a slight frown. He had been aware that Bai Hao wasn't well-liked in the clan, but would never have guessed that even a lowly gatekeeper would treat him with such scorn. That indicated there was more to Bai Hao's low standing in the clan than Bai Xiaochun understood.

"This is blatant humiliation," he thought.

When the sharpness of Bai Xiaochun's gaze stabbed into the

gatekeeper's eyes, his mind trembled. It felt as if an intense coldness had suddenly gripped his mind and dragged him into the dead of winter. Shocked, he didn't dare to keep looking into Bai Xiaochun's eyes, and even subconsciously stepped out of the way to make room.

Bai Xiaochun walked past, his face expressionless. It was only after he entered the gate and walked off that the gatekeeper recovered.

"How could Bai Hao's gaze be so intense?" he muttered. "It wasn't like that before!"

After entering the clan itself, Bai Xiaochun began to simply stroll around. The place was large, but it was a clan, so there weren't things like stores and shops. There were only mansions belonging to the various bloodlines of the clan. Everything was luxuriously decorated, complete with ornamental rocks and trees. Members of the clan walked about here and there, and some flew about overhead. Overall, it was a bustling place.

Before he could get very far, a young woman dressed like a servant appeared up ahead, walking toward him as she talked with a friend. When she saw Bai Xiaochun, her eyes flashed with scorn, and she snorted coldly.

"Is anyone even awake at the Department of Visitor Affairs? Apparently, they'll let any cretin through the gates!" With that, she walked past.

Bai Xiaochun was just about to glare back at her angrily, but restrained himself.

"Just deal with it," he thought. "After all, I'm not really Bai Hao." Taking a deep breath, he looked over his shoulder at the servant girl and then continued on his way. As he explored the city, he encountered quite a few servants, all of whom seemed surprised to see him. However, each one had looks of scorn and disdain in their eyes as well.

Many of their looks seemed too exaggerated to be sincere, as if they were merely putting on a show. Others didn't seem intentional at all, but rather, instinctive reactions, as if they truly found him disgusting, or even dirty.

Bai Xiaochun had a hard time not losing his temper, but he continued to remind himself of his purpose in coming here.

“Just deal with it!” he thought, gritting his teeth. After looking around for a while, he still had no idea where Bai Hao lived, and obviously, he couldn't just ask people. The more time passed, the more he became aware of what Bai Hao's life must have been like. Although he had been prepared to be treated poorly, he had never imagined it would be this bad.

“What exactly is the reason for it all...?” he thought. At one point as he was walking along, an old man walked out of a temple up ahead. His clothing seemed of better quality than everyone else Bai Xiaochun had seen so far, and he had a Foundation Establishment cultivation base. Clearly, he was no clan member, but rather, someone who had been hired to serve as a valet.

As he walked out, hands clasped behind his back, he prepared to leave, when suddenly he spotted Bai Xiaochun. Then, his eyes widened with surprise before turning extremely grim.

“Bai Hao! Have you forgotten your place!? This isn't a place you can just come visit anytime you want! What gall you have! How dare you disregard clan rules!” From the way the old man's eyes flashed, and from the impoliteness of his tone, it almost seemed like he was scolding a servant.

Up til this point, Bai Xiaochun had simply endured all the dirty looks people had given him. But the fact that this old man actually went so far as to rebuke him caused Bai Xiaochun's anger to rise. However, before he could do anything, the voice of a young woman rang out.

“Valet Chen, this is the Bai Clan, and no matter what your

position, you are no member of our clan! What gives a servant like you the right to act so disrespectfully!?” At this point, a beautiful young woman appeared, hovering in midair. She had an icy expression and a profound cultivation base in the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

Bai Xiaochun looked up at her and simultaneously suppressed his rising anger.

The old man’s face fell, and his eyes even flickered with a bit of fear. Ducking his head, he clasped hands respectfully toward the young woman.

“Greetings, Fifth Young Lady. That was just a slip of the tongue by an old servant. However, the clan chief really did establish a rule that bastards are not allowed into the inner residence district unless summoned....”

The young woman glanced at Bai Xiaochun, sighed, and then turned her attention back to the old man. “It doesn’t matter what the circumstances are. You may not be so disrespectful to a member of the clan.”

With that, she shook her head and flew off into the distance.

“Of course, of course,” the old man said. However, after she was gone, he looked back at Bai Xiaochun with disgust.

“You’ll escape punishment today because the fifth young lady showed up. Get the hell back to the north district. If I see you around here again, I’ll report you to the clan chief!” With a cold snort, he flicked his sleeve and walked off.

Bai Xiaochun felt like he was about to explode. From the moment he had entered the Bai Clan, he had been forced to endure and endure. If things kept going on this way, he wasn't sure if he could keep up the act of being Bai Hao.

“How did Bai Hao even deal with all this? What would be the point of staying around in a clan like this?! Even if he wasn't well-

liked, it shouldn't be this extreme. There must be more to the story!

“Well, whatever. I'm not Bai Hao, so I guess I'll just have to deal with it until I get that deva soul.” Gritting his teeth and doing his best to suppress his anger, he turned and headed north. It was at that point that he noticed a seven-story pagoda in the middle of a sprawling group of mansions.

Chapter 584: A Clue!

The seven-story pagoda wasn't very far away, making it easy to see how exquisite it was, glowing like a treasure that illuminated everything around it. That and the restrictive spells that surrounded it indicated that it was a very important place to the Bai Clan.

As Bai Xiaochun made his way toward the north district, a middle-aged woman stood on a fifth story balcony of the pagoda, her expression icily sinister as she stared down at him.

She wore expensive clothing woven from spirit thread and embroidered with nine phoenixes, which radiated a soft warmth that indicated it had magical properties designed to enhance a person's good looks.

Such clothing was extremely extravagant in the Wildlands. Even in the Heavenspan River regions, it would be the type of clothing that only an upper-class woman would wear. Because of it, this woman would be able to maintain her looks even if she were much older than she was now. She was curvaceous, with the fairest of fair skin, and although she couldn't be considered spectacularly beautiful, there was something very enticing about her. Unlike many young beauties, she was not the type who would ever yield to an opponent, and radiated an air of maturity and grace.

As she stared at Bai Xiaochun walking toward the north district, she gritted her teeth with the most malicious venom imaginable. A moment later, a man appeared behind her, wearing black clothing and surrounded by a murderous aura. His eyes glowed red, and overall, he looked like an unsheathed sword waiting to strike. As soon as he appeared behind the woman, he clasped hands and bowed respectfully.

“Greetings, Madam Cai.”

Madam Cai didn't look back at the man. Keeping her eyes fixed

on Bai Xiaochun, she growled, “Didn’t you say that the bitch’s son, Bai Hao, was dead?!”

“Yes,” the man replied in an icy, confident voice. “I hit the kid with my Exterminating Soulbrand. His heart and blood vessels were irreparably damaged. Although I teleported him away and wasn’t able to personally witness him become a corpse, I can guarantee that he was killed, beyond the shadow of a doubt!”

“Killed beyond the shadow of a doubt? What a wonderful way to put it. Well, take a look over there. Who’s that?!” Erupting in rage-filled laughter, Madam Cai pointed at Bai Xiaochun.

The man’s eyes widened as he took a few steps forward, following the line of Madam Cai’s finger until he was looking at Bai Xiaochun.

“Impossible!” he said incredulously.

“Whether that’s really him or not.... kill him immediately!!” With that, Madam Cai turned to leave.

The man hesitated for a moment. Although he knew that Madam Cai didn’t like Bai Hao, and had been involved in a power struggle with him, he didn’t understand why she wanted him dead so urgently. “Madam Cai, killing him won’t be hard, but we’re in the Bai Clan. If I kill him right now, it could be... problematic.”

“That bitch’s son isn’t even a person!” she shrieked. “He’s inhuman! Inhuman!! I don’t care how you do it, just kill him as quickly as possible!! He must not be allowed to grow any further!!” A moment later, she seemed to realize she had lost control. Taking a deep breath, she recovered her composure and walked away without another word.

The black-garbed man stood there silently, unsure of exactly what Madam Cai meant when she said inhuman. However, the fact that his target had survived being hit with his Exterminating Soulbrand was actually a bit intriguing.

“I guess this Bai Hao really does have some skill after all,” he mused. “I arranged the entire matter, and even delivered the fatal blow myself. And yet somehow, he didn’t end up dying! And then he dared to come back! Well, you might have escaped by the skin of your teeth last time, but let’s see if you can pull off the same thing again!”

Chuckling coldly, the man turned to leave. At the same time, he began to pulse with the aura of Core Formation!

Of course, Bai Xiaochun had no way of knowing the details of what had just been said in the pagoda. Because of the incredible restrictive spells which protected it, he wouldn’t be able to hear anything unless he was also inside of it. Furthermore, if he attempted to use divine sense to do so, the restrictive spells would detect it and react.

However, despite not being able to hear the conversation between the black-garbed man and the middle-aged women, he had seen them clearly, and had detected the ill will and killing intent with which they looked at him.

“Well isn’t this interesting....” he murmured to himself. Smiling coldly, he continued on toward the north district. Soon, he came to realize that the north district was far from the city center, and definitely not luxurious. Simple houses filled the entire area, the majority of them occupied by servants who had been attached to the Bai Clan for generations. Most of the people present were old, sick, and generally unhealthy-looking.

The houses seemed scattered about haphazardly, making the entire place seem vastly different from the east district. As Bai Xiaochun walked along, he realized that fewer people were looking at him with scorn and disgust. Considering that this was a poor and simple part of the clan, Bai Xiaochun was further struck by what kind of life Bai Hao must have lived.

There were even some people who seemed happy to see him, and

stepped forward to greet him with sincere pleasure. This place was definitely very different from the east district.

“Big Bro Hao....”

“Young Master Hao!!”

Bai Hao was obviously welcome here. Furthermore, he didn't even need to look for his residence. A group of children surrounded him and began to chat happily as they led him to a ramshackle house.

It was little more than a hut that seemed like it might collapse into rubble at any moment. Thankfully, the entire Bai Clan was protected by a spell formation that prevented the elements from affecting the buildings in the clan, otherwise his hut would have long since been washed away by the rain.

After entering the hut, he looked around and sighed.

The only thing inside was a bed. There wasn't even a chair present. It seemed almost impossible to believe that an early Foundation Establishment cultivator would live in a place like this. Whether it was in the Wildlands or in the Heavenspan River region, Foundation Establishment cultivators would always be treated very well no matter where they went.

“How could Bai Hao end up living like this in his own clan...?” Although Bai Xiaochun already knew a bit about Bai Hao, he simply couldn't understand the situation. Even though he had been expecting something less than ideal, nothing could have prepared him for this.

“Either Bai Hao was willing to live like this... or didn't dare to try to change his situation.... In that case, who is it that wants him dead? That man and woman from just now?” Considering the clothing the woman had been wearing, it was obvious that she occupied a very high position in the clan.

However, no amount of pondering brought any insight or clues.

He just didn't have enough information. In the end, he shook his head. "I wish I could help you, Bai Hao. But you need to give me something to work with. Help me understand what was going on with you!"

Sighing, he sat down cross-legged on the dilapidated bed. However, instead of meditating, he sent his divine sense out into the area.

He also performed some incantation gestures and prepared to place some restrictive spells in the area that no one but him would notice. This was a practice he had grown accustomed to over the years. Whenever he was in a strange place, the most important thing to do at first was make sure he was safe.

However, almost as soon as he sent his divine sense out, a serious expression appeared in his eyes, and his gaze shifted to an area in the corner of the room. Stepping off the couch, he walked over and squatted down to have a closer look.

Although this corner of the room looked ordinary in every way, when his divine sense touched it, he could sense the lingering fluctuations of some magical technique.

They were faint, as though they had been fading away for months now, and were just about to disappear for good. Were it not for the fact that Bai Xiaochun was currently fused with his three clones, quadrupling his divine sense's sensitivity, then he would never have noticed the traces. Although his current divine sense did not have all the powers that Nascent Soul divine sense did, it was equally acute as that of a Nascent Soul expert.

After examining the location further, Bai Xiaochun's eyes lit up with surprise.

"Someone used some kind of magic here.... It wasn't very long ago, months at most.... From the look of things, another type of magic was used later to wipe the ground clean. Erase some evidence of something perhaps...?" Curiosity growing, Bai

Xiaochun opened his Heavenspan Dharma eye just a crack, and sent violet light spilling out into the confines of the hut.

After looking at the ground using this method, Bai Xiaochun realized that what had been wiped away with magic was most likely some lines of hand-written text....

“Interesting,” he murmured. Suddenly, several afterimages appeared, which formed into his three clones. Each clone opened his third eye a crack, causing three more beams of violet light to converge on the same place.

Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun knew what he was doing, and prevented any of the violet light from leaving the hut, ensuring that no one on the outside would be able to detect what he was doing. Within moments, the line of text which had been wiped away was restored enough that Bai Xiaochun could read it.

Despite the level of his cultivation base and the extent of his mental control, the mere sight of the text caused him to let out a yelp of surprise!

“That’s.... That’s....”

Chapter 585: Peerless Talent!

What is fire...? According to my studies, mundane fire is not a physical substance like water. Instead, it is a reflection of something that can't be seen with either the naked eye or divine sense!

Fire is similar to an aura... a mixture of something illusory and something miraculous!

The only reason you can see it is because of the glow of light that results from its existence!

Multi-colored flame is the same.... In that case, a new question arises. What are souls? And why do souls produce multi-colored flame...?

By this point Bai Xiaochun was panting, and his eyes were as wide as saucers as he stared at the writing. Although only a portion of it was still visible, even the little bit he could read left him completely reeling. At the same time, the feeling of enlightenment left him gasping.

“This... this....” He had never imagined that someone would study fire in this way, research it in such detail. Based on how the words were written, it seemed that the person who had left them behind had just been casually writing down their thoughts.

Most importantly, in addition to the waves of shock which pounded at Bai Xiaochun's heart and mind as he looked at the words, they opened a new door to him. By combining what he was reading with his current understanding of how to conjure flame, he suddenly felt as if he were gaining significant enlightenment.

“That's right! This is exactly what I've experienced when conjuring my own flame. Fire... is not a physical substance like water, but rather, a reflection of something else. Or perhaps... a symbol! In many senses, it is illusory, and not material like water

is!!” Bai Xiaochun did his best to keep his calm, but it was almost impossible. From what he could tell, the person who had left these words behind was extraordinary, and had almost unparalleled enlightenment regarding the nature of flame. In that regard, this person was almost like a deva!

Furthermore, considering that he could already conjure eleven-colored flame, this writing left him in even more profound anticipation of conjuring twelve-colored flame! Based on this new information, and his own previous research and analysis, he was confident that he could succeed!!

Never could Bai Xiaochun have imagined that he would stumble across such good fortune here. Drawing upon his cultivation base, he poured more power into his Heavenspan Dharma Eye and continued reading.

As he did, he continued to reel with shock. And that was especially true when he reached the end of the text and realized that it contained speculations about the formula for fifteen-colored flame. After looking over much of that information, Bai Xiaochun was completely shaken.

“How is this possible?!?!” Dumbfounded, he stared at the final lines of writing.

Fire can be incredibly hot, and has mystical power. When that heat and that power combine, they form an outer flame, an inner flame, and a flame heart....

My special augury method has not yet produced the formula for fifteen-colored flame. However, making the final calculations shouldn't be difficult. After that... sixteen-colored flame and seventeen-colored flame shouldn't be much of a challenge. In fact, I'm even confident that my augury can produce the formula for twenty-colored flame!

Unfortunately... my cultivation base is too low. Even if I produced the formula, it wouldn't do me any good. I wouldn't be

able to conjure the flame.... However, I still want to make the formula. I'll show it to father to finally prove to him that I'm not useless. I am good for something! I'm not interested in fighting with anyone else in the clan for position. I just want father... to notice me....

Within those final words, Bai Xiaochun could sense both wild confidence and profound self-deprecation.

“I can't believe he made his own augury method to produce multi-colored flame formulas....” Sighing, he rose to his feet and used his Heavenspan Dharma Eye to search the entire hut. After searching the entire place several times, his anxiety began to mount.

It was obvious that at some point in the past, the entire floor had been covered with notes about flame conjuring. However, at some point, most of the notes had been wiped away by some unknown method!

Clearly, they had been erased by a person!

“The formula for fifteen-colored flame....” Bai Xiaochun thought. There was no way for him to remain unmoved by this development. Furthermore, if Bai Hao did not write the notes, then how did they end up in his residence?!

If Bai Hao wrote them.... then considering the level of his cultivation base, he had obviously achieved astonishing enlightenment of flame conjuring. In fact, his abilities far surpassed Bai Xiaochun's.

“Wait a second, that can't be right. If Bai Hao was really that good, he could just reveal his skills and achieve a monumental rise in the Bai Clan. Why would he allow himself to be treated the way he was?” Bai Xiaochun scratched his head in thought for a bit, but couldn't come up with any explanations.

He stood up and began to pace back and forth in the room, and

after a long moment passed, his eyes suddenly began to shine brightly.

“Whether or not Bai Hao wrote these notes doesn't matter. What's important is that the complete set of notes contains the formula for fifteen-colored flame. In that case... whoever erased the notes is Bai Hao's killer, or at least, is connected to the killer!

“Therefore, the killer is likely the one who possesses the complete set of notes....

“If I want to get those notes, I probably don't have to do anything. The killer or killers will come looking for me to cause trouble. After all, my return has most likely sparked their killing intent. In fact, if I make a stir in the Bai Clan, it will probably make them accelerate their plans....

“In turn, that would give me more clues to follow to get those notes!” Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered as he made his decision. Looking down at the remnants of the notes on the floor, he sighed.

“Bai Hao really had things rough. I feel bad for him....” He shook his head. By this point, he was fairly certain that Bai Hao had been the one to write all of the notes.

“However, I still need some confirmation.” Pulling out a jade slip, he sent a message to Li Feng and asked him to secretly start making inquiries about Bai Hao.

Of course, Li Feng didn't know that Bai Xiaochun was impersonating Bai Hao, and therefore, excitedly set about following orders. As far as he was concerned, this was a good opportunity to show off. Intentionally keeping Zhou Yixing in the dark, he started calling on his own network of friends and informants to try to get information.

A few days later, he told Bai Xiaochun all of the information he had been able to dig up on Bai Hao. When Bai Xiaochun saw it, his eyes flashed with anger.

Based on the information he had gleaned from Bai Hao's bone slips, as well as Bai Xiaochun's experiences in the clan already, he now had a good idea of what type of person Bai Hao had been.

His mother had been a servant girl with no position in the clan, whereas his father was the current clan chief. In a particularly violent and humiliating incident in which his mother had no control over her own body, Bai Hao was conceived, and became a bastard son of the Bai Clan.

He had a very low position from the moment he was born. Furthermore, it wasn't long after he came into the world that his mother was killed. If Bai Hao had possessed sufficient latent talent, things might have turned out differently for him. However, he wasn't talented when it came to cultivation, and no matter how hard he worked, was never able to excel.

His father's first wife was none other than Madam Cai, who occupied a very high position in the clan. In fact, she came from the Cai Clan, another of the three great clans that were attached to Giant Ghost City.

There was another factor at play. Madam Cai's son was Bai Hao's older brother, Bai Qi. He was insufferably proud, and was famous throughout all of Giant Ghost City. He was already in the great circle of Core Formation, and had attracted the attention of the Bai Clan patriarch, who viewed him as the qilin son of the clan, the type which only came along once every few hundred years. In fact, Bai Qi was to represent the Bai Clan in their attempt to secure the legacy of the hell-emperor.

Family like that made Bai Hao's life even more bitter than it might have been. His father treated him with cold aloofness that made it seem as if they weren't related, and apparently didn't even care whether Bai Hao lived or died.

His father's first wife hated him, and his older brother was completely condescending, treating Bai Hao as if he were a servant.

Eventually, Bai Hao came to be viewed as the lowest of the low within the clan.

Everyone was afraid of getting on Madam Cai and Bai Qi's bad side, and therefore, not even the servants were willing to have much dealings with Bai Hao. Furthermore, from the time he was in Qi Condensation, his progress had always been indescribably slow.

Thankfully, Bai Hao was the type of person who could deal with all of that. He put on a front of looking weak and cowardly, and always just bowed his head and shivered when people berated him. Eventually, people stopped paying much attention to him. Few people even remembered that he had a hut of his own in the north district.

It had only been recently that he finally broke through into the Foundation Establishment stage. Shortly afterward, he went missing....

By the time Bai Xiaochun finished reading all the information in the jade slip Li Feng had sent to him, his anger was burning hot. He almost couldn't reconcile the information within the slip with the young man he had seen out in the jungle.

“Who cares if he looked weak and cowardly? If I were in his position, that's what I would have done to stay alive.... If he had shown any signs of being extraordinary, he would have been a threat, and would definitely have been killed!

“In fact, it was right after he made a cultivation base breakthrough that he died.... And yet, merely having a Foundation Establishment cultivation base doesn't seem like enough to make him a threat to anyone....” Then he looked down at the ground, and suddenly, came to a realization.

Chapter 586: I Want Him Dead!

“Bai Hao must have accidentally revealed his shocking talents in flame conjuring to someone, and incited jealousy. That's what got him killed!

“I would bet money that the person responsible for his death is that Madam Cai.... However, there's still something I can't help but wonder about. Would Bai Hao's father have treated him that way if he knew about his spectacular talents? After all, any necromancer clan would view a genius like that as a true qilin son!

“Bai Hao.... Did you tell your father about how talented you were? If not, then I guess it's a moot point. However, based on what's left of your notes, it seems you really looked forward to telling your father the truth. In fact, you seemed absolutely set on giving him the formula for fifteen-colored flame....

“If you did tell your father, and then got killed anyway, then this whole thing is a lot more complicated....” Bai Xiaochun wasn't inclined to contemplate the matter, and yet was unable to do anything except that. As he pondered the situation, a feeling of profound sadness rose up in his heart. He couldn't help but feel sorry for Bai Hao, who had simply dreamed of being noticed by his own father. Bai Xiaochun sighed.

“Bai Hao, I once promised you that if fate would have it, I would get revenge for you.... Well, at the moment, I really need your flame conjuring techniques, and I'm not the type of person who takes advantage of others. You might have perished already, and left for the underworld, but I still want to take you as my apprentice!

“I've never had any apprentices before, so you'll be my first. I guess it's just karma. The two of us are separated by life and death, but I'm still going to be your Master!” On the one hand, Bai Xiaochun felt sad about everything that had happened to Bai Hao.

On the other hand, he was using Bai Hao's identity and was trying to track down his research.

“Starting now, you're my apprentice, and I'm going to find out exactly who it was that killed you!” As Bai Xiaochun contemplated this new state of affairs, his eyes flashed with anger, and his opinion of the Bai Clan fell even further than before.

Sticking his chin up, he coldly murmured, “The higher my profile, the sooner they'll try to kill me!”

Although he knew that he would be putting himself in danger, considering that he was now Bai Hao's master, he had no other choice. Besides, he still had his crystalline soulhoarding pagoda to fall back on.

“What a headache. I'm not the type of person who likes to show off, and yet here I am, being forced to do just that.” Shaking his head, he sighed, left his hut, and began to make certain inquiries.

He soon learned about several places in the Bai Clan where clan members would go to participate in trials by fire. All clans had places like that. As for the Bai Clan, they had special trials for spirit enhancement, flame conjuring, and soul medicine concocting.

There were rewards depending on the ranking one achieved, but Bai Xiaochun didn't really pay much attention to that. Considering all the sects he had been part of in his life, he was familiar with such arrangements.

“Well,” he thought with the shake of his head, “I guess I'll just have to go look at the rankings.” It was actually somewhat exhilarating to be in the great circle of the Gold Core stage and be preparing to go mess with a bunch of Foundation Establishment children. Filled with excitement, he headed toward the spirit enhancement trial.

Before long, he was standing in front of a stone stele that listed the Bai Clan's spirit enhancement rankings. Surrounding the stone

stele were a handful of spirit enhancement workshops. Compared to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect Superstars, this ranking list was rather short. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't care about that. There were actually quite a few people gathered in the area, either to challenge the trials, or to watch.

“I'm not here to bully anybody,” he thought to himself. “I'm just here to draw out the killer!” Clearing his throat, he looked around once more and then selected a spirit enhancement workshop.

Considering that Bai Xiaochun was competing against Foundation Establishment cultivators, there was little question about what would happen. The stone stele quickly began to glow, and then Bai Hao's name appeared on the list. At first, it wasn't even in the top 100, but it began to rise quickly. Soon it was in the top 30, and then it leaped... all the way into 1st place!!

It happened so quickly that few people even noticed what had occurred. But then, the light from the stone stele grew increasingly bright, and people began to gasp and look over.

“Bai Hao... took 1st place?! A sevenfold spirit enhancement!?!?”

“Heavens! That... that speed is incredible!!”

“This Bai Hao... he's not that bastard son, is he? How could he have become so powerful so quickly?!?!”

“How is this possible!?!? Even when Bai Qi was in Foundation Establishment, the most he could do was a sixfold spirit enhancement. I can't believe that Bai Hao can do a sevenfold enhancement!!”

As the crowd buzzed with conversation, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and walked out of the spirit enhancement workshop. Seeing all the shocked glances being sent in his direction felt quite wonderful.

“Hmmmphh. I'm not doing this for myself. I'm here so my apprentice can feel what it's like to be the subject of worldwide

adoration.” Bai Xiaochun hadn’t become so underhanded that he didn’t feel embarrassed about competing with Foundation Establishment cultivators when he was in the great circle of the Gold Core stage.

Even still, he couldn’t help but stick his chin up, wave his sleeve, and head toward the next trial.

At the trial for soul medicine, there were even more people than at the trial for spirit enhancement. After all, spirit enhancement was a very difficult thing. Comparatively speaking, concocting soul medicine was actually much easier. And since the Bai Clan was a necromancer clan, they were obviously talented in this regard.

The highest name on the ranking list had used the time it takes an incense stick to burn to concoct 27 portions of low-grade soul medicine. After seeing that, Bai Xiaochun’s spirit soared, and he quickly selected a soul medicine workshop.

Before long, the same thing which had happened moments before happened again. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, Bai Hao’s name appeared in 1st place in the soul medicine rankings!

Furthermore, he had actually concocted 50 portions of low-grade soul medicine!!

That was shocking, to say the least. For someone in the Foundation Establishment stage to do something like that was completely eye-catching, and as soon as the other members of the clan saw it, cries of disbelief rang out.

“1st place... 50 portions!!”

“That’s impossible! Bai Hao... I know him! He’s a nobody. How could he have reached 1st place!?”

“Like the saying goes, a bird might not sing for years, but when it does, its song will shock everyone!!”

Bai Xiaochun emerged to hear such conversation, and

immediately felt quite pleased.

“Hao’er,” he murmured, “if your spirit is out there watching, there’s no need to offer any thanks to Master. Don’t worry, I’ll take care of everything.” Murmuring to himself, Bai Xiaochun strutted off to the flame conjuring trial.

News about Bai Hao’s name getting onto the spirit enhancement rankings quickly began to spread through the clan. Before long, it was the talk of the clan, and of course, the news soon reached Madam Cai.

The area beneath the pagoda in the east district was filled with luxurious mansions. Inside one of them, Madam Cai smashed a flower vase onto the ground, her eyes blazing with killing intent. “Kill him. We must kill him!! He mustn’t be allowed to rise to prominence!!”

Standing in front of her was a young man with a grim expression on his face. He wore clothing just as luxurious as hers, and was extremely handsome. This was none other than that Bai Hao’s older brother, Bai Qi. Looking down at the shattered remnants of the flower vase, and then back up at his mother with her raging killing intent, he said, “Mother, please, calm down. He’s nothing more than a bastard. There’s no need to worry so much about him.”

Madam Cai looked up at her son and angrily said, “Maybe other people don’t realize the truth, but surely you do? Can’t you see how skilled he is in flame conjuring? If your father finds out about his talents, it would be a big threat to you. The boy has to die!”

Even as Madam Cai ground her teeth in frustration, Bai Qi chuckled. “You’re overthinking things, mother. The last time you sent people to kill him, the plan wasn’t executed perfectly. As the clan chief, father obviously knew about it, and yet, did he say anything afterward? Did he do anything to punish you?”

In response to his words, Madam Cai’s eyes widened.

“Mother, you really don’t need to get all worked up over a small thing like this. If Bai Hao thinks he can make a break for fame, then I’ll just go personally to cut him down a notch or two.” Shaking his head, Bai Qi casually turned and walked away.

After he left, Madam Cai thought about the matter more, and still did not feel at ease. Taking a deep breath, she pulled out a jade slip to transmit a message.

“I want him dead tonight!”

Outside the residence, Bai Qi’s lips twisted up into a cold grin as he took out a bone slip, which contained a message regarding Bai Hao’s current position. After discovering that he had gone to the flame conjuring trial, Bai Qi headed in the same direction, an expression of scorn on his face.

“Pretty soon, you’re going to find out that no matter how hard you work, and no matter what you do, a single slap of my palm can reduce you to nothing!”

Chapter 587: How Very Disappointing Of You

Bai Xiaochun was in a wonderful mood as he sped toward the flame conjuring trial. Quite a few clan members were following along behind him, extremely curious to see what would happen next.

“He’s going toward the flame conjuring trial!”

“He’s already taken 1st place in the Foundation Establishment trials for spirit enhancement and soul medicine. If he does the same with flame conjuring, then Bai Hao... will definitely rise to prominence with incredible speed!”

“Something seems strange about all this, though. Bai Hao always had a low position, and seemed cowardly and weak. Why is he suddenly showing off like this? Furthermore, it’s hard to believe he has such heaven-defying talent in spirit enhancement!”

As the discussions raged, Bai Xiaochun hurried along to the trial for flame conjuring. Upon arriving, he found a stone stele that was clearly much larger than the other stone steles in the other locations.

Three concentric rings of conjuring stations could be seen at the bottom of the stone stele. Furthermore, quite a crowd was present, including many servants. Obviously, people had already heard about Bai Hao’s performances earlier, and had come to watch.

As soon as he appeared, more conversations rose up.

“He’s here! Bai Hao is here!”

“In one day, he’s already taken 1st place in the trials for spirit enhancement and soul medicine. I’m going to bet that he’ll also acquire a shocking rank in the flame conjuring rankings!”

“Nice job, Bai Hao.... Nobody ever noticed you before, but that

was because you were keeping your true potential hidden!”

Bai Xiaochun strode forward through the crowd, which parted to make way for him. Inside, he was sighing repeatedly.

“Bai Hao, my apprentice, all of this praise belongs to you. With your talent in flame concocting, I'm sure you would do even better than me.” The more Bai Xiaochun thought about how tragically Bai Hao had died, the more he felt like it was a huge pity.

“The Bai Clan owes you, and as your Master, I'm going to make sure you get what's yours!

“In addition to flushing out your killer, I have another goal. I want to see the reaction of both your father and the clan as a whole when you prove how talented you are!” Eyes sparkling, he headed toward one of the conjuring workstations and then closed himself inside. Outside, the audience looked on in anticipation.

The matter had even drawn the attention of some of the clan elders, many of whom left their mansions to come see what was going on for themselves.

As of this moment, the entire Bai Clan was being shaken by Bai Xiaochun's shocking performance.

Not too long after he entered the conjuring workstation, eight beams of light appeared off in the distance, in the lead position of which was an eye-catching young man in the great circle of Core Formation.

The group which accompanied him were all chosen of the Bai Clan who followed him blindly wherever he went. The arrival of the group caused another commotion in the crowd.

“Bai Qi!!”

“A chosen from the direct bloodline, officially proclaimed as the qilin son of the Bai Clan... Bai Qi!!”

“Interesting. He and Bai Hao actually have the same father, but

different mothers.” The clan members and servants in the area looked on with glittering eyes, and many of them made way for the new arrivals. Some of the clan members gazed upon Bai Qi with zealous passion; to them, he was the number one chosen of his generation, the crown prince of the clan!

Such clan members stepped forward and offered formal greetings. However, there were others in the crowd who gave little more than hostile snorts.

Those people were from other, auxiliary bloodlines. It was only natural for there to be tension between different bloodlines in a clan, especially when it came to competition between the chosen members.

Bai Qi nodded in response to the clan members who were offering formal greetings, then glanced around at the hundreds of people and said, “Quite a little crowd we have here. I heard something’s going on. What could it be?”

Despite the broad smile on his face, he was actually feeling very displeased.

Among the clan members who clearly revered Bai Qi was a young man who stepped forward and respectfully said, “Crown Prince, everybody’s here because Bai Hao took 1st place in the other two trials by fire. Now that he’s come to the trial for flame conjuring, we’re all here to see what happens.”

“Oh? Bai Hao, huh? Seems my worthless little brother has attracted quite a bit of attention. Alright, well as his older brother I guess I might as well wait around to congratulate him.” As soon as these words left his mouth, profound gleams could be seen in the eyes of many others in the area.

Obviously, everyone was well aware of the relationship between Bai Qi and Bai Hao

It was in that moment that Bai Hao’s name suddenly lit up on the

stone stele, in 1st place, with the words seven-colored flame next to it!

Bai Xiaochun had been careful to limit his success to seven-colored flame; after all, Bai Hao was supposed to be a Foundation Establishment cultivator, and although he was trying to make a scene, he didn't want to make things too unrealistic, otherwise it could lead to trouble.

Seven-colored flame was where he chose to limit things, the standard for master necromancers. Master necromancers were rare among Foundation Establishment cultivators, and would cause a stir wherever they appeared, even in Giant Ghost City.

“Seven-colored flame!!”

“This Bai Hao... he's... he's actually a master necromancer!!”

“Heavens, how is that possible? Even a lot of the clan elders in the Core Formation stage aren't master necromancers....”

People in the crowd were starting to go crazy, both direct bloodline descendants and people from the auxiliary bloodlines. As for the clan elders who had come to observe, they were visibly moved.

Bai Qi's face was expressionless, and yet, inside, he was feeling extremely displeased. It was even possible to see a grim glint in his eyes.

As the crowd clamored, Bai Xiaochun emerged from the conjuring workstation, and was very pleased by what he heard. As of this point, he was fairly certain that he had achieved his goal of establishing a high profile. Now that he had taken 1st place in all of the trials by fire, it was highly likely that whoever was responsible for Bai Hao's death would accelerate their plans. Furthermore, he would soon see what the clan chief felt about the whole thing.

In almost the exact same instant that he stepped out into the open, numerous gazes fell upon him. There were gazes of jealousy,

confusion, shock, and various other emotions.

As for Bai Qi, his eyes were cold and filled with disgust.

Bai Xiaochun quickly noticed Bai Qi, and although it was his first time seeing Bai Hao's older brother, based on his cultivation base and expression, it was easy to identify him.

“So that's Bai Qi, huh...?” he thought, standing there staring at him with narrowed eyes.

Everyone could see what was happening, and soon, the crowd quieted down. Many of the people from the auxiliary bloodlines looked over, curious about what exactly would happen between the two brothers.

Bai Qi looked over and coolly said, “Feeling proud of yourself?”

His cultivation base was in the great circle of Core Formation, which caused significant pressure to weigh down on the crowd as his voice echoed out with thunderous might. Quite a few people even backed up a bit.

“Taking 1st place in all three trials is quite an accomplishment,” he continued, “I'll give you that.” Although Bai Qi appeared to be offering words of congratulation, the coldness in his tone didn't seem congratulatory at all.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes sparkled as he continued to stare at Bai Qi and wait for him to make his point. Whatever he said would reveal the true nature of his relationship with Bai Hao.

“Unfortunately,” Bai Qi continued in a cool tone, “you pushed things a bit too far, Bai Hao. Nobody else here knows you very well, but as your older brother, I do. How could you possibly accomplish something like this on your own? Clearly, you used some underhanded method to cheat! How very disappointing of you.” With that, Bai Qi extended his right hand to reveal a command medallion, which he waved at the stone stele.

Instantly, Bai Hao's name on the ranking list faded away and

disappeared. Shockingly, Bai Qi had used his status as crown prince to simply remove Bai Hao's name!

At first, everyone in the area was shocked, but then, they broke out into a hubbub.

“Cheating?”

“See, I told you so! Bai Hao was always weak and cowardly. How could he suddenly rise to prominence like that? As it turns out, he was cheating....”

“Interesting. Well, nobody will ever be able to say for sure whether he was actually cheating or not....”

Meanwhile, Bai Qi was looking coldly at Bai Xiaochun, doing nothing to conceal the disdain and contempt in his eyes.

It was almost as if he were using his gaze to tell Bai Xiaochun that no matter what he did, he could reduce him to nothing with the single slap of a palm!

Chapter 588: Exposing the Malefactor!

Bai Xiaochun stood there looking quietly at Bai Qi. For some reason, he wasn't angry at how he had wiped away Bai Hao's name from the stone stele, and presumably, the stone steles for spirit enhancement and soul medicine.

In fact, there wasn't even a need for Bai Xiaochun to ponder the matter. He instantly realized that news about him supposedly cheating would fill the entire clan.

The fact that Bai Qi had taken the initiative to wipe out Bai Hao's rankings without even investigating the matter was extremely telling. This was Bai Hao's older brother, and clearly, he treated him just as coldly as the stories had indicated he would.

"He didn't even give me a chance to explain...." Bai Xiaochun thought with a sigh. He wasn't angry, just sad for Bai Hao.

"Well, considering that this is how Madam Cai and Bai Qi treat Bai Hao, I can be fairly certain of his father's attitude...." As he stood there quietly, Bai Qi's voice could once again be heard.

"Because of the status father and I hold in the clan, most others would feel uncomfortable chiding you, Bai Hao. But not me. You're a bastard son, and have no right to put your name on the clan's ranking steles.

"As your older brother, I'd always hoped you would be able to make a name for yourself, and actually came here to congratulate you. Unfortunately, though, you turned out to be nothing more than a huge disappointment." Shaking his head, Bai Qi turned to the crowd and clasped hands. "Fellow clan members, I, Bai Qi, would like to apologize to all of you for what Bai Hao has done."

After bowing deeply, he ignored Bai Xiaochun, turned, and became a bright beam of light that shot off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun stood there silently, feeling all of the gazes upon

him. After a moment passed, he smiled faintly, then turned and walked away.

“It seems I underestimated Bai Qi. Apparently he can do a bit of scheming.” After returning to his hut in the north district, he sat down cross-legged to think.

“Well, this was a fishing expedition, that’s all, and my line has been tossed out. Bai Qi can erase Bai Hao’s name from the rankings, but he can’t make everyone forget what happened. Right now, I should probably give the killer a chance to make a move.” He considered going out for a walk immediately, but after looking up to check the time, he decided to close his eyes and work on his Undying Live Forever Technique instead.

As evening fell, an afterimage appeared as a clone stepped out from Bai Xiaochun, who quickly headed outside of the clan.

Simultaneously, Bai Xiaochun’s true self masked his own aura; unless someone opened the door of his hut and stepped inside, they would have no way of knowing he was there.

Outside of the Bai Clan, his fire clone sped along with an expressionless face, making sure to keep his cultivation base at the Foundation Establishment level as he headed in the direction of Giant Ghost City.

Before much time passed, his expression flickered, and he stopped in place. Turning, he saw a beam of light shooting toward him at top speed.

Within the beam of light was a black-robed man who fairly burst with a murderous aura. A wicked grin covered his face, and his eyes flickered with killing intent. Surrounding him was a cloud of vengeful souls, and soul fluctuations that instantly identified him as a necromancer.

This was the very same man whom Bai Xiaochun had spotted talking to Madam Cai in the pagoda when he first arrived at the

clan.

“I’ve been waiting for you for a while now,” Bai Xiaochun said loudly. “It’s about time you showed up.”

When the man in black saw Bai Xiaochun standing there as if he were waiting, he seemed surprised. The truth was that he had been waiting this entire time for a chance to get at Bai Hao, but hadn’t dared to make a move inside the clan itself. Eventually, the enraged Madam Cai had finally convinced him to do just that, and had even guaranteed his safety. However, just when he had been about to attack Bai Hao inside the clan, to his surprise, he discovered that he had left.

At first, he had been delighted, and had immediately given chase. But now, when he saw the frigid look in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, and heard his words, he suddenly felt strangely shocked.

“You....”

Bai Xiaochun waved his finger at the man, which caused frigid qi to spring up all around him.

Before the man in black could react, he was completely surrounded, causing his face to fall. He wanted to flee, but quickly realized that he was frozen in place.

“Impossible!” he shrieked, looking like he had just seen a ghost. His mind was reeling, filled with an intense sensation of imminent crisis. Biting his tongue and spitting blood out of his mouth, he caused the souls he had brought with him to all detonate.

However, that wasn’t all he did. His goal was to break free from the frigid qi, and because he didn’t trust the power of the soul detonations to do that on their own, he also resorted to detonating part of his own body!

A boom rang out as his lower half exploded, sending his upper torso speeding backward, face pale and filled with intense terror.

“You’re not Bai Hao!!” Trembling, the man in black prepared to

flee. However, that was when Bai Xiaochun took a step forward, appearing directly in front of him. Reaching out, he placed his hand on top of the screaming man's head.

“Fellow Daoist, please forgi--” Before he could finish, his body went stiff, and his eyes bulged out. His mind began to reel, and the last thing he heard was Bai Xiaochun saying one word.

“Soulssearch!”

The majority of cultivators had soulssearching techniques of one sort or another. Most such techniques didn't even count as divine abilities. They were simply ways of sending divine sense into the mind of another person and rifling through their memories in domineering fashion. Although there were certain tricks and methods that differed between techniques, most of them were used as a way to prevent the target's soul from being harmed in the process.

Unfortunately for the man in black, Bai Xiaochun wasn't adept with soulssearching, and didn't possess any tricks or special methods. Furthermore, he wasn't doing the soulssearch for himself, but rather, for the sake of Bai Hao.

As the clone soulssearched the man in black, various scenes became visible to his true self back in the Bai Clan.

“Your name is Xu Hai.... Ah, so that's what happened.... It really was Madam Cai.... When Bai Hao publicly revealed that he had reached Foundation Establishment, she arranged for dozens of assassins to go after him. Bai Hao was only in early Foundation Establishment, but was no fool. He was ready, and fought back tenaciously as they chased him. He even used multi-colored flame.... In the end, he evaded most of the assassins, and even killed some of them....” Bai Xiaochun was shaken by what he saw in the memories of the man in black, especially the casual way in which Bai Hao wielded his multi-colored flame!

Bai Xiaochun could also tell that the black-robed man had been

equally shocked. After all, he was only a master necromancer, without a deep understanding of the things he had been seeing. However, Bai Xiaochun was different.

“What he did, it was....” He took a deep breath, taken aback at how extraordinary Bai Hao had been, and also profoundly sad at how things had ended for him. “What a pity that in the end, his cultivation base was just too weak. He was hit with this man’s Exterminating Soulbrand, and then teleported away, his heart and blood vessels in ruins....”

In the end, Bai Xiaochun was certain that Bai Hao had been killed, not just because of his cultivation base breakthrough, but because of his skill with flame conjuring.

“Madam Cai, huh. So, she's the one who has Bai Hao’s research notes.” Another afterimage appeared as Bai Xiaochun’s water clone stepped out. Without the slightest hesitation, he left the hut, keeping all cultivation base fluctuations hidden as he headed toward the pagoda where Bai Xiaochun had first seen Madam Cai.

Given the current level of Bai Xiaochun’s divine sense, not even Nascent Soul cultivators would be able to detect him unless they tried extremely hard. Only a deva patriarch would be able to. However, the clan’s deva patriarch wouldn’t have his divine sense out in the clan at all times, nor would he be constantly paying attention to every minor thing that happened.

Bai Xiaochun’s water clone crept along through the night until he was near the pagoda. Keeping his aura carefully concealed, he made his way toward Madam Cai’s mansion!

Just when the water clone was about to start searching for Bai Hao’s notes, his expression flickered, and he stopped in place, looking into the mansion at one particular room where Madam Cai and Bai Qi were having a conversation!

“Qi’er,” Madam Cai said, sounding a bit anxious, “you need to spend more time studying that son of a bitch Bai Hao’s notes. Once

you master the ability to conjure eleven-colored flame, the patriarch will value you even more than he does already.

“Only then will he agree to open the ancestral land for you!

“The ancestral land is where the Bai Clan’s only deva soul is housed. Once the ancestral land is opened, anyone in the clan can enter, and although technically speaking any of them could get the deva soul... if the patriarch agrees that it should go to you, then everything will be a formality. The auxiliary bloodlines will have nothing to say about the matter, and you’ll be able to get the deva soul.

“Once you have that deva soul, you can trade it for a full set of five elements deva beast souls, and then form your Nascent Soul! Our clan is huge, and many people have their eyes on that set of deva beast souls. Not even your father could get it for you!” With that, Madam Cai went on to offer further exhortations on the subject.

Chapter 589: Placing Hope In The Ancestral Land

As Bai Xiaochun's water clone stood there listening to Madam Cai and her son talking, his eyes began to shine brightly.

Already, he had learned quite a bit about the situation. Bai Qi clearly was a chosen member of the Bai Clan, with extraordinary necromantic talents. Although he wasn't at the terrestrial rank yet, he was obviously on the verge of mastering eleven-colored flame.

Considering that Bai Qi was trying to win the approval of the clan's patriarch, then based on what Bai Xiaochun had learned earlier, it seemed obvious that the clan was grooming him to participate in the competition to become the successor of the hell-emperor.

Obviously, with his necromantic talents and a Nascent Soul cultivation base, he would have a good chance at succeeding.

Of course, all of that was assuming that he could reach the Nascent Soul stage. The Bai Clan was huge, with numerous bloodlines all competing against each other. Therefore, it wasn't possible for the clan to simply give the five elements deva beast souls to Bai Qi outright. Therefore, Madam Cai and Bai Qi were attempting to arrange for the so-called ancestral land trial by fire as the vehicle to achieve their aim.

A deva soul would be up for grabs in that trial by fire, and whoever got it could exchange it for a full set of deva beast souls. If they could secretly arrange for Bai Qi to be the one to get the deva soul, and no unforeseen circumstances arose, then the other bloodlines in the clan wouldn't be able to do anything about it.

All of that, though, was contingent on the clan's deva patriarch approving of the plan.

Based on what Bai Xiaochun's clone could sense in Madam Cai's tone of voice, she was thoroughly convinced that she could convince the deva patriarch to agree....

“So, they're going to open the ancestral land just for Bai Qi....” he thought, his heart pounding at the significance of this opportunity. “For most people, getting a deva soul is just a formality on the way to getting a set of five elements deva beast souls. But I'm different... I can directly absorb them!” He grinned, his eyes sparkling.

It was in that very moment that, inside the mansion, Madam Cai's face fell. Reaching down, she pulled a jade slip out of her bag of holding, a life slip which was currently crumbling to pieces.

“Xu Hai is dead!!”

Bai Qi's eyes went wide as he looked over at the crumbling jade slip. Xu Hai had been sent to kill Bai Hao, and although his cultivation base wasn't as powerful as Bai Qi's, he was still in Core Formation. For a Core Formation cultivator to perish in a fight with a Foundation Establishment cultivator was extremely unusual.

“How is that even possible?” Madam Cai said, clearly alarmed. “That bitch's son is only in Foundation Establishment. Don't tell me... that your father....”

“Calm down, mother. There's no way that Xu Hai was killed by Bai Hao, and there's also no way that father was there. If I'm not mistaken, the bitch's son must have come across some good fortune, and got something or someone to help him! Xu Hai must have been killed by whoever Bai Hao has helping him!” Bai Qi's eyes began to shine with cold light.

“Whoever it is that has dared to interfere with Bai Clan matters has overstepped their bounds, no matter who they are!”

Bai Xiaochun's water clone stood outside the mansion, rubbing

his nose. He could sense what was happening with the fire clone, who had never expected Xu Hai to be so unable to deal with pain. In almost the same moment that the soulsearch finished, he expired.

In response to Bai Qi's words, Madam Cai fought to get herself under control. She wasn't worried about Bai Hao having help from outside the clan. No, she feared interference on the part of her husband. However, after considering the matter closely, she decided that it was extremely unlikely that her husband had played a part in what had just happened.

“Well, it doesn't matter exactly what happened,” she said. “Bai Hao can't be left alive. Long delays usually lead to trouble....”

Bai Qi smiled coldly. “Don't worry, mother. Worst case scenario, we can just wait until the patriarch opens the ancestral land. If I have to, I'll personally kill him there. Even if he does have someone helping him, I refuse to believe that they would follow him into the ancestral land!”

Seeing how confident Bai Qi was, Madam Cai finally sighed and nodded. “Fine. I'll go talk with your father and persuade him to convince the patriarch to open the ancestral land within the next few months!”

Outside the mansion, Bai Xiaochun's clone smiled coldly. At the same time, his opinion of this mother and son team grew even lower.

“Opening the ancestral land, huh? Well, that works just fine. I'll just handle everything in one fell swoop!” Having made his decision, he turned and vanished into the night.

Back in his hut in the north district, Bai Xiaochun waited for his two clones to return before opening his eyes.

“Making a scene in the clan got me a lot of information, and some good news. Ancestral land, huh...?” The thought of getting his

hands on a fourth deva soul caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to pound with excitement.

“I can get Bai Hao's notes and the deva soul all in that ancestral land!” Suddenly, he frowned.

“However, I need to go in fully prepared. If I make a move inside the ancestral land, it will likely cause a commotion in the entire clan. I have to make sure I can stay safe....” With that, he walked out of his hut and looked up into the sky to observe the Bai Clan's defensive spell formation.

After a moment of silence, Bai Xiaochun took a few steps forward, and then suddenly vanished. When he reappeared, he was completely outside of the clan.

It still hurt to use his Undying Hex in this way, but not as badly as before. Turning around, he took another step, vanished, and reappeared in the north district.

“So, my Undying Hex can pierce through this spell formation!

“However, I can't rely only on that.... I need to attack the problem from two different angles to be completely safe.” For the following several days, he surreptitiously studied the Bai Clan's spell formation, performing various experiments to try to figure out another way to deal with it.

Unfortunately, he wasn't very adept at working with spell formations. Besides, this was the Wildlands, and most of the methods he knew about for breaking spell formations required items or methods powered by the spiritual energy in Heavenspan River water. Obviously, those methods wouldn't work out here in the Wildlands.

“I guess I need to use Wildlands methods.... I should probably ask Zhou Yixing about this.” He immediately sent a message to Zhou Yixing and asked for him to come up with some ways to destabilize the spell formation.

Zhou Yixing and Li Feng had both taken up residence in Giant Ghost City itself. Of course, since they didn't get along, they lived separately. As soon as Zhou Yixing got a message from Bai Xiaochun, he was very excited, at least, until he checked the actual content of the message, whereupon he was stunned.

After a moment of hesitation, he sent a reply. I can't do that.... A clan like the Bai Clan is definitely going to have an incredible defensive spell formation. How am I supposed to do anything to that kind of formation...?

Recently, he had run into Li Feng on a few occasions, and noticed the pleased expression on his face. That had immediately led Zhou Yixing to the conclusion that Li Feng had accomplished some task for Bai Xiaochun. As he thought about that fact, Zhou Yixing's anxiety mounted, and he gritted his teeth.

When Bai Xiaochun saw Zhou Yixing's reply, he frowned, and was just about to send a message to Li Feng when, all of a sudden, another message came in from Zhou Yixing.

Grandmaster Bai, I thought of a way. It will be very expensive, but it will definitely work. All you have to do is use murdersoul spikes. You would need a lot of them, probably at least a hundred. However, you could insert them into the spell formation from inside the clan, and then, if you detonated them all at the right time, it would definitely crack the thing open. However, it would only buy you a few breaths worth of time before the damage repaired itself....

Also, murdersoul spikes are very expensive. I... I can't really afford to purchase them on my own.... After explaining everything he knew, Zhou Yixing couldn't help but think that the method he had come up with was just too expensive.

Back in the Bai Clan, though, Bai Xiaochun's eyes were shining brightly. As far as he was concerned, money wasn't a big problem. As long as it bought him a greater chance of escaping, then it

would be worth it. He immediately sent a message back to Zhou Yixing, setting a time and place for him to meet one of his clones. Before long, that very clone left the clan, bag of holding in hand.

Soon, Zhou Yixing and Bai Xiaochun's clone met up. Before Zhou Yixing could even say anything, the clone slapped his bag of holding and produced a pill furnace.

It wasn't a very large pill furnace, but neither was it small. When it thumped down onto the ground in front of Zhou Yixing, his jaw dropped.

Swishing his sleeve grandly, Bai Xiaochun's clone said, "Take that and go buy the murdersoul spikes!"

Zhou Yixing hesitated for a moment, then took a step forward and opened the lid of the pill furnace. When he confirmed that it was full to the brim with Heavenspan River water, his eyes nearly fell out of his skull.

"This... this...." The spiritual energy he felt in the Heavenspan River water left him shaking, and his mind reeling. Never in his entire life had he seen so much Heavenspan River water, and he instantly realized that if he sold it, the profit would be difficult to put into words.

"Enough? Or not?" Bai Xiaochun's clone said proudly. After all, this wasn't even half of the water he had in his big bucket....

Trembling, Zhou Yixing replied, "Enough! More than enough!!"

"Don't skimp on the murdersoul spikes. Also, buy me some teleportation talismans and extra vengeful souls." With that, the clone strutted off into the distance. As Zhou Yixing watched him go, he suddenly realized that this Grandmaster Bai was even more mysterious than he had realized. To casually produce so much Heavenspan River water was something that no ordinary person could do.

His determination to be a follower of Grandmaster Bai grew even

stronger than before.

Chapter 590: Endless Rain Of Fire

It would take Zhou Yixing a bit of time to buy all of the murdersoul spikes. After all, they were magical items that usually weren't available for bulk purchase. He would need to take some time hunting through Giant Ghost City to find enough.

Considering that he wasn't familiar with the area, Zhou Yixing finally went to Li Feng and talked the matter over with him. Li Feng knew that this was a mission for Grandmaster Bai, and didn't want to cause any trouble. Therefore, he cooperated with Zhou Yixing, even calling upon his own personal contacts to help track down murdersoul spikes to buy.

Due to their cooperation on this mission, the animosity they felt toward each other began to fade.

While Bai Xiaochun waited for his followers to accomplish their mission, he kept a low profile in the Bai Clan. He rarely left his hut, preferring to spend most of his time cultivating his Undying Live Forever Technique.

Unfortunately, because he was out in the Wildlands, it was impossible for him to replenish his supply of medicinal pills. The upside was that he still had a lot of items he had embezzled during his time as a major general. The downside was that such items wouldn't take him very far. He was almost finished with his work on his Undying Tendons, and based on his estimations, his current supplies were probably sufficient to complete that work, but no more.

"I need to master the Undying Tendons before I go into that ancestral land. If I can make contact with the third shackle, then my poor little life will be much safer." Another decision he made was that he needed to perform an elevenfold spirit enhancement on his Eternal Parasol.

Afterward, the parasol looked different. The basic shape was the

same, but now it looked like it was made from metal. It was pitch black, and radiated an intense, murderous aura. Furthermore, the ghost face which would appear on its surface looked even more fierce and bizarre!

“It's too bad I'm running so low on souls....” he sighed. If he'd had enough souls, he would have performed elevenfold spirit enhancements on his clothing. Unfortunately, that wasn't an option.

After all, he needed to save up enough souls to try to conjure twelve-colored flame, and even with his clones out secretly collecting souls, and the help of Zhou Yixing and Li Feng, that was still going to be difficult.

He didn't even have enough Heavenspan River water to buy all of the souls he needed....

Thankfully, Bai Hao's notes about conjuring twelve-colored flame had been extremely beneficial. In fact, other than his time spent in cultivation recently, he had focused almost completely on researching the formula for twelve-colored flame.

Because he didn't have enough souls on hand, he didn't dare to casually perform any experiments. He could only analyze the method mentally, and prepare himself for the moment in which he actually attempted to conjure the flame.

Time passed. Before long, half a month had gone by. Bai Xiaochun's Undying Live Forever Technique was making progress, but his auguries regarding twelve-colored flame had reached a bit of a bottleneck.

“I think I need to do an experiment.” Taking a deep breath, he pulled out his soulhoarding pagoda and counted how many vengeful souls he had. As it turned out, he had enough for three attempts.

After some thought, he made his decision. After using his mask

to cover up the aura of the multi-colored flame, he began conjuring. Vengeful souls flew out one after another, and flames appeared in his palm. Eventually, eleven colors were present, and Bai Xiaochun was starting to get very nervous.

After all, if he failed, it would be a huge waste of resources. Settling his qi and calming his mind, he cautiously began his attempt to conjure twelve-colored flame.

As the masses of vengeful souls poured into the eleven-colored flame, Bai Xiaochun's expression turned very serious. He also began to work more slowly. At one point, he suddenly began to lose control, and the flame began to flicker. Without any hesitation, he summoned one of his clones, who worked with him to stabilize the flame before he continued.

Utilizing the assistance of his clones was one of the ideas Bai Xiaochun had come up with in his planning. As it turned out, using two clones to help didn't do any more good than using one clone. However he did it, it was still multitasking, and therefore, using one clone was the best technique.

With the help of his solitary clone, the eleven-colored flame grew stable, and more time passed. Two hours later, he was finished with the first step of the process, and a twelfth color was now visible in the sea of fire that surrounded him.

“Bai Hao was absolutely right. Fire represents something else, and is not a material object...” Feeling very pleased, he took a deep breath and prepared to finish the task at hand. As of this moment, he could easily split the sea of fire into two parts and make two portions of mid-grade soul medicine. Or, he could converge the sea into a single tongue of multi-colored flame!

Never could he have imagined that his first attempt at conjuring twelve-colored flame would turn out to be a success.

“Hahaha! It turns out that Bai Xiaochun really is a genius!” With that, he snapped his hand closed to pull the sea together into the

form of a tongue of twelve-colored flame.

However, that was when something unexpected occurred!

Even as the sea of fire began to shrink down, it went completely out of control! Bai Xiaochun's face fell with fear as a terrifying aura erupted out in all directions.

The shocking detonation of the twelve-colored flame scared Bai Xiaochun so much that he let out a shriek. Any other necromancer, even one in the terrestrial rank, would have been completely incapable of reacting in time. However, because of Bai Xiaochun's extensive experience with exploding pill furnaces, he was always on guard and ready for situations like this.

Therefore, he reacted with lightning speed. He quickly relaxed his hands and performed an incantation gesture that sent frigid qi shooting out. Almost instantly, both hands were shoving down onto the unstable twelve-colored flame.

As the flame was suppressed, the fire died down, revealing two glittering portions of mid-grade soul medicine.

Anyone else who saw two portions of mid-grade soul medicine would be elated, but Bai Xiaochun was scowling on the verge of tears.

"I didn't want medicine," he said, tugging at his hair in despair. "I wanted flame! What happened...?" After thinking back to everything he had done during the process, he couldn't think of any area where he'd gone wrong.

Why did it end up becoming medicine instead of multi-colored flame? The mere thought of the terrifying power he had sensed in the twelve-colored flame left Bai Xiaochun trembling with residual fear.

"Don't tell me that I'm going to start experiencing the same kind of accidents with flame conjuring as I did with medicine concocting?" He shivered.

After a long moment passed, he looked at his soulhoarding pagoda and tried to decide whether or not to perform another experiment. After all, that was the only way to truly figure out what he had done wrong.

Gritting his teeth, he produced more vengeful souls and proceeded to conjure another eleven-colored flame. At that point, he hesitated.

“I can’t do it here....” he thought. Eyes turning up in thought, he eventually put his clone and the eleven-colored flame away, and then left with his soulhoarding pagoda. Taking advantage of the darkness of night, he left the north district and made his way to the east district.

“That way, even if an accident occurs, I can still rest at ease....” Clearing his throat, he found an out-of-the-way ornamental rock formation in the east district with a large open cavity inside that he could work in. After setting up a spell formation, he took a deep breath and then pulled out his eleven-colored flame. Then his clone appeared, and he began to conjure the twelfth color in the flame.

It was in the still of night that he used the power of the mask to suppress the pressure of the flame. Not even someone standing directly next to the ornamental rocks would have noticed what was happening, or would have been able to detect the incredible power brewing inside....

Bai Xiaochun was very nervous, and his clone was sweating visibly. As the two of them worked together, things went smoothly for about two hours. Then, a twelfth color appeared within the sea of fire. All he had to do was shrink the sea down into a tongue of flame, and he would be finished. However, at that point, he paused.

“It should work this time, right...?” he thought, blinking a few times as the twelve-colored flame began to shrink down.

That was when unstable fluctuations suddenly sprang up within the sea of fire. Explosive power erupted in a tempest that caused a sensation of deadly crisis to instantly rise up in Bai Xiaochun.

Letting out an involuntary shriek, he tried to adjust the flame to stop the explosion, but the power was even more intense than before. No matter what adjustments he made, nothing did any good, and in fact, rumbling sounds echoed out as wildly destructive flames began to spread out in all directions.

Bai Xiaochun screamed and flew backward, pulling his clone back into him and then using the power of his Undying Hex to vanish. As for the sea of fire, it rumbled out in all directions, destroying the ornamental rocks and consuming everything in the area.

Strangely, even as the sea of fire devoured everything in the area and then vanished, the night sky up above turned bright red. Huge red clouds could be seen, which caused widespread chaos within the Bai Clan. Before anyone could react, thunder crackled, and something happened that left everyone astonished!

An endless rain of fire began to fall from above!

Chapter 591: Magical Rain Of Fire

A rain of fire descended onto the Bai Clan, illuminating everything with bright red light. The clan was immediately thrown into a huge commotion, and power was poured into the spell formation to defend against the incoming flame.

Countless clan members rushed out of their residences to look up into the sky, whereupon astonished shouts began to fill the night sky.

“What... what is that?!”

“Don’t tell me we’re under attack!?!?”

“Aaahhh! It’s a rain of fire....”

The heat from the fire was almost at the level of twelve-colored flame, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as the clan’s defensive spell formation twisted and distorted. One by one, powerful clan members flew up into the air.

“What happened!?!?” Bai Qi was there in the crowd, looking shocked, as was Madam Cai, who had emerged from her mansion to see what was happening.

“Twelve-colored flame... that’s... twelve-colored flame!? How is this possible! It’s raining multi-colored flame?!?!?” Numerous chosen from the auxiliary bloodlines were all looking on in shock and wonder.

From a distance, it looked like the entire Bai Clan was being bathed in fire. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was now outside of the city, looking back in utter shock at the scene playing out.

“Don’t blame me... I didn’t do this on purpose....” Scalp tingling in fear, he gritted his teeth and took advantage of the chaos in the clan to use his Undying Hex to head back to the north district.

Even as he returned to his hut, the clan’s spell formation finally

couldn't last any longer, and began to teeter unstably beneath the barrage of fire. Just when it seemed like it was about to collapse, several enraged shouts could be heard from the east district as eight shadowy figures shot up into the air. Shockingly, all of those figures emanated the fluctuations of the Nascent Soul stage.

These were the Nascent Soul clan elders, who quickly split up and manned key areas of the spell formation. By bolstering the formation with all of their power, they gradually stabilized it.

It was a shocking sight to Bai Xiaochun, who sat there nervously in the north district, looking at the flames outside the shield and scowling on the verge of tears.

“I doubt anybody realizes I'm the one who caused this....” How could he have ever anticipated that trying to conjure some flame would lead to such terrifying results...?

Even as he stewed in his anxiety, a middle-aged man appeared in the east district.

He wore luxurious clothing, and was the type of person who seemed threatening without being angry. There was something grimly impressive about him, and apparently, he was in the mid Nascent Soul stage. As soon as people caught sight of him, looks of respect could be seen in their eyes, and they clasped hands and bowed.

“Greetings, Clan Chief.”

That man was none other than Bai Hao's father, the current clan chief of the Bai Clan. Looking up into the sky beyond the spell formation shield, his expression turned icily ominous. It looked like he was just about to speak, when all of a sudden, a cold snort echoed out from a subterranean chamber in the depths of the city. It sounded ancient, and as powerful as thunder, causing the clouds above to churn. The sound of it even seemed to merge with heaven and earth, as if this person were becoming one with everything. The heavens were embodied in this person, and vice versa!

“Disperse!” That single word caused the crimson clouds up above to shatter into countless fragments. Then, it was as if an enormous, invisible hand swept them away, clearing the sky.

There in the north district, Bai Xiaochun could sense an incredibly powerful divine sense within that word, something hair-raisingly terrifying that replaced the will of the heavens.

“A deva!” he thought, trembling. At the same time, he once again made sure that his own aura was well concealed.

Having no foundation, the rain of firebolts gradually began to thin out. Thanks to the power of the spell formation, and the fact that the cloud had been destroyed, it disappeared, and the Bai Clan was spared of any disaster....

From deep within the subterranean chamber, the grim and domineering voice of the Bai Clan patriarch spoke: “Someone transformed twelve-colored flame into a devious attack on our Bai Clan.... Investigate immediately, and find out who did this!”

Virtually everyone in the clan responded by kowtowing reverently and voicing their assent.

That included Bai Qi, Madam Cai, and everyone else. As for the clan chief, although he didn't kowtow, he did clasp hands and bowed deeply, a respectful expression on his face. Upon completing his bow, he waved his sleeve and spoke out in a tone that brooked no argument.

“Hall of Corrections, Hall of Justice, and all other members of the clan, hear my orders. Do everything in your power to find out what happened here tonight!!”

That night, virtually no one in the entire clan was able to rest. Under the leadership of the clan elders, as well as the Hall of Corrections and the Hall of Justice, a thorough investigation was carried out.

Internal inquiries were made first, but the scope of the

investigation soon led people to the ornamental rocks where Bai Xiaochun had been working. Although it was quickly determined that those rocks were the location in which the incident began, no clues had been left behind. However, the investigation only continued to intensify.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very nervous, and was aware that he had yet again caused a huge disaster. Plus, this wasn't the River-Defying Sect, it was the Bai Clan, which had treated his own apprentice with frigid brutality. However, he still felt that he hadn't done anything wrong.

“It's not like I did it on purpose! What are they making such a big deal out of it for?” The night passed quickly, and yet, the matter didn't end. During the following several days, people came to ask him questions on several occasions. In the end, though, no headway was made in the investigation, and eventually, the matter came to be somewhat of an unsolved mystery....

Bai Xiaochun knew that it was a tense situation, and therefore, he didn't dare to attempt any more flame conjuring. However, he continued to study and analyze the topic, and kept trying to ascertain why he had failed.

“I can't believe it actually caused firebolts to rain down. Just what exactly did I do wrong...?”

“That fire was pretty powerful, and yet, it was only twelve-colored flame. What if it had been fifteen-colored flame? In that case... the Bai Clan... might have been wiped off the map.” On the one hand, he was moved by how powerful the fire had been, but on the other hand, was worried about why he had failed. As he continued to analyze the matter there in his hut, five days went by. By this point, he was looking a bit thin and haggard, and had already reached the limits of what he could analyze mentally.

“Logically speaking, I shouldn't have failed....”

“Everything was going smoothly the entire time. The sudden

failure at the end seemed really suspicious....

“Plus, it actually formed soul medicine....

“Just where exactly did I go wrong?” Clenching his hands into fists, he yet again reviewed every step he had taken, and analyzed them thoroughly. Finally, sometime in the afternoon, he shivered and looked up, his eyes shining brightly.

“Don’t tell me... it was my clone!?!?” The more he thought about it, the more likely it seemed that the problem had something to do with the fact that he had used a clone to help conjure the twelve-colored flame with his true self.

“If it was because of my clone, then that would explain everything. I created that clone with a deva soul, and even I don’t know what divine abilities might have existed in that soul. Perhaps... that really is the reason.” After pondering the matter for a bit more, he left one of his clones behind and then went out into the darkness alone.

Although things were tense in the clan, he was still itching to go do some more tests to see if he was right.

Therefore, he raced along, leaving Bai Clan territory and finding a cave deep in some mountains. There, he began preparations to make another attempt at conjuring twelve-colored flame.

This time, he didn’t use any clone power. He relied only on himself, using the same methods as before. It was difficult, and he very nearly lost control on two occasions. However, by bolstering himself with spirit alcohol, he ensured that he always had enough power at his disposal.

It took a bit more time as well, and soon, his head was aching with pain. By the time the sea of fire formed down into the tongue of twelve-colored flame, he was soaked with sweat and panting with excitement.

“I didn’t do anything differently than before.... The only

difference was that I didn't use my clone to help conjure the flame! Therefore, it definitely has something to do with my clone! My clone was made from a deva soul. It must mean that using a clone to conjure necromantic flame... causes unforeseen complications."

Excited to have found the reason for his previous failure, he rose to his feet, his eyes shining.

"In that case, I guess I've actually created... my own necromantic divine ability! A magical rain of fire!"

Chapter 592: I Don't Understand!

“I almost can’t believe that I’m really this awesome!” Bai Xiaochun was extremely excited, and his eyes were glowing more brightly than ever. He even felt a bit dizzy from the rush of emotion. “I, Bai Xiaochun, actually created a new divine ability! That’s the kind of thing that sect-founding patriarchs do! I... I can’t believe I’m so worthy of admiration!”

He threw his head back and laughed uproariously at how amazing he was. As he reveled in his success, he thought back to how Chen Hetian had abandoned him, and realized that his loss was definitely a major blow to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

“Hmmmphh. One of these days I’m going to make sure Chen Hetian regrets that decision of his. In fact, the whole Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is going to regret it...” With that, he sat down cross-legged for a bit to recover his energy, then swaggered back to the Bai Clan.

Everything went very smoothly along the way. After all, he had left a clone behind in the north district of the Bai Clan, and therefore, no one had even suspected that he’d left his hut.

A few days later, the combined efforts of Zhou Yixing and Li Feng finally got them all of the murdersoul spikes and teleportation talismans that Bai Xiaochun had requested. After studying the murdersoul spikes thoroughly, Bai Xiaochun found that they were crafted from souls, using a technique he had never even realized existed. Furthermore, the souls used to create them had especially strong murderous auras.

After analyzing the murdersoul spikes, Bai Xiaochun realized that if he set them up in the clan right now, there would be too much of a risk of them being found. Therefore, he decided to wait until right before entering the ancestral land. That would be the best and safest bet.

As he waited, he thought about the formula for thirteen-colored flame, and also spent time cultivating his Undying Live Forever Technique.

Another half a month went by. One evening when he was sitting in meditation, working on the final qi passageways necessary to complete his Undying Tendons, his expression flickered, and he looked at the door.

With his divine sense, he could clearly see three beams of light heading in his direction. Soon, three middle-aged men became visible, each of them wearing a black robe with a sun and a moon embroidered on it.

Only members of the Hall of Corrections could wear uniforms like that, and the arrival of these men caused an instant commotion in the north district. Considering that everyone there had very low standing in the clan, they were all left trembling with fear and hesitant to make a single noise.

The three men had arrogant expressions on their faces as they looked around in disgust at the north district. As far as they were concerned, this place was a malignant boil within the Bai Clan, a dirty, filthy place that they were loath to enter. Soon, they were right outside of Bai Xiaochun's hut.

Then, one of them spoke out in a coldly impatient voice. "Bai Hao, get out here right now!"

Inside the hut, Bai Xiaochun's heart began to pound.

"Don't tell me they figured out it was me? Impossible!" His body blurred as, instead of going out personally, he sent one of his clones out of the hut to meet the men.

He kept the aura of his true self invisible; no one outside would be aware that he was still inside the hut.

As the clone emerged from the hut, the three men from the Hall of Corrections eyed him coldly. Then the one in the lead said,

“Let’s go. The clan chief wants to see you!”

With that, they turned to leave, clearly not inclined to stay in this place one moment longer than necessary. Eyes flickering, Bai Xiaochun followed along in clone form.

“The clan chief wants to see me.... He’s Bai Hao’s father. Alright, this will be a good opportunity to see what Bai Hao’s father actually feels about him!” Considering that he was going in clone form instead of as his true self, he felt a lot safer.

The three men from the Hall of Corrections didn’t say anything to him along the way; their arrogance and disdain for him clearly went bone-deep. Inwardly, Bai Xiaochun chuckled coldly at them, proud at how these men were like sparrows, unaware that a dragon was in their midst.

“Just wait until you see my real cultivation base level. Then the three of you will be scared to death!” Bai Xiaochun was wrapped up in his thoughts as he followed them to the west district, which was very different from the east district. It was much quieter, a place that few people visited, and that was mostly occupied by female clan members.

Bai Xiaochun looked around in surprise and confusion as he was led to a mansion in the corner of the district. It wasn't very large, and consisted of only a few buildings surrounding a weed-filled courtyard. It was a bleak, run-down place that didn’t seem to be occupied.

The three men stopped out front of the mansion. “Go in. The clan chief is waiting inside.”

With that, they turned and left.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered; he could sense a faint aura within the mansion that he was sure belonged to a cultivator in the mid Nascent Soul stage.

“Don’t tell me he’s meeting me out here because he wants to kill

me?” Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised, but considering that he was here in clone form, his true self would have plenty of time to get away if things went wrong. Therefore, he simply walked into the mansion.

“Bai Hao,” he thought, “your Master is going into this dangerous situation for you! I want to see exactly how your father feels about you!”

Upon entering the main gate, he saw a man standing in the courtyard, facing away from him. Next to him was a simple well which he was looking down into.

The man’s hair was mostly black, but had some strands of white in it as well. Although he seemed middle-aged, he was clearly very old. Furthermore, there was something bleak and stern about him.

The courtyard seemed just as bleak, and there was a pressure weighing down that made it feel like a rainstorm might break out at any moment. Bai Xiaochun looked at the man's back, and then around at the courtyard, whereupon his eyes widened in surprise.

Although weeds choked the ground, they couldn’t cover up the countless wooden toys that filled the area. There were little horses and soldiers, drum-shaped rattles and other knickknacks....

There was a finesse to the way the toys were crafted that indicated they weren’t made by a man. They seemed more like trinkets that a mother would make for her child.

There were also some dilapidated items of clothing that had once belonged to a child scattered about in the corners. The scene spread out in front of Bai Xiaochun left him with some very complex and even indescribable emotions.

He wasn’t actually Bai Hao, but the sight of all of these children's toys made him suddenly feel as if he really had turned into him.

“This must be where Bai Hao grew up....” he thought as he stood there looking around at the toys, wondering what Bai Hao would

be feeling if he were here instead. His heart already felt as if it were heavier than before.

As numerous complex emotions filled Bai Xiaochun's heart, the man standing there said, “Qi'er told me about how you cheated in the clan trials for spirit enhancement, soul medicine and flame conjuring!”

His voice was cold, and didn't contain the slightest scrap of emotion. It was almost as if he were talking to a complete stranger. There was even a scolding tone to his words, the kind that would be used to reprimand a servant.

Bai Xiaochun stood there silently, unsure of what to say in response. “So, Bai Hao,” he murmured in his heart, “this is your father, huh...?”

Bai Hao's father slowly turned, revealing a cold, expressionless face and an icy aura. The way he looked at Bai Xiaochun made it seem as if he were looking at someone he had never met. When he continued speaking, his words were as cold as a winter wind. “This isn't the first time you've done something like this, either. I can tolerate your complete lack of ambition, and even the fact that you stole Qi'er's research notes about fifteen-colored flame. But now you've gone and cheated!”

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun realized that before his death, Bai Hao must have revealed to his father that he was talented in flame conjuring, in the hopes of winning his approval. Sadly, Bai Hao had been completely naïve in such hopes.

This man would give Bai Hao no such chances. In fact, it was even possible that he knew the truth of the matter, and yet still acted this way.

“Not only did you humiliate me, but you also broke clan law. According to the rules, I should take away your cultivation base and have you thrown into Devil Penitentiary for ten years! However, considering you do have the blood of the Bai Clan

running in your veins, I'll forgive you this one time. But if something like this ever happens again, I'll personally cleanse our clan by removing you from it." The killing intent in the clan chief's eyes was as clear as day, and his voice cut as coldly as the harshest winter gale. As a result, Bai Xiaochun felt the same bitter fright that Bai Hao would have in the same situation.

The clan chief didn't seem pleased with how Bai Xiaochun was standing there silently. A flicker of loathing passed through his eyes as he gestured toward the well.

"This is where your mother died. She was born a servant girl, and after her death, became a servant soul. Her fate was to submit, and as a bastard son, you need to learn to do the same thing. Submit! Understand?!"

The spark of rage which rose up in Bai Xiaochun's heart was impossible to suppress. Looking over at the clan chief, he replied, "No, I don't understand."

Chapter 593: Cold Father Bai!

The anger that burned in Bai Xiaochun's heart was fueled by his compassion and sorrow for Bai Hao. Although he had just said he didn't understand, the truth was that he understood exactly what was going on!

Combined with everything else he had already learned, the situation was crystal clear. Perhaps the clan chief had not always been aware that Bai Hao was extremely talented in flame conjuring. However, after Bai Hao gave him the formula for fifteen-colored flame, how could he not know?!

He knew that Bai Hao was a talented flame conjurer, and also knew that there had been no cheating done in the trials by fire. He knew all of these things beyond the shadow of a doubt!

As a mid Nascent Soul stage cultivator, and the clan chief, he could get information about anything he wanted in the Bai Clan as easily as turning over his hand. In fact, Bai Xiaochun couldn't imagine that the man was unaware of how Bai Hao had been chased down and killed. Not only had he been aware of it, but he had turned a blind eye to what was happening!

He had denied everything about Bai Hao, and even shifted all of his accomplishments over to Bai Qi. Clearly, he wanted Bai Qi to soar high, regardless of the price to be paid, even if it was the death of Bai Hao. It couldn't have been more obvious that the clan chief felt that Bai Hao was as valuable as a bug, or even less so.

As for this particular meeting, its purpose was to get Bai Hao to bow his head in acquiescence, and to impress upon him that this critical juncture was not the time to make a scene. Based on the killing intent that Bai Xiaochun could see in the man's eyes, he clearly desired to see Bai Hao out of the picture for good.

That was the reason why he picked this location to have this conversation, to make it very clear to Bai Hao what it meant to

submit....

Submit, and live. Refuse, and die!

His choice to have this discussion in the location where Bai Hao's mother passed away revealed how truly malicious his intentions were. From the perspective of a bystander, Bai Xiaochun couldn't watch the scene play out without getting angry. Although it had been somewhat on a whim that he took Bai Hao as his apprentice, as of this moment, his heart was filled the same grief and bitterness that Bai Hao must have felt in life. As of this moment, he felt more serious than ever about being Bai Hao's Master.

Although Bai Xiaochun was the type of person who feared death, he was a righteous and loyal person in his bones. When his friends faced a deadly crisis, it didn't matter if he was trembling and weeping with fear, he would always grit his teeth and go back to their aid. Now that Bai Hao had become his apprentice, he would not turn a blind eye to the wrongs his apprentice had endured!

This was the contradiction that existed within Bai Xiaochun; within his fear of death existed a brightly burning fire of passion!

The clan chief standing in front of him was completely cold and emotionless, and because of that, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but think that Bai Hao's deep desire to please the man had been completely pointless!

"What did you just say!?" the clan chief replied, the coldness in his eyes growing more intense. He even unleashed some of the power of his cultivation base, causing wind to whip about the courtyard.

Bai Xiaochun glared angrily at the clan chief and slowly said, "For better or worse, I'm your flesh and blood. Tigers don't eat their own cubs, but you...."

"How impudent!" the clan chief roared in a voice that echoed like thunder. The killing intent in his eyes blazed as he strode toward

Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun stared back at him as he approached. If the man actually attacked him, it would affect his plan to get a deva soul. And yet, Bai Xiaochun couldn't hold back from saying what he just had!

Just when it seemed like the situation would devolve into a disaster, the clan chief suddenly frowned. Stopping in place, he produced a jade slip from his bag of holding.

After scanning it with divine sense, his face lit with joy. Moments later, he gave Bai Xiaochun a disdainful glance, looking at him almost as if he were a corpse. Turning, he left, leaving a single sentence ringing in the courtyard behind him.

“You're going to get yourself killed!”

Bai Xiaochun watched as the clan chief disappeared in a beam of light. Then he looked around at the courtyard, complex emotions playing in his heart and mind. Finally, he sighed.

“Bai Hao. Ah, Bai Hao. If your spirit is out there, I hope you were able to see all of that....” With that, he organized the tattered, crumbling clothes and rotting toys, then looked over at the well.

After sending some divine sense inside, he confirmed that there was no corpse inside, so he quietly left and headed back to the north district....

**

Beneath the Bai Clan were sprawling catacombs, which was where the clan chief now stood. His hands were clasped, and he was bent over in a bow in front of a huge door.

After a long moment passed, the grating voice of an old man echoed out from the door, each word seemingly capable of causing transformations in heaven and earth.

“Your request from earlier is granted!”

“Many thanks, Patriarch!” The clan chief did his best to suppress the excitement he felt in his heart, and even deepened his bow. He was well aware that this patriarch was referring to more than just opening the ancestral land.

He was also agreeing to give the deva soul to Bai Qi!

Of course, it was impossible to open the ancestral land only for Bai Qi. Anyone in the clan who was under the Nascent Soul stage would be allowed to enter. Considering how big the Bai Clan was, the patriarch had to give the auxiliary bloodlines an equal opportunity.

However, he naturally had ways to secretly ensure that only Bai Qi got the deva soul!

“You’re dismissed. The event will begin in one month.”

The clan chief took a deep breath, then respectfully took his leave.

Soon, word about the opening of the ancestral land began to spread through the Bai Clan. All of the clan members who met the requirements to enter were very excited.

That was especially true when people heard that a deva soul was in the ancestral land. All of the chosen from the auxiliary bloodlines began to grow very excited about the prospect of competing amongst each other.

The opening of the ancestral land was a big matter, and the trial by fire which would take place inside was something that left the entire Bai Clan shaken. It was with great fanfare that all the preparations went underway.

Madam Cai was extremely pleased, and couldn’t stop thinking about the wonderful prospects in store for Bai Qi.

Bai Qi was equally delighted. Of course, he kept his mouth shut about certain details that only he was privy to. As for all the other chosen from the auxiliary bloodlines, he couldn’t help but scoff

inwardly at how eager they seemed to join in the competition.

“That deva soul belongs to me!”

Although Bai Xiaochun had been aware that the ancestral land would be opened, he hadn't known any details. However, considering how monumental the event was, he soon learned more.

“Almost a month until it opens....” he thought, his eyes shining with anticipation. He was already fed up with the Bai Clan, but knew he had to suppress his frustration until the time came to truly vent it.

“I'm doing this for you, Bai Hao! I'm going to shock the entire clan when I get into that ancestral land!”

Although he felt confident that the ancestral land wouldn't be extremely dangerous, he knew that if you stole food from a tiger's mouth, you almost always ended up with an angry tiger chasing after you. When he made his move in the ancestral land, that would only be the beginning of a very dangerous situation.

Therefore, he needed to be completely prepared to stay safe.

“The Wildlands is a huge place. I'll just have to wait and see how far the Bai Clan's deva patriarch will chase me. Detonating my soulhoarding pagoda could change the equilibrium between the Bai Clan and the two other great clans in the area. Let's see if the deva patriarch dares to keep chasing me when he realizes that!

“Of course, in addition to the patriarch, there will be other members of the Bai Clan to deal with, including Nascent Soul experts. I can't be lax!” Although Bai Xiaochun was feeling nervous, he had already made up his mind. He would make his move, and then flee immediately!

“Besides, I refuse to believe that the Bai Clan doesn't have any enemies....” Eyes flickering with cold light, he went back to his cultivation.

Days passed. Nobody paid much attention to him, and he didn't leave his hut. His medicinal pills were running out rapidly, and yet, one day, he made major progress with his Undying Tendons.

It was a complete breakthrough!!

The instant he completed the third level of the Undying Live Forever Technique, rumbling sounds filled his body, and golden light spread out, piercing through his clothing to fill the area.

At the same time, he could clearly feel something like the weight of an entire mountain pressing down onto him, which was none other than the third shackle!

He desperately wanted to break through that shackle, to destroy the mountainous weight crushing down on him and be transformed into something greater than before.

However, he knew that he needed to wait until he formed a Nascent Soul before doing that. The power he would have access to at that time was the only way he would be able to break the shackle.

Chapter 594: Assessment During the Ceremony

It had been the same with the first and second levels of the Undying Live Forever Technique. Shortly after making initial contact with the shackle, it was possible to make use of cultivation base power to break it.

As Bai Xiaochun sat there motionless, eyes glittering, a second shadowy figure appeared in the room. That figure was no clone, but rather, an afterimage created by the manifestation of his incredible speed.

In fact, the figure remained in place for a long moment before fading away.

There was no need to perform any more tests. He could tell that his speed had broken through to another level, and although he couldn't determine exactly how quickly he could move, he knew that it would be difficult for even a deva to catch him.

“The Undying Skin focuses on defenses!

“The Undying Heavenly King focuses on power!

“The Undying Tendons focus on explosive speed....

“In that case, what does the fourth level, the Undying Bones, focus on?” Such thoughts filled Bai Xiaochun with deep anticipation.

“Too bad it's too difficult to cultivate before reaching the Nascent Soul stage.... Plus, resources in the Wildlands are severely lacking. The Undying Bones will require even more resources than the Undying Tendons....” After a bit more thought, he suppressed his disappointment. Settling his qi and clearing his mind, he set about solidifying his advancement with his Undying Tendons.

Meanwhile, the appointed day to open the ancestral land grew

nearer and nearer. At the same time, the clan was preparing to hold a grand ceremony to offer sacrifices to their ancestors.

This was a custom of the Bai Clan; such ceremonies were always held when the ancestral land was to be opened. During the ceremony, all members of the clan, no matter which bloodline they came from, would attend. Furthermore, high-ranking members of the clan would perform assessments of the clan members, and give out rewards to exceptional individuals.

Oftentimes, members of other clans would be invited to attend, and usually, the giant ghost king would send a representative to join the festivities.

After all, it wasn't a simple matter to open the ancestral land, and it only happened once every so often.

The ceremony was held the day before the opening of the ancestral land, in the central district of the Bai Clan, in the ancestral shrine hall.

The other two great necromancer clans sent representatives, as did the giant ghost king. The entire Bai Clan bustled with activity as the final preparations were made.

The shrine hall in the central district featured an enormous square, within which had been erected a huge stone gateway. The gateway was carved with the image of a middle-aged man, whose stern gaze seemed to look condescendingly upon all creation. That man was none other than the founding patriarch of the Bai Clan!

The shrine hall was surrounded by crowds from the Bai Clan, more than 10,000 individuals. There wasn't even enough room for them on the ground, so many sat at tables which floated in the air. It was a grand sight to take in.

The older members of the clan sat nearest the shrine hall, smiles on their faces as they chatted with the representatives from the other clans.

Everyone was simply waiting for the ceremony to begin.

Madam Cai and the other womenfolk sat in their own area, where they buzzed with conversation and made themselves quite the center of attention.

Bai Qi stood out in the crowd like a star in the night sky. He sat close to the shrine hall itself, and was surrounded by important people, including some chosen necromancers from the other clans, with whom he engaged in lively banter.

Of course, there were others from the auxiliary bloodlines nearby, none of whom stood out as much as Bai Qi did, but who were clearly special. One of them was the fifth young lady that Bai Xiaochun had met on his first day in the clan. She was beautiful, and despite her cold personality, was surrounded by quite a crowd of devotees.

There was another young man who was about the same age as Bai Qi. He was tall and muscular, and had a booming laugh that caused everyone to take a liking to him, clan member or not.

Although Bai Hao had been born a bastard, and had a very lowly position, he still had the blood of the Bai Clan in him. Therefore, he was also required to attend the ceremony. He didn't get to sit near the shrine hall itself, but rather, at one of the tables floating in the air.

As soon as he arrived, he noticed the fifth young lady and the burly young man. During his time in the clan, he had learned a bit about them. The fifth young lady was named Bai Yan'er, and was known even in Giant Ghost City for her good looks. Quite a few young elites from the other clans had their eye on her.

As for the burly young man, his name was Bai Lei, and he was a chosen from one of the auxiliary bloodlines. Although his cultivation base wasn't at the same level as Bai Qi's, he was still in late Core Formation. In fact, he and Bai Qi were considered to be the two rising stars of the clan!

However, the two of them didn't get along very well, a fact that was well known in the clan.

Together, those three were the focus of much attention in the ceremony.

Were it not for the fact that it was required of him, Bai Xiaochun wouldn't have come. As he looked around at the crowds, he contemplated his plans for the ancestral land tomorrow.

"I should plant the murdersoul spikes later today," he thought. Suddenly, he felt as if someone were looking at him. Glancing around casually, he realized that it was Madam Cai, who sat with the other womenfolk, glaring at him venomously.

"She managed to find me even though I'm sitting so far away...." he thought, surprised. He was sitting in a very inconspicuous position, a place that should have made it difficult to lay eyes on him. And yet, Madam Cai had managed to locate him even in the crowd.

Without even thinking about it, Bai Xiaochun glared back at Madam Cai with such ferocity that her eyes went wide. However, a moment later, the venom returned. Before she could do anything else, though, the sound of bells rang out.

The crowd quickly went silent. At the same time, three beams of light appeared off in the distance. In the lead position was the clan chief, and he was flanked by two old men with cultivation bases in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. They were none other than the grand elders who ran the Hall of Corrections and the Hall of Justice.

After arriving outside the shrine hall, the clan chief began to speak in a loud voice, "To all members of the Bai Clan who have gathered here today...."

All the clan members listened eagerly, but as for Bai Xiaochun, he wasn't interested at all, and simply closed his eyes.

All sorts of complicated details about the ancestral land were explained, things that didn't really affect most members of the clan. Only the outstanding figures who planned to participate in the event needed to listen.

Occasionally, bells would ring out, causing ripples to spread out through the cloud-filled sky, and create auspicious signs.

Bai Xiaochun would crack his eye open every once in a while. Feeling very much like an immortal hiding in the mundane world, he would think, "I've witnessed far greater spectacles than this before."

A few hours passed, and evening fell. The sacrifices to the ancestors were finished, and the bells began to ring again. Bai Xiaochun yawned and opened his eyes. Having come to the assumption that everything was over, he prepared to leave. However, it was at that point that the grand elder in charge of the Hall of Justice, who was sitting in front of the huge stone gate, chuckled.

"Alright, alright," he said. "Since the clan chief insists, and no one else will back down, I guess I'll carry out the assessment this time around." The grand elder's chuckle was sonorous, and backed by the profundity of his cultivation base, causing illusory ripples to spread out in all directions. There was even a cloud of souls that swirled around him as he spoke.

Looks of reverence could be seen in the eyes of the rest of the clan members as they looked over at him. Even the representatives from the other clans and the emissary from Giant Ghost City had very serious expressions on their faces.

When Bai Xiaochun felt the old man's cultivation base fluctuations, he looked over at him with a serious expression. He was clearly half a step into the Deva Realm, similar to Bai Lin. Furthermore, from the soul power fluctuations coming off of him, he was obviously a necromancer.

“He’s likely in the terrestrial rank, with profound skill in necromancy. That would explain why so many souls appeared at the mere echo of his voice....”

Even as Bai Xiaochun contemplated the subject, the grand elder continued to speak. “Young heroes of the Bai Clan, all of you are aware that the ultimate pinnacle of spirit enhancement is the legendary thirtyfold enhancement, something which no one has ever actually accomplished. Even twentyfold spirit enhancements are virtually unheard of. Therefore, I would like to ask all of you this question: what do you think would happen to this simple feather if it received a thirtyfold enhancement?” Smiling, he held up a feather.

It seemed completely ordinary in nature, lacking in anything which could be considered unusual. It was really just a simple feather.

“There is no correct answer to the question. Based on your skill in spirit enhancement, consider the question for a moment. After all, there are some things in life which can never become a reality unless you ponder them deeply first!

Chapter 595: Bite My Tongue

As the grand elder's words echoed out, the clan members gathered by the shrine hall all looked on with thoughtful expressions. Apparently, a lot of consideration had been put into how this assessment would be carried out....

There was no set answer. Rather, each response would be based on each person's varied experiences and skill sets in spirit enhancement. As such, it would be a true test of each individual's level of enlightenment.

The question also touched upon matters of flame conjuring and soul medicine. Although the other two were different branches of study, one's abilities in those regards would affect one's understanding of spirit enhancement. Therefore, although the question seemed simple, it was actually extraordinarily complex!

Furthermore, it was exactly as the grand elder had said; if one did not dare to contemplate certain matters, then it would be impossible to make them a reality. In some ways, his question actually pertained to each person's Dao!

It wasn't just the ordinary members of the Bai Clan who were suddenly looking very thoughtful. The clan elders and the clan chief all seemed to be pondering the question as well.

Even the representatives from the other two clans and the emissary from Giant Ghost City were all sitting there in quiet contemplation. Furthermore, from the nature of the question, it was possible to see that the grand elder from the Hall of Justice had extremely profound skill in spirit enhancement.

No one responded to the question. The area outside the stone gate was completely silent, to the point where it would have been possible to hear a pin drop. Everyone was considering the assessment question. This type of assessment was a custom during the ceremony of ancestral sacrifice in the Bai Clan. Theoretically

speaking, the question was addressed to everyone, but the reality was that only a few people would actually speak up and answer it.

Usually, the chosen from any given bloodline would represent that bloodline to speak out in answer. As could be imagined, the competition between the various bloodlines in this matter was fierce.

Of course, the elders of the clan were aware of that, and actually encouraged the competition. As long as such competition was kept under control, it was a way to ensure that the blood of the clan pumped strong and hard in the veins of the clan members.

Bai Xiaochun rolled his eyes. To others, this question would be a difficult one to answer, especially because there was no way to prove whether one was right or wrong. But to Bai Xiaochun... it was far too simple.

After all, in the trial by fire in the labyrinth, he had personally performed spirit enhancements well beyond the twentyfold level. Although he hadn't reached the thirtieth level, he had seen the clues pointing to the outcome.

Clearing his throat, he thought, "If I answer this question, it really would be cheating...."

Although he was itching to give a response and see what happened, he believed himself to be a straightforward and upright person. Furthermore, despite the fact that he could cheat if necessary, in this case, it wouldn't be very helpful, and in fact, could cause more suspicion to be cast on him.

With such thoughts on his mind, he yawned and pretended that he wasn't even listening.

After a long moment, the grand elder from the Hall of Justice looked around at the gathered members of the clan, smiled, and said, "Who would like to answer first?"

After a long moment of silence, one of the young men seated next

to Bai Qi, who was also a member of the direct bloodline, rose to his feet with glittering eyes.

“Senior, I am Bai Li, and I wish to answer the question.” Instantly, all of the other clan members present looked over. When they identified who it was that had spoken, it was possible to see expressions of scorn, jealousy, coldness, and other various emotions.

As for the clan elders, some seemed bored, whereas others were nodding in encouragement. The clan chief gave a slight nod.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the young man out of the corner of his eye, curious as to what he would say.

Bai Li was very excited to be the center of so much attention, and was already glad he had spoken up first. At the least, he would garner a bit more attention from the Senior generation. Clearing his throat and putting a very solemn expression onto his face, he said, “Senior, based on my understanding, if you perform a thirtyfold spirit enhancement on that feather, it will most likely transform into a precious treasure. In fact, to call it a precious treasure would probably be an understatement!”

With that, the young man looked nervously at the grand elder from the Hall of Justice.

However, before the grand elder could even say anything, ripples of laughter spread out through the audience. Many shaking heads could be seen, as well as chuckles of scorn.

“What a load of garbage.”

“Even a complete moron could guess that an ordinary object that receives a thirtyfold spirit enhancement would become a precious treasure.”

A strange expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun’s face as he looked at Bai Li. As for Bai Li, he could hear what people around him were saying, and the laughter, and immediately, his face

turned scarlet.

“It was a brave thing to speak first,” said the grand elder, smiling. Instead of offering an assessment, he looked around and said, “Would anyone else like to give an answer?”

Bai Li sat down, looking extremely embarrassed. However, despite the fact that his answer had mostly been a cheap trick, his goal had been to get some attention, and from what he could tell, it had worked. When he thought about that, his mood perked up, and he even felt quite pleased.

Because Bai Li had dared to speak up, more of the clan members in the audience began to do the same.

“Grand Elder, I think that after performing a thirtyfold spirit enhancement on the feather, it would become enormous! It would probably be big enough to blot out the sun and the moon!”

“Grand Elder, my bet is that the feather would transform into a fan! A feathered fan that could rock heaven and earth!”

“Grand Elder, in my judgement, if that fan got a thirtyfold enhancement, it would probably become a feather sword that could dominate everything!”

“Not necessarily! Grand Elder, I think that the feathered fan would become a sealing mark that you could use to grow wings!”

Answers and explanations of all sorts filled the air. The clan elders smiled and listened, nodding occasionally, but mostly just sitting there quietly.

As for the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, his expression was the same as ever the entire time. He seemed to be pondering all of the answers given, but not taking any of them too seriously.

Bai Xiaochun, on the other hand, had to hold back from jumping in to correct people. Considering how amazing he was, this was an amazing opportunity to show off, which was one of his favorite pastimes. However, he suppressed that urge with every answer

that he heard.

“I have to just bite my tongue,” he told himself. “There’s no point in jumping into the conversation. No point at all!” Eventually, one of the two rising stars of the clan, Bai Lei, shot to his feet.

Immediately, everyone went quiet, and all gazes came to be fixed upon him. Even Bai Qi looked over, his eyes narrowed.

The representatives from the other two clans and the emissary from Giant Ghost City were all aware of Bai Lei’s reputation in the clan, and were also very interested to see what he would say.

“Grand Elder, Junior isn't very skilled at spirit enhancement. Based on what I know, it’s hard for me to guess what a thirtyfold spirit enhanced feather would become. However, I can well imagine that after the thirtieth enhancement, the feather might become some sort of spirit. There are flame spirits and wood spirits in the world, so perhaps there are also feather spirits!” Bai Lei’s words caused many in the audience to look either shocked or moved.

The elders’ eyes glittered, and many smiles could be seen on their faces. As for the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, he actually nodded for the first time!

That nod provoked quite a response from the various members of the Bai Clan, and discussions immediately broke out in the crowd.

Bai Xiaochun looked over at Bai Lei curiously. Although the ‘feather spirit’ answer wasn’t completely correct, it was actually more in line with the truth than any of the other answers so far.

As the audience talked about what Bai Lei had just said, a few more clan members spoke up to give answers of their own. However, none of them could compare to Bai Lei’s, and many were obviously just variations of what he had said. The clan elders were all shrewd people, and realized this instantly.

Eventually, the fifth young lady rose, bowed, and then gave a simple answer that attracted a lot of attention.

“Grand Elder, I think... that it would become a rainbow. I know that feathers and rainbows aren’t necessarily related to each other, but I still think that a rainbow is the answer.” As she sat back down, the grand elder nodded, and for the first time, provided some feedback.

“Anything and everything is possible. Not a bad answer.” At this point, the grand elder’s eyes came to rest on Bai Qi. Clearly, he was curious what the number one chosen in the Bai Clan would say as his answer.

Actually, he wasn’t the only one looking at Bai Qi. The other clan elders, as well as many other ordinary clan members, were all waiting for his answer. Considering how many other people had spoken up so far, it was definitely time for him to speak.

Seeing how so many eyes had come to rest on him, Bai Qi smiled faintly and then rose to his feet. After bowing to the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, he looked up, eyes sparkling with the utmost self-confidence.

A proud gleam could be seen in Madam Cai’s eyes, and anticipation was even visible in the clan chief’s expression. From the soft look in the clan chief’s eyes, it was obvious that he viewed Bai Qi differently than the others.

“Fifth Junior Sis and Junior Brother Lei both provided part of the answer. Perhaps it was a bit misleading for me to wait so long to give my answer, I hope you can all forgive me. Spirit enhancement is one of the foundations of cultivation in the Wildlands, and can manifest countless variations. After a twentyfold enhancement, it would indeed be possible for the feather to become a rainbow or a feather spirit. However, there is more to a thirtyfold enhancement than that!” Bai Qi appeared to be in extremely high spirits, and seemed thoroughly captivating as he

stood there, single-handedly surpassing all of the other clan members in his generation.

“It is impossible to say for sure what will happen after a thirtyfold enhancement. However, I am eighty percent sure that the feather will become a true, living bird, a phoenix that could dance in the highest heavens, the foremost among all birds in the world!”

Chapter 596: Bai Xiaochun's Answer!

Bai Qi spoke loudly and clearly, and even backed his voice with the power of his extraordinary cultivation base. As a result, everything in the area trembled, and the clouds in the evening sky roiled in shocking fashion.

It was almost as if heaven and earth were confirming that his answer was correct. The faces of the clan members in the area all flickered, and many seemed to suddenly be struck with new insights. Countless shining eyes focused on Bai Qi.

“A phoenix that could dance in the highest heavens, the foremost among all birds in the world! This answer....”

“How come I didn’t think of an answer like that!?!?”

“I would never have dared to think in such a way. How could a single feather actually turn into a living creature!?!?”

The fifth young lady trembled, seemingly lost in thought. As for Bai Lei, although his hands were clenched into defiant fists, inside he was sighing. He knew that his own skill in spirit enhancement didn’t match up to Bai Qi’s, and that Bai Qi’s answer was certain to become a legend in the clan.

Bai Xiaochun’s gaze sharpened as he looked over at Bai Qi. Although the answer wasn’t the correct one, it showed that Bai Qi had already begun to forge his own path of spirit enhancement.

“Sadly, it's still wrong!” he thought. Bai Xiaochun knew that it didn’t matter that Bai Qi had begun to forge his own path. In the end, that path would never become a reality.

Madam Cai’s face was flushed with pride and excitement as she looked at Bai Qi. The fact that this blazing sun of the clan was her own son left her feeling extremely pleased.

And then there was the clan chief, who was Bai Qi’s father. He looked very satisfied; clearly, Bai Qi was definitely the qilin son of

the clan as far as he was concerned.

The other elders were visibly moved and even shocked by Bai Qi's answer. In fact, the grand elder from the Hall of Justice actually stood up. Smiling, he said, "Excellent! You truly are the qilin son of the Bai Clan! Truth be told, I can't say if your answer is correct or not, but what I can say is that your boldness is the type that can dominate mountains and rivers!" The grand elder threw his head back and laughed heartily. The praise in his eyes was clear; obviously, Bai Qi's answer was in line with what the grand elder had already come to understand about spirit enhancement.

Based on the skills he had developed, he had long since come to understand that spirit enhancement was broken up into different realms. The ability to create rainbows or feather spirits was one realm, but just as Bai Qi had said, there was clearly a higher realm.

Looking over with a smile at the clan chief, the grand elder said, "No wonder the patriarch has taken such a liking to Bai Qi. That would explain why he agreed to open the ancestral land for him. In terms of spirit enhancement enlightenment and latent talent, he is clearly extraordinary."

"He doesn't deserve such praise, Grand Elder," the clan chief said. "The kid still needs a lot more training." However, it was impossible for him to hide how pleased he was.

Considering that the grand elder had approved of Bai Qi's answer, the other clan members began to raise their voices in praise. It was a thunderous cacophony that filled the area, causing Bai Qi to suck in his breath in surprise, and leaving Madam Cai visibly moved, her eyes shining with unprecedented levels of pride.

"That bastard Bai Hao might be good at spirit enhancement," she thought, "but he's definitely not as good as my Qi'er. The only difference is that Qi'er doesn't like to make a big show of his skills."

Bai Xiaochun was not very impressed at all by how everyone seemed to be fawning over Bai Qi. In fact, he couldn't hold back from yawning openly. "The Young Master doesn't wish to sink to your level," he thought, "otherwise I'd reveal the answer out loud, and all of your jaws would drop."

By now, this so-called assessment was getting so boring that he was really wondering when it would all just end. However, it was in that moment that the pompous, preening Bai Qi looked out into the crowd and happened to spot Bai Hao yawning. Malice glimmering in his eyes, he laughed loudly.

"Bai Hao!" he called out. "Didn't you say that you were talented in spirit enhancement? Everybody else gave an answer for the assessment, perhaps you would like to do the same? Come on, let's hear it. There's no need to feel embarrassed." An enigmatic smile could be seen on Bai Qi's face. He really did sound like an older brother offering a bit of encouragement to his younger brother. However, his sinister goal was clearly to humiliate Bai Hao.

He was obviously completely confident that the answer he had given left no room for anyone else to say anything worthwhile. Any answer that was given would have to either touch on something immaterial, or something corporeal. Therefore, as far as Bai Qi could tell, no matter what answer Bai Hao gave, he could accuse him of copying his own answer. Then he could act like the older brother and publicly teach Bai Hao another lesson!

That would once again cause Bai Hao to lose a huge amount of face in front of the clan. Furthermore, because he had already been found guilty of cheating, then when the ancestral land opened and Bai Qi found an excuse to kill him, no one would think to even complain.

As soon as the words left Bai Qi's mouth, everything went quiet, and all eyes turned to Bai Xiaochun.

"Bai Hao is nothing more than a Foundation Establishment

cultivator. What answer could he possibly give that would be worth listening to? I'd say there's an eighty to ninety percent chance he'll just chicken out and refuse to say anything."

"Watch, I bet he says that it'll become a phoenix which could dance in the highest heavens, the foremost among all birds in the world.... That would be pushing the limits of shamelessness though, wouldn't it?"

"You never know. He cheated his way to 1st place in all three clan trials by fire. That alone shows you how shameless Bai Hao is. It's a good thing Bai Qi puts righteousness above family ties, and wiped his name off of the stone steles."

Although most of the gazes were those of scorn and disdain, there were a few that seemed to contain pity at the malice being put on display by Bai Qi.

The fifth young lady and Bai Lei were among those who looked at Bai Hao with pity. Although neither of them knew him well, the fact that Bai Qi hated him so much earned him their sympathy.

Unfortunately, there was no way for them to stop what was happening right now, not when Bai Qi was at the peak of glory.

It only took Madam Cai a moment of thought to realize what her son was up to. Although she was a bit worried about what might result, she trusted Bai Qi's judgement, and thus, looked over at Bai Xiaochun with an intensely sinister glare.

A placid expression filled the clan chief's eyes, as if he had no idea what Bai Qi was planning to do. As he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, the other clan elders did the same, their eyes flickering with amusement as they exchanged silent glances. As for the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, he wasn't a member of the official clan circle of elders, and although he couldn't be said to be completely impartial in all clan affairs, he came close. Smiling, he looked over at Bai Hao, whom he had never paid much attention to before.

Bai Xiaochun frowned as he studied Bai Qi's vicious smile. Slowly, Bai Xiaochun's own eyes turned icier as he realized how vile Bai Qi really was. Earlier, he had been planning to keep a low profile, but now that Bai Qi was going so far as to force his hand, it seemed he had no choice. Since Bai Qi was feeling suicidal, Bai Xiaochun would respect his wishes! Snorting coldly, he rose to his feet.

As he did, the scorn among the audience grew more intense.

“He's actually standing up? Well isn't this amusing. Let's see how he copies Bai Qi's 'bird' answer.”

“He really overestimates himself. Bai Hao, the bastard son, daring to compete with the best in the clan!”

“People like him can do nothing but cheat. He's a disgrace to the entire Bai Clan!”

Bai Xiaochun heard the things that people were saying. He could see the venom in Madam Cai's eyes, and the coldness in the clan chief's. He also saw the expressions on the faces of the clan elders. Of particular note was that no one did anything to stop the derisive talk. In fact, almost everyone in the clan was speaking scornfully of him.

As for the representatives from the two other clans and the emissary from Giant Ghost City, they were clearly taken aback by the commotion, and were looking at Bai Xiaochun. However, despite all of these things, Bai Xiaochun felt no anger.

Sticking his chin up, he looked around at the crowd as if they were a bunch of house sparrows that could be crushed to death in the blink of an eye. Swishing his sleeve in very proud and aloof fashion, he pointed at Bai Qi and growled, “I didn't want to say anything, but since you've come to me looking to be humiliated, you villain, then I'll do just that.”

Bai Qi's eyes flickered with killing intent as he chuckled coldly.

“Whatever answer you come up with will seem amazing to you, but will sound like a bucket of dog crap to me!”

Bai Xiaochun swished his sleeve again. Although he only unleashed the fluctuations of a Foundation Establishment cultivation base, it definitely made him look like a grand figure.

“Very well, I’ll tell you the correct answer to the question of thirtyfold spirit enhancement!

“That one feather will become a world of its own. In fact, anything that receives a thirtyfold spirit enhancement will become its own world!” Bai Xiaochun’s voice boomed like thunder, spreading out in all directions and piercing into the hearts of all clan members.

His answer seemed to provoke reactions from the magical laws of heaven and earth! His voice was like heavenly thunder that rocked everything in the area, completely shattering the cloud layer up above.

Evening light spilled down from above, bathing Bai Xiaochun in brightness, causing him to suddenly radiate a very profound air.

In response to his words, the eyes of many clan members went wide. They felt as if their minds were being struck by lightning, and even Bai Qi began to shiver visibly as an extremely unsightly expression overtook his face.

Never could Bai Qi have imagined that Bai Hao would give an answer like this. There wasn’t even a need to try to compare it with his own answer. Regardless of whether or not that answer was correct, anyone could see that it vastly surpassed the answers of anyone else present, and had crushed his own answer into smithereens.

Chapter 597: Condemned By Law!

How shocking!!

It only took one short moment for all mouths to be silenced.... Some people had been making fun of Bai Hao, others had been deriding him. Some had been looking on in boredom, others had been enjoying the excitement. But as of this moment, everyone looked like statues frozen in place with shock.

As the moments ticked by, and people began to recover, the sound of panting could be heard. Expressions of shock and disbelief could be seen everywhere. As for the fifth young lady and Bai Lei, they were clearly reeling in astonishment, and were staring at Bai Xiaochun with almost complete disbelief.

The silence only wore on for a short time, though, before the entire clan erupted into a huge commotion. People shot to their feet, looking ever at Bai Xiaochun with shock and other mixed emotions. Soon, there were even expressions of admiration.

“That answer... surpasses all of the other answers!!”

“Heavens! Is that really Bai Hao? The useless, pathetic Bai Hao? It will become its own world... this... this type of boldness, the type that can dominate mountains and rivers, how is it even possible?!?!”

“A world, a whole world.... That must be it! That must be the correct answer!!”

“How... how is this even possible?!?!”

Bai Xiaochun simply stood there, the focus of all attention. Although he wasn't very impressive physically, there was something casual and even transcendent about how he carried himself. At the moment, nobody was looking at Bai Qi. Bai Xiaochun's words had completely eclipsed him, stolen all of his thunder. Bai Xiaochun now seemed completely dazzling, as if all

the glory had always belonged to him from the very beginning.

Bai Qi's face drained of blood, and although he wanted to offer some retort, he soon realized there was nothing for him to say. After hearing the answer which had just been given, he realized that, for some reason... he knew it to be true!!

He wasn't the only one to have such a realization. The clan elders were all clearly moved, and were looking at Bai Xiaochun with expressions of amazement. Some of them had even risen to their feet in wonderment.

The grand elder from the Hall of Justice was trembling, and even his lips quivered in shock. The gleam of augury could be seen in his eyes, and his breath came in ragged pants; even his cultivation base was teetering unstably.

He had a look on his face that said he had just been struck with perfect enlightenment, as if he could now see everything clearly. Soon, a look of flushed excitement appeared on his face.

Madam Cai and the clan chief were struck most deeply. As for the clan chief, he wasn't sure what to think. However, to see Bai Hao basking in radiant glory didn't make him feel even slightly gratified. Instead, rage began to bubble up in him. In his estimation, he was looking at nothing more than an unfilial son, which caused killing intent to rise up within him.

The more outstanding Bai Hao proved to be, the more it felt to the clan chief like he was being slapped in the face. As he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, the fires of fury could be seen clearly in his eyes. However, he quickly covered them up; after all, he was the clan chief.

The clan chief managed to suppress his rage, but Madam Cai was entirely incapable of doing so. Bai Xiaochun's one simple answer had turned the entire situation upside down, and had stolen all of the glory away from Bai Qi. When she saw how ashen Bai Qi's face was, it filled her heart with pain, and caused her hatred for Bai Hao

to grow to greater heights.

“Complete hogwash!” she screamed. “Bai Hao, you impudent son of a bitch, shut the hell up! Men, take this bastard away and have him killed in body and soul!!” Madam Cai seemed to have completely lost her mind. Most of the clan guards in the area were clearly hesitating about whether or not to follow her orders, but a few of them gritted their teeth and began to make their way toward Bai Xiaochun.

But then, Bai Xiaochun spun to face Madam Cai and said, “The only impudent one here is you!

“This is a Bai Clan ceremony, and I'm a member of the Bai Clan. I was simply answering a question posed by the grand elder. How dare you go so far as to disrupt the ceremony! Could you be more impudent?!

“Clan Chief, this woman has no blood of the Bai Clan in her. At best, she could count as half a clan member. And yet, she dares to act like a madwoman in plain view of the entire clan, and in the presence of the spirits of our dear ancestors! For showing disrespect to our clan ceremony, I request that you immediately punish her to the full extent possible under the clan rules. Clan Chief, she must definitely receive the death penalty!” Bai Xiaochun counter attacked with a watertight argument, with vicious words, and with complete righteousness. There was nothing anyone present could say to find fault with his words.

The members of the auxiliary bloodlines who weren't fond of Bai Qi and Madam Cai suddenly turned with shining eyes to look at Bai Hao, almost as if they were seeing him for the first time.

Bai Lei was looking at him with a curious gleam in his eyes, and suddenly felt the impulse to go over and introduce himself. The fifth young lady was also shocked, and had a similar expression on her face.

There were even some among the clan elders who gazed at him

with glittering eyes.

Bai Qi's expression flickered in response to the killing intent in Bai Xiaochun's words. Chest puffing up in rage, he bellowed, "What gall you have to offend your superiors, Bai Hao. You--"

Before he could finish speaking, Bai Xiaochun turned and barked, "Shut the hell up!"

"I have the blood of the Bai Clan running in my veins, and that makes me a member of the clan just like everyone else. I'm here to offer sacrifices to the ancestors, and did nothing more than answer a question posed by the grand elder. Gall, you say? Of course I have gall! That's exactly what our ancestors want to see! The gall to stand up for our clan!"

"Offend my superiors? That's exactly what clause nine of the clan rules talks about! When offering sacrifices to the ancestors, all clan members of all bloodlines are separated according to their rank. And during the ceremony, who are the true superiors? The ancestors! Bai Qi, don't tell me that you think this woman is one of the Bai Clan's ancestors? Don't forget, Bai Qi, her surname isn't Bai, it's Cai!"

"Therefore, it seems to me that the person offending their superiors here is none other than you, Bai Qi!!" Bai Xiaochun's booming words stabbed like swords into Bai Qi, causing his mind to reel and sending him staggering backward. Although he wanted to argue back, he couldn't find any words to do so, and ended up merely coughing up a mouthful of blood.

"Bai Hao! You...."

Even as everyone looked in in mute shock at what was happening, Bai Xiaochun turned toward the grim-faced clan chief, toward whom he clasped hands and bowed.

"Clan Chief, first, I must request that you punish this woman for disrupting the ancestral sacrifices. For disturbing the peace of our

ancestors, she fully deserves to be killed in body and soul! Second, I must request that you punish Bai Qi for his unfilial act of confusing the identities of our ancestors. Clearly, he has forgotten that his own surname is Bai, which is an act of complete unfaithfulness. Unfilial, unfaithful, and disrespectful people like him do not deserve to be members of the Bai Clan!”

Bai Xiaochun’s thunderous words left all members of the clan visibly shaken. To counter attack by calling for his enemies to be put to death according to clan rules was something that no one could ever have imagined would happen. No one could even react, and many clan members were so astonished they couldn’t even think. To many of them, it was as if their entire world had suddenly been turned upside down.

The representatives from the other two clans were deeply shaken, especially the one from the Cai Clan, who seemed very displeased, and was staring at Bai Xiaochun with a very serious expression. Bai Xiaochun’s intent was clear, and it was no underhanded scheme: it was an open attack! It was also an opportunity for all of the auxiliary bloodlines in the clan, something that the representatives from the other two clans, as well as the emissary from Giant Ghost City, took very seriously.

The clan elders began to exchange glances. The internal affairs of the Bai Clan had already been rocky, and now, the auxiliary bloodlines suddenly had a golden opportunity.

Even as everyone pondered the situation, Madam Cai saw Bai Qi cough up blood, and suddenly went even more crazy.

“Are you looking to die, you little son of a bitch!?!? Men, kill him immediately!!” In her rage, Madam Cai even flew up into the air, as if to attack Bai Xiaochun herself. As she did, the eyes of the clan elders glittered even more brightly as they prepared to jump up and start fighting. However, that was when the clan chief suddenly slapped his hand down onto the table in front of him.

A huge boom echoed out as the table exploded and transformed into nothing more than ash.

“Shut your mouth!” he roared. Waving his sleeve, he sent a burst of power slamming into Madam Cai, causing blood to spray out of her mouth as she tumbled out of the air.

“Take her into custody!” he continued through gritted teeth. Immediately, several clan guards hurried forward and dragged Madam Cai away.

The clan chief did nothing to disguise the killing intent in his eyes as he glared at Bai Xiaochun. “Happy now?!”

Bai Xiaochun glanced at Madam Cai being dragged away, then turned back to the glowering clan chief. Clearly not willing to back down, he clasped hands and said, “Young Bai Qi must be punished for his unfilial, unfaithful, and disrespectful actions!”

“Enough!” the clan chief shouted. This was his first time ever experiencing anything like this during his time as clan chief. The feeling of being forced into action was infuriating, and made him want to kill Bai Hao more than ever. In fact, were it not for the fact that he feared the auxiliary bloodlines, he would likely have killed him on the spot! “If you want him dead, then kill him yourself in the ancestral land.”

Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything in response, but inwardly, was chuckling coldly.

Bai Qi glared angrily at Bai Xiaochun, but was clearly afraid of provoking him into further speech. Considering that his mother had been dragged off to be punished, and his father was enraged, all he could do was grit his teeth and swear an oath to kill Bai Hao in the ancestral land!

Obviously, it was not appropriate to continue with the ceremony of ancestral sacrifices.

“The ceremony is over!” the clan chief said with the flick of a

sleeve.

However, it was at that point that the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, whose eyes had been flickering with the glow of augury up to this point, suddenly looked over at Bai Xiaochun and said, “Wait a moment. Bai Hao, please continue with your explanation. How did you come up with the idea that a thirtyfold spirit enhancement would create a new world?”

His expression was sincere, and his words were uttered with calm warmth. Apparently, he didn't care at all that there had been some tension between Bai Hao and the clan chief just now.

The truth was that as the grand elder of the Hall of Justice, the only people in the clan who could cause any problems for him were the patriarch and the grand elder from the Hall of Corrections. As for the clan chief... he didn't care about him at all.

The clan chief's expression couldn't have been more unsightly. He would never be able to forget everything which had occurred this day. However, he couldn't afford to provoke the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, and was therefore forced to sit there, wallowing in his rage. From the way he gritted his teeth and glared at Bai Hao, it was obvious to everyone how he felt about him.

Chapter 598: Preaching Ignorantly Of The Dao

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback. However, the grand elder from the Hall of Justice had spoken with warm sincerity, and seemed to be thirsting for knowledge. Apparently, he had no ill intent at all, and really wanted to know about the secrets of thirtyfold spirit enhancements.

Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything at first. Instead, he scrambled for a way to build on the incredible foundation he had already prepared. There had to be a way to show off a bit more, to build on the high profile he had already created, to the point where everyone would prostrate themselves in worship and admiration!

Of course, no one could tell from the look on his face that he was thinking about that. As for the grand elder, he simply waited in quiet anticipation.

Before Bai Xiaochun had provided his answer, most people in the clan had viewed him with scorn. But now, none of them dared to think in such a way. His explanation about the feather becoming a world had moved all of them. Then, his sharp tongue had forced the clan chief to take his own wife into custody. Bai Qi had come close to either being expelled from the clan or executed.

Because of all of that, Bai Hao seemed like a completely different person than the one they remembered....

Plus, they could all see that the grand elder from the Hall of Justice approved of him. With every moment that passed, Bai Hao's place in their hearts grew.

The fifth young lady was looking at him with a curious gleam in her eyes. Of course, because of the drastic change in Bai Hao that had just been revealed, it occurred to her that he might be an imposter. In fact, she wasn't the only one to have such thoughts;

the clan elders were also thinking the same thing.

It was the same with the clan chief, who even secretly checked the clan's defensive spell formation to determine whether this was really Bai Hao or not!

The clan spell formation could perform deep analyses of the blood of anyone in the clan, and therefore, if this person was not Bai Hao, but someone else who had secretly entered the clan by some unknown means, it would be able to detect it.

Everyone in the clan knew that, including the fifth young lady. Therefore, she put such thoughts of imposters out of her mind, and continued to wait in anticipation for further explanation from Bai Hao.

It was the same with Bai Lei, who by now was fully convinced that he had simply overlooked Bai Hao in the past, and that his sudden rise to prominence was a good thing.

Not everyone in the clan was happy, though. The hearts of the all the direct bloodline descendants seethed with venomous hatred, although they didn't dare to reveal that in their facial expressions. After all, Bai Hao's actions hadn't just humiliated Bai Qi and Madam Cai; they had humiliated the entire direct bloodline.

In fact, as far as they were concerned, because Bai Hao was also part of the direct bloodline, he was a traitor!

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, Bai Xiaochun looked up, his eyes glittering. Facing the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, he clasped hands and bowed.

The grand elder's expression brightened, and he sat there patiently, waiting to hear what was about to be said. It was the same with the other clan elders, all of whom had very somber expressions on their faces.

“Allow me to answer your question, Grand Elder. My speculations regarding thirtyfold spirit enhancements were rather

arbitrary. The thing is, Junior is a rather lonely person, with no brothers or sisters, nor any friends. Oftentimes, I sit alone and daydream about the world around me, feeling alone, as though I am the only person left alive in the entire world....

“Perhaps that feeling of loneliness is what makes me dream of having wings, and of flying off into the distance....” As he spoke, his voice slowly grew more and more hoarse, as though he were immersing himself in memories of his youth.

Most clan members knew a bit about Bai Hao’s situation, and when they heard his words, they could easily imagine a lonely young boy sitting there looking up into the sky and daydreaming about the world.

Many of the clan elders seemed moved. As for the fifth young lady, she wasn’t sure why, but she suddenly felt very melancholy.

Bai Xiaochun was pleased to see this reaction. During the time he had spent thinking moments ago, he had considered long and hard how to give an answer that would shock and move everyone present.

Although Bai Xiaochun didn’t view himself as someone who was adept at bragging and impressing people, he could at least leave them feeling somewhat moved. As he continued to speak, his voice floated in the wind, almost as if they had originated in his youth, and had drifted through the streams of time into the present....

“I often wonder about the shape of the world itself... and how we came to exist in it.... Why are there souls, and why is there multi-colored flame? Why is there such a thing as spirit enhancement...?”

“I often wonder if there really are immortals in the world. And I wonder how people learned to practice cultivation....”

“I often wonder about the sky, which is so vast. Is there something else beyond it? Is there another world out there? If there is, what does it look like...?” Although he spoke in little more

than a murmur, everyone could hear him clearly. The entire area was completely quiet, and everyone was immersed in his words.

The clan elders were holding their breaths, all of them struck with the realization that they had mistakenly overlooked Bai Hao in the past....

That was especially true of the grand elder from the Hall of Justice. His expression flickered through numerous emotions as he thought back to what Bai Hao had been like as a youth. Considering the words he was speaking now, he could almost see what he was describing.

"Are there people in that world beyond ours? If there are... what do we look like to them...?" Bai Xiaochun's eyes gazed softly into nowhere as he continued to speak.

"For all we know, the place we live in is actually an object that some almighty being performed a thirtyfold spirit enhancement on, turning it into a world!!!" As his words echoed out, the sounds of gasps could be heard among the audience.

"Can anyone explain why we even know about spirit enhancements to begin with? Can anyone explain where the practice of performing spirit enhancements came from?!?!"

After a dramatic pause, he concluded, "And that is my explanation!"

Once again, he clasped hands to the grand elder, and then stood there silently. Inwardly, he felt completely pleased. Even he wasn't quite sure of the exact meaning of the words he had uttered; he had spent most of his time earlier trying to come up with some things that sounded incredibly profound and mysterious.

Although he didn't understand what he had just said, he was sure that it was enough to startle everyone. The more enigmatic his words sounded, the more profound mysteries of the Dao they seemed to contain, the better. At the moment, although he seemed

completely calm, he was actually surreptitiously looking around, hoping to see a positive reaction.

At the moment, silence reigned. Everyone was staring blankly at him, including the grand elder, whose heart was teetering in shock.

Bai Xiaochun could imagine how incredible he seemed, and could almost see the gears turning in their heads as they realized why he had come up with his answer of the feather becoming a world.

No one could recover from their shock immediately. It was only after about ten breaths of time passed that people began to gasp and utter various exclamations.

"There's another world beyond ours...?"

"What if we really live in some magical item that an almighty being performed a thirtyfold spirit enhancement on?!?!"

"Heavens! Isn't there a story about how the first generation arch-emperor created heaven and earth, and then died in battle to protect it for his people...?"

The fifth young lady and Bai Lei were shaking visibly. The more deeply they thought about the words Bai Xiaochun had just uttered, the more mysterious and profound they seemed.

After hearing the cries of shock, Bai Xiaochun finally calmed down. His goal of leaving everyone shaken had been met. To his pleasure, the clan elders were looking at him with shining eyes. As for the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, he rose to his feet, threw his head back and laughed at the top of his lungs.

"Excellent. Excellent! Excellent!!" Normally speaking, the grand elder was a very somber person who did little more than nod his head in acknowledgment to people. In fact, he had only said the word excellent once to Bai Qi.

But now, he said it three times. Furthermore, the excitement on his face showed how much he approved of Bai Hao. As for Bai Qi,

when he saw all of these things, he felt like he was being stabbed in the heart. His eyes instantly turned bloodshot, and his hands clenched tightly into fists.

Snarling, his killing intent grew even more intense, and he thought, "After I get the deva soul in the ancestral land, I'm definitely going to kill you!!"

As for the clan chief, it was with mixed emotions that he looked at Bai Xiaochun. However, that only lasted for a moment before he cleared his heart and filled it with only icy coldness.

"Just blame the fact that you're a bastard," he murmured in his heart. "Your mother was scum, and therefore you are destined to be scum. You refuse to submit, and constantly fight back. That's why you deserve the same fate as your mother: death!"

Chapter 599: The Ancestral Land Opens

"Among all the answers I have heard today, your answer is the most difficult to analyze and assess. It is also the answer that I find most pleasing!

"Well done, Bai Hao, very well done!" From the delighted laughter that echoed out of the grand elder's mouth, everyone present could tell how much he approved of Bai Hao.

From now on, Bai Hao would obviously have a much different standing than before. Bai Qi could only grit his teeth, and as for the clan chief, his expression turned grimmer and grimmer. Various thoughts existed within the hearts of all the clan members as the grand elder swished his sleeve and said, "Bai Hao, I have an official residence that, while not the best place to practice the necromantic arts, is still quite satisfactory. I hereby bequeath that residence to you for use in your cultivation. I hope that you can progress to the Core Formation stage quickly."

The grand elder was actually a bit disappointed by the fact that Bai Hao was not yet in the Core Formation stage. If he were, even if it was the early stage, he would officially take him under his wing, regardless of how much the clan chief objected.

Unfortunately, Bai Hao's cultivation base was only in early Foundation Establishment, which was too weak. Therefore, he gifted him with an official residence, which would not only sow good will with him, but would also help him probe the clan chief's intentions.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and then looked up in thought. As far as he was concerned, an official residence wouldn't really do him any good, and in fact, he was even considering simply asking for some vengeful souls as compensation instead. However, it was at that point that the clan chief spoke out in an icy voice.

"That would be far too much of an imposition, Grand Elder. I can

obviously provide for this son of mine on my own."

He spoke with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron, his voice filled with discontent and anger that sent the grand elder into silence. Obviously, there was little he could say on the subject.

Bai Xiaochun clasped hands and said, "Many thanks, Grand Elder." Then he cast a glance at the clan chief.

"Just can't bear to see anything go Bai Hao's way, huh?" he thought with a cold chuckle. "Well, I didn't want that official residence anyway. I want a deva soul! When the ancestral land gets opened tomorrow, you can just sit there and watch me take your clan's deva soul away from right under your nose!"

"The ceremony is concluded!" the clan chief said loudly. As far as he was concerned, this ancestral sacrifice ceremony made him feel like he'd swallowed a mosquito. Waving his sleeve, he transformed into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

The grand elder from the Hall of Justice watched him leave, then sighed inwardly. Bai Hao had a precarious position in the clan, which was quite a pity. Looking over at him, he gave an encouraging nod.

"Since your father has other plans, Bai Hao, I won't interfere. However, if you ever have any questions about cultivation, you can come to me any time to get some advice." With that, the grand elder left, as did the other clan elders. Bai Xiaochun watched them leave. So far, the grand elder from the Hall of Justice was one of the few people in the clan who he actually had a good impression of.

"He knows that Bai Hao is a bastard son, and that his father doesn't like him. Despite that, he still expressed his good will. Clearly, he's offering Bai Hao a bit of protection. Well, in that case, I should represent Bai Hao to take advantage of that protection."

Now that the ceremony was over, Bai Xiaochun left. His arrival

had been ignored by everyone, but his departure was the exact opposite. As of this point, everyone was paying attention to him. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't care.

His time dealing with all this pressure in the Bai Clan was coming to an end....

"Tomorrow is when everything will be made clear!" With that, he flew beneath the evening sky all the way back to the north district.

Virtually no one in the Bai Clan was able to sleep soundly that night. Bai Hao's sudden rise to prominence had them all feeling completely shaken. Bai Qi's fury, Madam Cai's mad screams, the clan chief's grim silence; these were images that would forever be imprinted on the hearts of all members of the clan.

Besides all that, the clan's ancestral land would be opened in the morning. Those who would be entering the ancestral land had one more night to prepare. Even the fifth young lady, who didn't particularly want to join the competition, sat in meditation to get herself into top condition. After all, in addition to the deva soul, there would be other rewards available, some of which would be of particular use to her.

Obviously, Bai Lei was aiming for the deva soul. Bai Qi was his direct competitor, and although he knew it wasn't likely that he would succeed, he was still itching to give it a shot.

And then there was Bai Qi. He planned to take all of the rage which had built up in his heart and vent it by killing Bai Hao in the ancestral land. He spent the entire night on breathing exercises, getting himself in the optimal condition to fight.

"The ancestral land is going to be your graveyard! Even if you beg to be exempt from going in, I'll make sure you have no choice in the matter. I'll drag you in myself if I have to!"

While everyone else in the Bai Clan made their final preparations, Bai Xiaochun took advantage of the darkness of night

and the powers of his mask to slip undetected through the clan and plant murdersoul spikes in numerous locations.

He had long since scouted out the clan and picked which locations were optimal to sabotage. Now, on the final night before the opening of the ancestral land, he carried out his plan.

Of course, all he did was put the murdersoul spikes in place. His plan was to wait until the right moment, and then detonate all of them simultaneously to completely shake the Bai Clan's defensive spell formation.

The night passed uneventfully....

Eventually, it was the deepest part of the night, when dawn was just around the corner. At that point, Bai Xiaochun's eyes opened, and they glowed like blazing swords as he looked around at his hut.

Although he hadn't been in the Bai Clan for very long, after everything he had experienced, he had come to a very clear understanding of what Bai Hao's life had been like.

"If your spirit is out there, Bai Hao," he murmured, "I hope you know about everything that's happened since your death. Perhaps you would even wish to put the people responsible to death. Well, although your Master doesn't usually participate in fighting and killing, this time, that's exactly what I feel like doing. And I'm going to do it for you."

Soon, bells tolled in the clan, indicating that the ancestral land was about to be opened!

As the bells tolled nine times, numerous clan members flew into the air and headed toward the stone gate outside the ancestral shrine hall in the central district.

Bai Xiaochun joined them, and before long, he was standing there by the stone gate. The instant he showed up, many eyes turned in his direction.

"I can't believe Bai Hao actually showed up...."

"Couldn't he see yesterday that Bai Qi wants him dead? If I were him, I would definitely just give up on the opportunities of the ancestral land...."

"Guess he's got a death wish, the overconfident little bastard!"

"Hmph. Well, he couldn't give up even if he wanted to!"

There were already a few hundred people gathered outside the ancestral shrine hall, most of them in the Foundation Establishment stage, with only a dozen or so being in Core Formation. All of them were engaged in hushed conversations.

Bai Qi was there, and as soon as he saw Bai Xiaochun arrive, he looked over with cold eyes and open killing intent.

The fifth young lady and Bai Lei were in the crowd as well, and seemed surprised that he had come.

Bai Xiaochun pretended not to hear all the discussions around him, and seemed completely and utterly calm as he looked at the stone gate.

A bit more time passed, and more people showed up, although most of them had come to observe, not participate. When they saw Bai Xiaochun standing there, more discussions broke out.

The representatives from the two other clans and the emissary from Giant Ghost City were also there. Eventually, the grand elder from the Hall of Justice showed up, and when he saw Bai Xiaochun, his eyes widened, and then his face settled into a frown.

Before the grand elder could say anything, though, the clan chief shot through the air and came to a stop in the air above the gate. Almost immediately, the discussions in the area ceased.

"So, the unfilial bastard showed up after all," he thought, looking down icily at Bai Xiaochun. Whenever the ancestral land was opened, all cultivators in Foundation Establishment and Core Formation were supposed to go in. However, anyone who didn't wish to could simply report in at the shrine hall, and would

generally not be forced to enter.

Actually, it was common for clan members to submit requests to be exempt from entering the ancestral land. Such requests were almost always granted. In fact, the clan chief had long since planned to approve of all such requests, with the exception of Bai Hao's.

And yet, no such a request had ever come in. Although that had made his little plan somewhat pointless, the fact that Bai Hao was here waiting left him chuckling coldly in his heart.

"So, looking to die, huh? Well, then at least I don't have to put family interests aside and kill you myself!" Turning his attention to the stone gate, he performed an incantation gesture and then waved his finger. That in turn touched the clan's spell formation, which caused the stone gate to begin shining with brilliant light. Gradually, it was possible to see a passageway opening up.

An ancient aura escaped, causing a powerful wind to sweep across everything in the area.

"The ancestral land is officially opened!" the clan chief said somberly. "After everyone has entered, the gate will close of its own accord, and will only open after someone acquires the deva soul. Once you enter, your own destinies will determine what good fortune you acquire. The ancestral land is not free from danger; it is a trial by fire, and throughout the years, fatalities have been known to occur, as all of you know! Now, enter the ancestral land!"

Chapter 600: Deva Soul

To open the Bai Clan ancestral land from the outside required major preparations over a long period of time. Furthermore, it necessitated a vast expenditure of resources.

Therefore, the entrance would only be left open for a short period of time, then closed again. Only after someone acquired the deva soul inside would they be able to use its power to open the ancestral land again, this time from the inside. Doing that wouldn't negatively affect the deva soul in any way. Because of how the area could be sealed in this way, the so-called ancestral land also served as an arcane pocket realm that was perfect for preserving soul bodies.

As soon as the clan chief officially declared the ancestral land to be open, Bai Qi sped into motion toward the stone gate, surrounded by dozens of his relatives from the direct bloodline.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered, and he took a deep breath to suppress his excitement. As he well knew, he would only have one chance to pull off his plan.

"If it works, I'll get a deva soul, and also get revenge for Bai Hao...." Gritting his teeth, he flew toward the opening in the stone gate.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as hundreds more clan members did the same thing. Then, the stone gate slowly closed.

As it did, the gate twisted and distorted, after which a shimmering screen appeared above it, which offered a view of the ancestral land itself!

Clearly visible was a towering mountain peak, the summit of which was surrounded by a majestic halo. Furthermore, it was possible to make out an altar at the summit, upon which was... the deva soul!

The halo was actually being manifested by the deva soul itself!

There were other areas on the mountain that had smaller halos of various size, each of which represented a place for the clan members to acquire good fortune.

There were magical items, soul bodies, techniques, and other resources. All of them were there for the taking by anyone who had the skill, power, and luck to do so.

Of course, the higher one went on the mountain, the more intense and colorful the halos became, indicating the higher quality of the good fortune available.

The screen above the stone gate was already quite the focus of attention among the clan members on the outside, and currently depicted numerous figures being teleported into the ancestral land.

Bai Xiaochun's vision blurred, and intense rumbling sounds filled his ears. When the teleportation ended and everything went back to normal, he found himself standing on a jagged rock outcropping.

The sky above him was violent, and the lands which stretched out in all directions were pitch black. There was also a red sun, whose light made the entire world seem as hazy as dusk.

He could see the towering mountain and the halos on it. The enormous height of the thing was so shocking he felt like it was weighing down on his heart.

He had done a bit of research and asking around beforehand, so he knew that the ancestral land consisted of this enormous ancestral mountain. However, to see it with his own eyes was different.

“It seems incongruous with the heaven and earth on the outside, as if... the mountain came from somewhere else!” In fact, it was to Bai Xiaochun's surprise that he realized this mountain seemed very similar to the Fallen Sword World. Supposedly, that sword had

fallen from the beyond....

He studied the mountain quickly, his eyes eventually coming to rest on the halo at the summit, and the altar within it. When he opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye to get a closer look at it, he could see that floating right there atop the altar... was the deva soul!!

It looked like a clump of sandy soil, indicating that it was an earth-type deva soul!

“What if I just went over there right now...?” Heart pounding with eagerness, he studied the situation for a bit longer, then discarded the idea. Although no one else would be able to tell, with his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, he could see that the altar was protected by a powerful restrictive spell.

There was a blood qi within that spell formation that ensured that only people with the blood of the Bai Clan would be able to pass through it. Furthermore, it was also obvious that one needed especially pure and strong clan blood.

“Once I make my move, time will become very limited. The best thing to do is to wait for someone else to break through the restrictive spell and get the deva soul. Then, I can just take it away from them!”

As Bai Xiaochun stood there sizing up the ancestral land, the rumble of teleportations could be heard in other areas as various Bai Clan cultivators entered the ancestral land. There were hundreds of them, and at the moment, most people were looking up at the countless halos on the mountain, their faces filled with anticipation.

Bai Xiaochun looked around thoughtfully as the teleportations proceeded, and eventually, the entrance closed. From that point on, it would require the power of the deva soul to get out. For the land to be opened again from the outside would require a lot of time and effort.

“Well that's good,” he thought. “Things are going pretty much as I'd expected. The entrance being closed... will actually be a big help to me!

“Based on what I learned earlier about the ancestral land, it's safe to assume that everyone else in the clan is observing what's happening inside. They should be able to see everything through that stone gate.... Well, that's fine. I guess I'll have a good audience when I make my move, so I might as well put on a good show!” Even as he made up his mind about how to proceed, he sensed something, and turned to find Bai Qi and a large group of direct bloodline cultivators looking over at him with killing intent in their eyes.

Although it made him a bit nervous, he was also at the point where he didn't care much about trying to keep up appearances. Seeing that Bai Qi was glaring at him, he frowned and glared back.

The cold malice flickering in Bai Qi's eyes was impossible to hide, and he almost looked like he was about to fly over and attack. However, one of his relatives leaned over and whispered something to him, causing him to laugh coldly.

“That's right. The most important thing is getting that deva soul. With it, I will control the exit from this place, and can prevent Bai Hao from getting away. He definitely won't be escaping with his life!” Bai Qi knew that this entire event was being held for him, and therefore, he didn't want to concern himself with trivial matters before getting the deva soul. Taking a deep breath, he turned and headed toward the mountain, his relatives in tow.

The rest of the clan members did the same, either alone, or in groups of between three to five.

When Bai Qi looked away, Bai Xiaochun snorted coldly, musing about how he had never been bested in a staring contest for his entire life. “Lots of people have glared at me in my life, Bai Qi. You think I care if you join the club...?”

Proudly clasping his hands behind his back, he prepared to head toward the mountain when suddenly, the voice of a young woman could be heard behind him.

“Bai Hao.... This mountain is a mighty and dangerous place. Some areas are especially perilous. Although most members of the clan won't find them too unsafe... for people in early Foundation Establishment, they could be deadly. Even I anticipate encountering some difficulties if I proceed alone. What do you say we team up?”

The person speaking was the fifth young lady, her voice soft and her gaze warm as she looked at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun stopped in place and looked back at her. Not only had she helped him in a difficult situation when he first came to the clan, but he remembered how kindly she had looked at him during the ceremony the previous day. Clearly, she was interested in helping him out, and yet had vaguely worded her statement to save face, even making it seem as if she considered them both to be members of the same bloodline.

Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment. He was grateful for her good intentions, but at the same time, had his own plans, plans that wouldn't be made any easier by having another person tagging along. Even as he pondered how to answer her, booming laughter could suddenly be heard, which belonged to none other than Bai Lei.

Striding forward, he looked Bai Xiaochun up and down with sincerity glowing in his eyes. “How nice of you to help out Junior Brother Hao, Fifth Junior Sister. Well, I guess I might as well join you. What do you say to a team of three, Bai Hao?”

The fifth young lady smiled charmingly and replied, “It would naturally be wonderful to have you along, Third Brother. But isn't your goal that deva soul?”

Bai Lei sighed. “Forget about that deva soul. That matter has

already been settled behind closed doors. The rest of us are just here for show.”

The previous night, he had been very excited about going into the ancestral land. However, in the morning, he had received a message from one of his bloodline’s elders, telling him that the deva soul was to go to Bai Qi to help him reach the Nascent Soul stage. Bai Qi would subsequently begin performing spirit enhancements on his nascent soul to put him in the running to become the successor of the hell-emperor. In the end, he hadn’t quite been willing to accept that fact, but really had no choice but to do so, leaving him feeling more than a bit down.

In some ways, that was a better thing for him. After all, performing five spirit enhancements on one’s own nascent soul was very dangerous. Bai Qi was willing to take that risk, but Bai Lei wasn’t, so in the end, he had simply given in.

Thankfully, the clan had also given him some special compensation to make things fair.

Considering that both Bai Lei and the fifth young lady were trying to persuade him, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t object. The fifth young lady obviously liked him and wanted to help him, although he couldn’t quite be sure of Bai Lei’s motivations. In fact, it seemed likely that he wanted to make friends because it would be useful in his own competition with Bai Qi.

“Ah, whatever,” he thought. “I need to give Bai Qi some time to get that deva soul anyway. I might as well repay the fifth young lady for her kindness.” Smiling, he nodded in agreement.

Chapter 601: Take Your Pick, Fifth Young Lady

As the group of three got closer to the ancestral mountain, the pressure weighing down on them increased. It was the type of pressure that would have a significant effect on any Foundation Establishment cultivator; only Core Formation experts would be able to ignore it.

Obviously, the summit of the mountain was where the pressure was strongest, and based on Bai Xiaochun's calculations, it would only be possible for someone in late Core Formation to get that far.

However, in consideration of how he was weaker, the fifth young lady took the lead, using the power of her own cultivation base to reduce the pressure on Bai Xiaochun. Moved, Bai Xiaochun followed along, simultaneously engaging in some casual conversation with both her and Bai Lei.

Before long, they were at the foot of the mountain. There were numerous paths that led up, and they picked one. As they began to climb, the pressure intensified. Occasionally, they would pass other Foundation Establishment clan members, all of whom were sweating profusely and being very careful to avoid the dangerous restrictive spells.

With the fifth young lady's help, Bai Xiaochun was able to move much faster than any of the other Foundation Establishment cultivators.... Of course, even without her help, the pressure wouldn't have fazed him. Not even the pressure at the summit would have been a huge deal, let alone the pressure further down.

Because of how kind the fifth young lady was being, Bai Xiaochun tried his best to pretend that he was having difficulty with the pressure, even going so far as to gasp and wheeze occasionally.

After all, people outside of the ancestral land were watching, and

therefore, Bai Xiaochun had no choice but to proceed with his act. Occasionally, though, he would look over at Bai Qi and his group speeding toward the summit. Eyes sparkling, Bai Xiaochun tried to calculate how long it would take for him to reach the top.

When Bai Lei noticed who he was looking at, his eyes flickered, and he lowered his voice and said, “Junior Brother Hao, you listen to me... that Bai Qi is someone you can't afford to provoke.”

Bai Xiaochun looked over at him. Plastering a look of anger onto his face, he said, “Well it's not like he's actually going to kill me, right?!”

Bai Lei sighed. “Don't you get it, Junior Brother Hao? The clan arranged for Bai Qi to get this deva soul, and that shows how much the patriarch favors him. If you keep pulling stunts like you did yesterday, I'm afraid... you will get yourself killed.”

Bai Lei had a serious expression on his face, but inwardly, he was chuckling. Although Bai Hao had uttered some sharp words the day before, as far as Bai Lei was concerned, he was still just a child.

“You listen to me, alright?” he continued. “From now on, stick close to the grand elder from the Hall of Justice. With him on your side, Bai Qi won't make a move against you, at least not casually....”

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and then gritted his teeth defiantly.

Off to the side, the fifth young lady listened, a slight frown on her face. Although Bai Lei's words seemed to be uttered out of concern, to her, it seemed more like he was trying to take advantage of the conflict between Bai Hao and Bai Qi for his own benefit. However, now was not the time to point that out. Sighing, she pondered how everyone in the Bai Clan seemed to have their own agenda, and how everyone was always fighting and bickering.

It was really exhausting to live in an environment like that,

which was one of the reasons she didn't feel very at home in this place. Sighing, she looked over at Bai Hao with compassion and sadness. It was bad enough that he had such a lowly standing in the clan, but now, just when he had finally managed to prove himself to some extent, someone came along to try to manipulate him.

Seeing that Bai Lei was about to continue speaking, she jumped in and said, "Hey, look at that halo over there, Bai Hao. See the bracelet inside...? It's a magical item that's well suited to you!"

Bai Xiaochun looked over at a nearby boulder, upon which was a green bracelet. The fluctuations rolling off of it weren't very strong, but would clearly be useful to someone in early Foundation Establishment.

In the same moment that he looked over at it, the fifth young lady performed an incantation gesture and waved her finger, causing a beam of green light to fly out. As the beam neared the boulder, a protective shield of light suddenly sprang into being.

The green beam of light pierced through the shield, wrapped around the bracelet, and then dragged it back into the fifth young lady's hand. After looking it over, she handed it to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun took the bracelet, looked up at the fifth young lady with her kind gaze, then clasped hands and bowed.

"Thank you, Fifth Young Lady."

"Take it. You need every bit of protection you can get. In our clan... you can't trust anybody." Looking melancholy, she shook her head and then continued along the path.

Bai Lei frowned, not very pleased that the fifth young lady had interrupted him. However, considering her high status, he knew that she would eventually be married off to someone important outside the clan. Likely, she would achieve an even higher standing in the future, and therefore, he pretended that nothing

had happened, and just continued to chat randomly.

The fifth young lady obviously wasn't in a very good mood, and only occasionally responded to Bai Lei's banter. However, whenever they encountered items useful for Foundation Establishment cultivators, she would take them and give them to Bai Xiaochun.

Two hours later, Bai Xiaochun had acquired about eight magical items, a few thousand souls, and even some soul medicine.

He was quite moved by all of this. The fifth young lady was now the second person in the Bai Clan to have taken a liking to him. Most importantly, she wasn't trying to get anything out of him. She was simply treating him like family, out of compassion.

Another thing he noticed was that there were items available on the mountain that the fifth young lady actually wished to acquire, but could not because of the level of her cultivation base.

Bai Lei took the initiative to get a few things that he wanted, then apparently felt a bit embarrassed and got a few things to hand over to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun accepted everything silently, and the group proceeded along for about an hour. By this point, they were about halfway up the mountain, which was when Bai Qi actually reached the summit. His journey up the mountain had gone very smoothly, with almost nothing causing any problems for him or getting in his way.

"The deva soul was put here for me!" he told himself. "It's mine!" The reason why Bai Qi had such an easy time going up the mountain was because he knew exactly how to deal with all of the restrictive spells on the way up. His father had provided him with that information, and therefore, Bai Qi didn't need to waste almost any of his cultivation base power to get to the summit.

From his current position, he could see the altar, and the earth-

type deva soul on top of it. Eyes shining with anticipation, he shifted his gaze from the soul, to the restrictive spell protecting it.

Now that he was here, all he had to do was walk over and take what was his!

“This is the last restrictive spell, and also the most powerful. Only someone with the strongest and purest blood can get through... thankfully, I came prepared! Once I get that deva soul, then I can go and kill Bai Hao!”

Chuckling coldly, Bai Qi sliced a cut open on his index finger and then spattered some blood onto the restrictive spell. At the same time, he patted his bag of holding, producing a jade bottle that he crushed... causing a drop of blood to appear!

That blood came from the deva patriarch, and was incredibly pure.

When Bai Qi reached the summit and began to deal with the restrictive spell, many of the other clan members on the mountain looked up with complex emotions. Although most of them were frustrated and jealous, there was nothing they could do.

Outside of the ancestral land, the clan members who had gathered to watch the event saw what was happening, and various serious expressions could be seen on their faces. The clan chief smiled broadly, whereas the clan elders looked on indifferently. After all, they had all agreed to this matter, and knew that the supposed trial by fire was mostly just for show.

Originally, Madam Cai should have been in custody and being punished, but for some reason she was now in the crowd, excitedly watching the scene play out.

The person paying the closest attention to Bai Qi, though, was Bai Xiaochun. Now that he saw Bai Qi dealing with the restrictive spell, he stopped in place to think for a moment.

Then he turned to look at the fifth young lady, and suddenly,

seemed to be bursting with energy. His eyes shone far more brightly than before, and for some reason, he seemed taller and stronger. It was as if, moments ago, he had been a tiny hill, but was now a towering mountain peak!! Conversely, the ancestral mountain he was standing on was now like a tiny hill compared to him! The air around him even began to distort as something like a black hole formed!

“Thank you for watching out for me, Fifth Young Lady,” he said. “I’d like to pay you back for your kindness. If you agree, then tell me what things you want from the mountain, and I’ll get them for you. Take your pick.”

The sudden change to Bai Xiaochun happened so quickly that neither the fifth young lady nor Bai Lei were able to react.

“You....” Bai Lei’s eyes widened, and his heart began to pound. For some reason, Bai Xiaochun seemed like one of the clan’s grand elders right now, completely shocking. In fact, when their eyes met, Bai Lei felt his mind spinning.

The fifth young lady was panting, completely taken aback by what Bai Xiaochun had just said.

Bai Xiaochun looked at her and once again said, “Well, Fifth Young Lady, take your pick!”

All of a sudden, the fifth young lady seemed to realize what was going on. Shivering, and eyes shining, she suddenly laughed.

“If you can get anything on this mountain for me... then what are you waiting for?! Take it all!”

Bai Xiaochun looked at her deeply, then threw his head back and laughed. “You got it!”

Chapter 602: Take What I Want

Very few people on the mountain had even noticed the change in Bai Xiaochun. Most everyone else was transfixed by Bai Qi as he dealt with the final restrictive spell at the summit, and were looking on with jealousy, frustration, and countless other emotions.

“This is really unfair!”

“That’s right. Even if Bai Qi were more of a chosen than he already is, he shouldn’t have been able to make it to the top of the mountain that easily. I don’t care if he is in the great circle of Core Formation!”

“Hmph! I was watching him, and from what I could tell, he knew how to deal with those restrictive spells before he even got to them! It was too easy for him!”

“Come on, don’t you realize what’s going on? Not even Bai Lei put up a fight. It’s obvious that the ancestral land was opened just for Bai Qi! The leadership already decided to give him the deva soul, that way he can get his five elements deva beast souls and form his nascent soul!!”

Most angry of all were the people from the auxiliary bloodlines, whereas the people from the direct bloodline seemed very pleased. They even went so far as to rebuke anyone they heard saying anything they didn’t like.

“Bai Qi is the qilin son of our clan! It’s the will of heaven and earth that he gets that deva soul!”

All sorts of talk could be heard on the mountain. Meanwhile, people on the outside were also dealing with all sorts of thoughts and feelings.

No one outside had noticed Bai Xiaochun yet either. Bai Qi was currently the main focus in the ancestral land, and was like a

blazing sun that drew all attention.

As he went about dismantling the restrictive spell, discussions could also be heard near the stone gate.

“So, the deva soul is going to Bai Qi....”

“I'd guessed that it would be him. Not that we would have had a say in it anyway.”

“It was definitely set up ahead of time. Nobody else even had a chance. But then again, nobody is on the same level as Bai Qi.”

As people discussed the matter, the faces of the clan elders were all expressionless. After all, they had all known ahead of time that this would happen. Even the grand elders from the Hall of Justice and the Hall of Corrections weren't reacting.

None of them qualified to argue with the decisions made by the patriarch, and furthermore, Bai Qi really was the cream of the crop of the current generation.

Most excited of all was Madam Cai. She was physically shaking from excitement, and could barely breathe straight as she watched the image of Bai Qi on the screen.

“My Qi'er is definitely the qilin son of the Bai Clan,” she thought. “That deva soul was prepared just for him! How dare that little son of a bitch Bai Hao try to compete with my Qi'er. What gives him the right?! Everything was prepared for Qi'er. All we did was take his research notes and arrange for him to be killed! How dare he fight back against us!!

“You just wait, Bai Hao. As soon as my Qi'er gets that deva soul, you'll definitely be dead, you son of a bitch!!”

Madam Cai laughed out loud, sounding completely elated.

The clan chief no longer looked grim like he usually did. As the sun shone down onto his smiling face, he seemed warm, happy, and proud.

However, even as Bai Qi attempted to break through the restrictive spell, people outside of the ancestral land finally noticed that Bai Xiaochun was thrumming with a shocking energy.

In fact, that energy was so shocking, so indescribably powerful, that it caused the screen to distort. The fact that the energy seemed to be interfering with heaven and earth caused looks of shock to appear on the faces of many of the clan members.

“That’s....”

“Bai Hao!”

“What’s going on? What’s happening with Bai Hao!?!?” Eyes widened as more people looked over. The clan elders seemed shocked, as did Madam Cai and the clan chief. All of them subconsciously looked over at Bai Xiaochun!

It was in that very moment that Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Then, he looked at the fifth young lady and said, “Alright, Fifth Young Lady. If you have the guts to ask for everything, then I have the guts to get it for you!”

Only moments ago, Bai Xiaochun had come to realize that although the fifth young lady seemed soft, she was actually a lot more tough and tenacious than he’d realized.

If he took all the treasures on the mountain and gave them to her, it wouldn’t be easy for her to keep them. However, she obviously knew that, and yet was still confident enough to say what she had. In that case, Bai Xiaochun wasn’t going to disagree with her.

As he laughed, his hair whipped about in the air, and his cultivation base began to rise rapidly. In almost the blink of an eye, he went from Early Foundation Establishment to the mid stage, the late stage, and then the great circle. Within a few earth-shaking moments, he had become a Core Formation cultivator.

Wind screamed around him, shaking the entire ancestral

mountain, rising up into the sky and even provoking lightning. All of the clan members on the mountain were completely shaken, and began to cry out in shock.

“Th-this... this....”

“Heavens, what’s happening!?!?”

They weren’t the only ones to react in such a way. Even more shocked was Bai Lei, who felt like his mind was being struck by lightning. His face turned completely ashen, and he staggered backward, trembling the entire time. Because he was closer to what was happening, he felt like Bai Hao had become a raging ocean, while he was a little rowboat being tossed about by the waves. It was almost impossible for him to comprehend what was going on, and he felt like he might get wiped out of existence at any moment.

“I... I can’t believe he’s so strong!!!” Bai Lei’s mind was devolving into a blank, and he was already sweating profusely.

As for the fifth young lady, she was panting; she had already come to the realization that Bai Hao had been hiding the true level of his cultivation base, and to see him explode to higher levels of power right in front of her caused her eyes to shine brightly.

It took only the briefest of moments for Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base to reach the shocking level of the great circle of Core Formation!

And then, it went a bit further, into the pseudo-Nascent Soul stage!

With his current cultivation base, Bai Xiaochun looked like an immortal devil, his eyes shining like the stars, his fleshly body power surging. Although he was slender and had a fair face, he seemed like he contained the explosive power of a divine dragon!

Then, even as he continued to laugh, he lifted his right foot. The moment had come to vent all of the negative feelings that had

cropped up in his heart because of Bai Hao's tragic fate. All of his discontent with the Bai Clan was about to erupt!

Without any hesitation, he stomped his foot down onto the surface of the ancestral mountain!

Instantly, a sound like heavenly thunder filled the air. The entire mountain began to shake, provoking cries of alarm from all of the clan members standing on it.

Bai Xiaochun stomped down with the full power of his own cultivation base, as well as his three clones'. It was a force that surpassed the Core Formation stage, and also contained control power, which seemed capable of rocking the entire mountain!

And that was not to mention his fleshly body power, which was in the great circle of the third level of the Undying Live Forever Technique. He was already at the point of making contact with the third shackle, giving him access to monstrous force!

All of the frustration he had been keeping suppressed in the Bai Clan was unleashed in the stomp of his foot, which shook the ancestral mountain so violently that a crevice opened up on it!

Cracking sounds could be heard as, in the blink of an eye, the crevice spread out through the entire mountain! Many areas of the mountain even began to completely collapse!

To the clan members on the mountain itself, it was like an apocalypse of destruction. Screams and shouts could be heard everywhere, and at the same time, the halos formed by countless restrictive spells were simultaneously destroyed!

Moments later, all of the items of good fortune which had been placed into the ancestral land by the Bai Clan were out in the open. Vast amounts of magical items, soul bodies, and soul medicine all appeared, completely unprotected by any restrictive spells!

Chapter 603: Damn You, Bai Hao!

Everyone was completely shaken by what they were seeing. The glitter of countless magical items, numerous soul medicines and endless soul bodies was enough to obfuscate the sky.

All of the cultivators on the mountain were having a hard time staying on their feet, but as soon as they saw the vast number of items flying up, their eyes began to burn with passion, and they began to shout out loud.

“That's... a mid-grade soul medicine!”

“The Magesword of Annihilation! Heavens! That's one of the most powerful magical treasures in our clan!”

“That's... a metal-type deva beast soul!!!”

Bai Lei looked on in stupefaction as Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, causing whooshing sounds to fill the air as all of the items which had just flown up began to speed toward him.

That included almost everything that had been placed onto the mountain, and yet, Bai Xiaochun completely ignored them, and simply sent them to the fifth young lady.

“Hurry up and take them, Fifth Young Lady!”

The fifth young lady was completely taken aback. Despite having been prepared for something like this, to see it actually unfolding in front of her left her almost shell-shocked. That was especially true considering that the single stomp of Bai Xiaochun's foot had destroyed all of the restrictive spells on the ancestral mountain, as well as all of the glowing halos.

She had never even heard of anyone who could do such a thing, not even the venerable clan elders.

It was even as she stared blankly that Bai Xiaochun's words entered her ears and shocked her into clarity. Eyes shining with

brilliant light, she quickly assessed the items, then gritted her teeth and opened her bag of holding.

“Even if Bai Hao plans to betray the clan,” she thought, “I'm claiming these things, and nobody will take them away from me!” Although the fifth young lady seemed weak, she was actually very tenacious, and thus, it was without the slightest hesitation that she drew upon the power of her cultivation base to drag everything into her bag of holding.

Bai Xiaochun used his control power to help. Magical items, soul medicines and soul bodies alike all flew toward the fifth young lady and disappeared into her bag of holding.

Everyone on the mountain could see what was happening, resulting in gasps and cries of alarm. However, most astonished of all was Bai Lei...

The entire situation had changed so quickly that he couldn't even react. Instead of Bai Hao being the foolish brat he had taken him to be, he was now a dazzling, almighty being worthy of ultimate veneration.

Even more mind-shaking was how all of the treasures on the ancestral mountain were now being taken by the fifth young lady. Because of the incredible pressure Bai Lei felt from Bai Xiaochun, he didn't dare to say a single thing, or even reveal by his facial expression that he wasn't pleased. His intuition was telling him that...

Something big was happening in the Bai Clan!!!

His intuition was correct! And in fact, almost everyone in the ancestral land was thinking the same thing. As for the people outside, watching the screen on the stone gate... many of them were also being pricked by intuition!

The gathered crowd watched as Bai Hao suddenly powered up, shattered the ancestral mountain, and then took all of its

treasures. The result was that they felt like their minds were beings struck by countless bolts of lightning.

“This... this... heavens! What’s going on?!?!”

“Is that... Bai Hao? Impossible! I thought he was in early Foundation Establishment!! But that’s clearly not early Foundation Establishment, that’s more like... the Nascent Soul stage!!”

“What exactly is going on here? Bai Hao... has terrifying self-control! He actually has a Nascent Soul cultivation base, but kept it a secret this entire time!!”

“Impossible!!”

“Something big is going down! As of this moment, Bai Hao... is invincible within the ancestral land.... Heavens, the deva soul! His goal... is the deva soul!!”

“Bai Qi is in danger!!”

As everyone began to cry out, the clan elders shot to their feet, their expressions flickering dramatically.

All minds and hearts were completely shaken. No one among the audience could actually see Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base, so everyone just assumed he had a nascent soul. However, the clan elders were all Nascent Soul experts, and could see exactly what the situation was.

“Bai Hao is actually in the pseudo-Nascent Soul stage!!”

“Dammit! What if he’s not the real Bai Hao, but an imposter?!?!?!”

“That’s not likely. Without the blood of the Bai Clan in him, he wouldn’t be able to get past the clan spell formation, not even with a Nascent Soul cultivation base!”

“With a cultivation base like that... if he really is Bai Hao, then he is the qilin son of the Bai Clan!!”

These clan elders were stern and awe-inspiring people, but at the

moment, their eyes were lit with shock.

The grand elders from the Hall of Corrections and the Hall of Justice had similar reactions, especially the latter, whose eyes were shining with utter incredulity.

“Pseudo-Nascent Soul stage.... this Bai Hao obviously came across some destiny-changing good fortune, and yet managed to keep it a secret! His level of self-control surpasses his own cultivation base!! Not only does he have shocking skill in spirit enhancement, but he also has an incredible cultivation base. Latent talent like this is the type that will only be seen in the clan once in a thousand years!!”

“Now that is what the qilin son of the Bai Clan should be like!!”

The two grand elders felt their minds reeling; Bai Xiaochun’s sudden rise to prominence was something completely unexpected, an event which no one could ever have predicted would happen.

They weren’t the only ones to be floundering in shock. The representatives from the two other great clans and the emissary from Giant Ghost City were so shocked their eyes were bulging out of their faces. Never could any of that group have imagined that they would witness something so unbelievable during their trip to the Bai Clan!

“Latent talent like that... has never appeared in the Bai Clan before.... Furthermore, it's obvious that this Bai Hao has a beef with his own clan!”

“Well, this development is a good thing. If Bai Hao were on the side of his people, that could lead to a new rise of the Bai Clan....”

“Bai Hao, huh.... Interesting. I need to report this back to his highness the king. It looks like a schism might occur within the Bai Clan!!”

The two representatives and the emissary were even more shocked than the clan elders, and yet, there was still a person whose shock surpassed everyone else’s.

Madam Cai was literally shaking, and began to scream, “Bai Hao, you little son of a bitch, you deserve to die! Damn you, you deserve to die!!! Men, get in there and kill him! Kill him!! Kill him!!!”

Her eyes were completely bloodshot, and she seemed to be on the verge of going insane. Her hair was completely disheveled, and based on her unhinged and ear-piercing screams, she seemed like she couldn't handle the situation.

There was really no other way for her to react. Her heart was filled with unprecedented terror and astonishment at the realization that Bai Qi's previous explanation about Bai Hao getting outside help to kill his assassin was completely incorrect. Obviously... Bai Hao had done the deed himself!

When she realized how powerful Bai Hao's cultivation base was, and that he had already dispatched previous assassins, as well as the fact that Bai Qi had essentially publicly stated that he wanted to kill him, it meant... that there was little question about what was to come in the ancestral land. Madam Cai's vision began to grow dim, and she couldn't help but scream in terror.

Bai Qi... was in great danger!!!

“No, this can't be happening. It can't be! Qi'er, get out of there!!” Unfortunately, Madam Cai had already forgotten that her voice couldn't enter the ancestral land, no matter how loudly she screamed. Ignoring all decorum, she rushed toward her husband and grabbed his arm madly. “Qi'er is the qilin son of the Bai Clan! He can't die!”

Of course, the clan chief didn't need any urging from Madam Cai to understand the gravity of the situation. Almost as soon as Madam Cai grabbed his arm, he threw his head back and howled with grief and rage that could pierce the heavens.

“Damn you, Bai Hao!!” As of this moment, the clan chief was reacting exactly the same as he had the previous day. Instead of being glad that his own son Bai Hao was rising to prominence, he

was descending into the depths of fury.

“Why do you have latent talent like this? Why do you have a cultivation base like this? Your fate is to submit! You are the lowest of the low, a bastard son! Why do you have to fight back!?!?” Just like Madam Cai, the clan chief was desperately worried about Bai Qi, so much so that he took a step forward and waved his finger at the stone gate.

Rumbling sounds could be heard, and the gate trembled; shockingly, the clan chief was going all out to try to open the entrance to the ancestral land. Once he did, he would pass through that entrance, find Bai Xiaochun, and kill him!

Chapter 604: If You Kill Me, You're A Traitor!

After the ancestral land was closed, opening it from the outside required time. However, the clan chief was desperate, so much so that his eyes were completely bloodshot.

“Clan elders,” he said loudly, “lend me a helping hand! That unfilial bastard must die!!”

A few of the clan elders from the direct bloodline flew forward to help forcibly open the stone gate.

However, the other elders hesitated, especially the grand elder from the Hall of Justice.

Enraged, Madam Cai shrieked, “If you dare to stand idly by, and my Qi'er gets hurt in any way, then I won't let any of you off the hook!!”

In her desperation, Madam Cai even turned to the representative from the Cai Clan to ask for help.

Although the man hesitated at first, they were related, so after a moment passed, he came forward to help. However, despite all that, the entrance wouldn't budge.

Even with the help of a deva patriarch, the gate wouldn't open quickly. At best, it might open after enough time passed for an incense stick to burn.

Rumbling sounds filled the clan, which was rapidly devolving into chaos. Inside the ancestral land, the mountain was shattered, and the restrictive spells were destroyed. As for Bai Qi, he had only been about halfway finished with his work on the restrictive spell; now his face was a mask of shock as he staggered to the side. Looking over his shoulder, he saw what looked like a massive tempest, within which shone the eyes of Bai Xiaochun.

The sight of those eyes struck Bai Qi to the core. Something like divine sense pierced into him with lightning-like speed, provoking a scream from him as intense fear and disbelief filled his heart.

What was most alarming of all was how Bai Qi suddenly felt like a bug, as if those eyes could determine his life or death with a single thought.

“Impossible! This can’t be happening!!” Bai Qi had never felt more terrified for his own life. He was shaking, every inch of his flesh, blood, and bones screaming out in terror. He immediately abandoned the restrictive spell he had been unraveling, and began to flee.

“If I hold out for long enough,” he thought, “father will definitely come save me!!”

However, almost as soon as he turned to make his escape, Bai Xiaochun chuckled within the tempest....

“Why aren’t you taking down that restrictive spell? Allow me to help you out.” All members of the Bai Clan looked on with pounding hearts as Bai Xiaochun took a step forward.

Originally, he had been fully 9,000 meters away from Bai Qi. However, that distance was nothing to cause much pause for Bai Xiaochun.

He was like a heavenly god, with a single step propelling him 900 meters ahead, leaving behind an afterimage that made it seem almost like there were two Bai Xiaochuns standing in the ancestral land!

Furthermore, his killing intent was so powerful that the entire ancestral land began to shake, both the violet sky and the black soil alike!!

“He's going to kill Bai Qi!!” The clan members inside of the ancestral land were all dumbstruck. Bai Lei was shaking, gulping in fear, his face completely ashen.

As for the fifth young lady, she looked on silently, but with brightly shining eyes.

Outside of the ancestral land, Bai Xiaochun's shocking killing intent, and Bai Qi's abject fear, caused everyone to begin to shout in alarm.

“Bai Qi is in danger!!”

“Heavens! Is Bai Hao actually going to go so far as to kill him!?!?”

It wasn't just the ordinary clan members who were shocked. The clan elders had very serious expressions on their faces. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had taken all of the magical items and other good fortune in the ancestral land didn't matter too much according to the clan rules. But if he actually killed other clan members right out in the open, that would be a different matter.

Any objective observer would be able to tell how unfair the situation was. After all, if the roles were reversed, and Bai Qi was going after Bai Hao to kill him, the clan elders would likely frown, but wouldn't take the situation as seriously.

But now, things were different. Bai Qi had been selected by the patriarch to prevail in the ancestral land. Bai Hao's sudden rise to prominence was completely unexpected, and there was no way that they could instantly discount Bai Qi's importance.

Not even the grand elder from the Hall of Justice could sit idly by at this point. He also stepped forward to help open the stone gate.

However, all of the other clan elders were thinking of things in a different way than those from the direct bloodline. Bai Hao obviously had incredible latent talent, and the fact that he had kept it hidden all this time proved that he was a true chosen of the clan. As such, they couldn't simply watch as he did something unforgivable.

“Bai Hao, don't do something that you'll regret,” thought the grand elder from the Hall of Justice. “Just wait until you get out of

there, and I'll handle everything for you!"

He knew that if Bai Hao killed Bai Qi, especially in a situation like this, then he would damage his relationship with the clan permanently!

Killing Bai Qi would essentially be a public act of rebellion against the clan!!

As the clan elders burst into action, the emissary from Giant Ghost City looked at the image of Bai Xiaochun on the screen with shining eyes.

The sight of Bai Xiaochun stepping toward Bai Qi caused the clan chief to go even more crazy. Throwing his head back, he roared, "How dare you, you unfilial bastard!!"

Then he attacked the gate with renewed vigor.

"Stay your hand, you son of a bitch!!" Madam Cai screamed shrilly, trembling with madness, her hair flying about in complete disarray.

It was almost as if, despite being outside of the ancestral land, she could sense the intense level of Bai Xiaochun's killing intent! After taking his 900-meter step, Bai Xiaochun looked over his shoulder at a spot high up in the sky, where the faint outline of a stone door was visible. It was almost as if he could sense the maddened glares of the clan chief, Madam Cai, and the other members of the direct bloodline.

"Finally getting anxious, huh?" he said with a cold chuckle. Based on the vortex that was forming up above, he didn't need to analyze the situation at all to realize that they were trying to open the ancestral land from the outside.

"I wonder if that deva patriarch will do something...?" he thought, his eyes flickering. But now wasn't the time to ponder the situation. Looking back at Bai Qi, his killing intent soared, and he took a second step.

By this point, the entire world was shaking as violently as if a giant had stamped his foot down. The air rippled and distorted as everything slowed down from Bai Xiaochun's perspective. His second step propelled him even farther than the first step, a total of 2,100 meters!

Everything around him was shaking violently as he moved with blinding speed. By this point, he was only about 6,000 meters away from Bai Qi, who suddenly shrieked, "The clan elders can all see you, Bai Hao! How dare you think about killing me!!"

Bai Qi was so scared he couldn't even think straight. Although Bai Xiaochun's second step had been taken casually, the speed on display was so terrifying that Bai Qi obviously couldn't escape.

The sensation of deadly crisis he felt was like a flash flood that caused even his soul to shake.

Outside of the ancestral land, the souls of the clan chief and Madam Cai were shaking just as hard, and it was with complete despair that they watched Bai Xiaochun speeding toward Bai Qi.

Regardless of what they did, the ancestral land needed time to open, and clearly, they didn't have enough of it to get inside and rescue Bai Qi. Eyes completely bloodshot, Madam Cai screamed, "You'll die in pain, Bai Hao!!"

The clan chief's chest ached with fear, and his expression was unsurpassably grim. The prospect of seeing his own son killed in front of him had him descending into madness.

And of course, he couldn't forget the fact that Bai Hao was also his own flesh and blood!

All the other members of the clan were panting in shock as they looked at the screen on the stone gate, and the image of Bai Hao descending upon Bai Qi like some sort of immortal devil!

Flicking his sleeve, Bai Xiaochun took a third step, a step which propelled him with lightning-like speed that vastly surpassed his

previous movements. It was almost a teleportation, a movement which people couldn't even track with their eyes as he moved 6,000 meters in the blink of an eye!

He was now directly in front of Bai Qi, his energy surging, a string of sonic booms echoing out behind him. Bai Qi felt like a cotton ball facing a hurricane; he was incapable of doing anything, and wracked with despair.

First step: 900 meters. Second step: 2,100 meters. Third step: 6,000 meters! The speed on display here was so unbelievable that the members of the Bai Clan who were watching felt like their hearts were being bashed by tidal waves of shock!

Most of them couldn't even breathe....

Bai Qi stared at Bai Xiaochun, panting, wilting under the pressure he was facing. Scared out of his mind, he shrieked, "I'm your brother, Bai Hao. If you dare to kill me, you'll be a traitor to the clan!!"

When Bai Xiaochun replied to him, it was with a voice as cold as midwinter snow. "Yeah? So what?!"

Chapter 605: Felled By A Palm

Bai Xiaochun's words echoed out, shaking everything in the ancestral land. Up in the sky, an enormous vortex was forming that almost seemed to represent the fury of the heavens.

The ancestral mountain was shaking violently, with rocks and debris tumbling down everywhere. As for the clan members who still stood on the mountain, they were so shocked they couldn't even think straight, and were merely watching events play out with their jaws hanging open!

This was a case of brothers trying to kill each other!!

One was the qilin son of the Bai Clan, the other was a bastard son. One had once been a blazing sun, while the other had been a bug!

But now, everything had been turned around. The qilin son was the bug, and the bastard son was the blazing sun!

Although Bai Xiaochun wasn't incredibly tall, as he stood in front of Bai Qi, he seemed to blot out the violet sky, and to make the crimson sun up above grow dark!

The sight of a single person surpassing the sky and blocking the sun created an image that caused the observing members of the Bai Clan to devolve into further shock. Members of the direct bloodline and auxiliary bloodlines alike were so astonished they forgot to breathe, and their minds were struck motionless.

Bai Lei's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode, and the fifth young lady's eyes were blank with astonishment. What Bai Xiaochun was doing right now was something they would never be able to forget for the rest of their lives. No matter how many years passed, they would never be capable of blotting out this memory.

“Don't push things too far, Bai Hao!!” The despair in Bai Qi's eyes

had reached an indescribable level, and he was seemingly paralyzed. He wanted to fight back, but the pressure weighing down on him from Bai Xiaochun made it impossible. It was like facing a windstorm of such epic power that it left him completely powerless.

It didn't matter that he was in the great circle of Core Formation. It didn't matter that he was the qilin son of the Bai Clan. To stand in front of Bai Xiaochun was like standing in terror at the gates of the underworld.

Taking a step back, Bai Qi screamed, "If you kill me, the Bai Clan will never rest until they find you! You won't be able to get away from them! No matter how big the Wildlands are, you'll never escape!!"

Terror and fear gripped Bai Qi's soul, driving him into madness as he cried, "Don't be rash, Bai Hao! We can talk things over! I'm... I'm your big brother!!"

"Who cares?!" Bai Xiaochun said, his voice exploding like thunder from the highest heavens. With that, he reached out with his right hand, the mere movement of which caused the violet sky and the red sun to distort as his energy skyrocketed, bursting past his previous level with explosive intensity!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

The lands around him quaked violently as massive energy began to build up; it was almost as if the entire ancestral land was being crushed!

And the hand to do the crushing... was the very hand which Bai Xiaochun had just reached out with!

Everyone on the mountain was deafened, and their eyes went blank. No soul and no mind could go unaffected by that hand!

They weren't the only ones to be affected. The clan members outside of the stone gate were all astonished, and Madam Cai was

screaming her head off.

“Stay your hand, Bai Hao!!”

The clan elders were reeling in shock, their auras destabilized by the sight of Bai Hao raising his hand toward the ashen-faced, screaming Bai Qi.

Everyone else in the clan was equally shocked. All eyes, all streams of divine sense, were focused on the screen, and the image of Bai Xiaochun!

“Is that... really Bai Hao...?”

“That palm... it....”

“Bai Hao... is turning traitor!!”

The clan chief was going mad, raving and raging as he battered the stone gate and its spell formation. Tears of blood leaked out of the corners of his eyes as he was forced to watch helplessly as his son was about to be killed.

“I'm going to skin you alive, Bai Hao!” he shrieked. As of this moment, he was no longer a clan chief, but rather, a father.

And yet, despite everything, he couldn't forget... that he wasn't just Bai Qi's father, he was... Bai Hao's father too!!

As the Bai Clan reeled in shock, something else was happening in a hidden chamber in the catacombs beneath the clan. Within that secret chamber, seven wrist-thick candles were spread out in a circle, and were burning with green flame.

In the middle of the circle of candles, a wrinkled old man sat cross-legged in meditation. He was little more than skin and bones, with a virtually hairless head, and looked almost like he had just crawled up out of the grave.

Suddenly, the old man's eyes opened, and began to glow with the light of the sun and the moon. It was an oppressive glow that, if anyone could see it, would immediately make them forget about

everything except the man's eyes.

The old man slowly looked up, and his vision passed through the earth and soil until he could see Bai Qi and Bai Xiaochun on the screen on the stone gate.

The old man didn't even bother to look closely at Bai Qi. Instead, his eyes came to focus on Bai Xiaochun....

His voice sounded like bones rubbing against bones as he murmured, "With latent talent like that... and that aura... he's much more suitable than Bai Qi to be my next incarnation...."

Meanwhile, back in the ancestral land, Bai Xiaochun's soaring energy filled all heaven and earth, making him the complete focus of all attention!

Although his hand was not physically large, it seemed powerful enough to wipe away everything in existence! It was so strong it could destroy the sun and moon, rip apart the ancestral mountain, and shatter all the lands!

As Bai Qi watched that hand rising up, it was as if the violet sky vanished, and the crimson sun disappeared. To Bai Qi, Bai Xiaochun's hand became the will of the heavens, and the only thing that existed in the entire ancestral land! To Bai Qi, that hand became the representation of death itself!

His eyes felt like they were going to explode, and his blood didn't even seem capable of pumping through his veins. "Don't tell me you're going to turn traitor against the clan, Bai Hao!?!?"

He knew that outside, his father and mother were doing everything they could to break inside and save him.

He also knew that hundreds of clan members on the mountain were all looking at him....

But... none of that mattered. He was filled with the terrifying realization that nothing in heaven or earth could possibly save him.

Almost as soon as Bai Qi mentioned turning traitor, Bai Xiaochun's voice could be heard, responding with crushing volume that caused the air itself to vibrate!

“So what if I turn traitor!?”

As those words echoed out, Bai Qi's senses converged on one thing. It was as if all light, all energy, and everything else in the ancestral land had vanished, and the entire world consisted of one single palm.

And then... the palm descended!!

“No!!!” Bai Qi screamed hysterically. He was not willing to die, and definitely not willing to die by Bai Hao's hand. His eyes were bloodshot, his hair in disarray, and his mind gripped by madness. Without any hesitation, he overdrew his cultivation base, using every scrap of energy he could find, and more, performing a double-handed incantation gesture that caused soul power to thrum within him.

Then, he shoved out with both of his hands to fight back against Bai Xiaochun!

However, such resistance was like a mantis trying to stop a war chariot. The palm descending onto him was backed by the power of all heaven and earth, and could crush anything in its path as easily as crushing dried weeds!

The palm landed on Bai Qi's head, destroying all resistance. Cracking sounds could be heard as his body began to fall apart, completely and utterly incapable of withstanding the blast of that palm!

Chapter 606: Collecting The Deva Soul

“I refuse to accept this!! How can you possibly compare with me, Bai Hao? From the time we were kids, I was the strongest, I was the most important, and I had the highest cultivation base! I refuse to accept this!!” Bai Qi’s scream was one of utter despair, the most wild, raving scream that had ever escaped his lips in his entire life. It lasted for only the briefest of moments, a bright shining light that was cut off moments later in destruction!

Rumbling sounds filled the sky of the ancestral land as Bai Xiaochun’s all-destroying palm made contact with Bai Qi, eradicating all of his divine abilities and magical techniques. Bai Qi was like a snowflake hit by a firestorm, and was completely incapable of providing even the slightest scrap of resistance!

He was in the great circle of Core Formation, only a bit below Bai Xiaochun in terms of level. And yet, he couldn’t compare at all. After all, the person who wanted him dead wasn’t actually Bai Hao, it was a person he should never, ever have provoked. Bai Xiaochun!

It was like the difference between heaven and earth, making the two of them virtually beyond compare with each other. Bai Xiaochun had reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, and the Heaven-Dao Gold Core stage. He had fused with three deva souls, giving him three deva soul clones. Although he hadn’t reached the ultimate level of his potential yet, he was strong enough already that he had been able to flee in the face of Mistress Red-Dust, a deva. Considering all of that... the great circle of Core Formation was like nothing to him!

There was nothing Bai Qi could do about that, and therefore, the fact that he refused to accept the situation was mostly just a joke!

Rumbling sounds echoed out as his divine abilities and magical techniques shattered. Then cracks spread out from his hands down

his arms, which then erupted with blood and destroyed flesh. His bones were ripped to pieces, and his legs vanished as surely as if they had been devoured by a meat grinder.

Even as pain and despair filled him, Bai Xiaochun's hand completed its motion. Blood sprayed out of Bai Qi's mouth as his chest collapsed. His head, neck, and all remaining parts of his body disappeared. He had been... completely and utterly eradicated!!

Under the devastating force of that palm strike, he was crushed like a weed, with even his soul and his core completely destroyed!!

Everyone on the ancestral mountain was left profoundly stunned, including Bai Lei and the fifth young lady. Members of the direct bloodline and the auxiliary bloodlines alike were flabbergasted, their minds left spinning and their bodies trembling as they watched Bai Qi transform into splatters of blood that floated through the air like flower petals!

So stunned were the members of the Bai Clan that they forgot to breathe. They even forgot to cry out in shock.... As for everyone outside of the ancestral land, they were equally astonished, but because they weren't physically present for what had occurred, they began to recover more quickly. Soon, cries of shock could be heard by the stone gate.

“He... he really killed Bai Qi!!”

“That was Bai Qi! He was the qilin son of our clan!!”

“Heavens! What just happened? Is that really Bai Hao!?!?”

Most people present didn't dare to believe the incredulous scene they had just witnessed was real. It was as though everyone outside of the ancestral land had been struck by lightning.

All scalps were tingling violently. From the moment the Bai Clan had been founded until now, nothing like this had ever happened!!

Countless people shot to their feet, including the representatives from the two other great clans. As for the emissary from Giant

Ghost City, to have personally witnessed what just occurred caused his expression to flicker with profound meaning.

Despite the fact that everyone had been able to guess what was to come... to actually see Bai Qi killed left them completely bowled over.

The clan chief looked almost completely insane as he threw his head back and roared, “Bai Hao!! If I don’t kill you, then I don’t deserve to live!!!”

His entire body was trembling. His hands were shaking, and his eyes were crimson as he wept tears of blood. He had just witnessed his own son being killed, the qilin son of the clan, and its whole future!

Now... all of that was no more.

The spattering blood drove the clan chief into utter madness; he held nothing back as he battered at the stone gate in the hopes of opening it. However, the restrictive spells were strong, and could not be opened in a short time.

The clan elders were panting, their minds simply incapable of processing what had just occurred. Even the grand elder from the Hall of Justice was deeply shaken, his eyes glinting with lamentation.

However, no one, not even the clan chief, was driven to the same level of madness as... Madam Cai.

“Bai Hao you son of a bitch, you’re going to die in pain! I’m going to kill you. Kill you!! Qi’er, oh, my Qi’er.... This can’t be happening. It’s not real! Bai Hao!!!” She sounded like a wild beast screaming in madness, and looked like an evil ghost as she stood there trembling.

Although Bai Xiaochun couldn’t see what was happening outside, he could well imagine how Bai Qi’s death would shake the Bai Clan to the ultimate degree.

At the moment, Bai Xiaochun seemed completely engulfed by killing intent, but the truth was that his heart was already pounding in anxiety. However, now was not the time to be wrapped up in nervousness. Suppressing his lingering fear, he focused on the main task at hand: buying the time to get out of the Bai Clan!

He took a deep breath, and once again, his energy surged. Without the slightest hesitation, he waved his hand, causing Bai Qi's bag of holding to fly to him, as well as some of his blood and flesh. Then Bai Xiaochun shot toward the restrictive spell at the summit of the mountain!

The restrictive spell needed the blood of the Bai Clan to open; with the blood drop from the deva patriarch, and Bai Qi's own flesh and blood, it could be unraveled with ease!

When the cultivators on the mountain saw that he was using Bai Qi's own flesh and blood to open the restrictive spell, their hearts filled with boundless coldness.

It was the same outside the ancestral land. Madam Cai was screaming hoarsely, and the clan chief roared with anger.

“I will never agree to live under the same sky as you, you unfilial bastard!!!”

As Bai Qi's flesh and blood spattered onto the spell formation, the unraveling process that Bai Qi himself had begun continued with shocking speed. In the blink of an eye, the restrictive spell began to fade away!

At the same time, the final glowing halo that was left on the mountain faded into darkness. Cracking sounds rang out, and the bloodline restrictive spell... opened up!!

Without the halo and the restrictive spell, the mountain summit was open. There on the altar was the deva soul, eye-catching to the extreme.

Even as everyone looked on, Bai Xiaochun strode up to the altar!

He moved quickly, and was soon right in front of the altar, where, without a moment of hesitation, he reached out toward the deva soul, his eyes flickering with strange light.

Numerous afterimages of Bai Xiaochun's right hand could be seen, and the heavens above rumbled loudly as... he grabbed the soul!!

The entire ancestral land began to shake. Bai Xiaochun's heart surged as he could sense the fluctuations of a deva from within the earth-type soul.

“It really is a deva soul!” he murmured excitedly. He had been waiting for this day for a long time.

Chapter 607: Conjuring Flame For An Audience

“Deva soul in hand!” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t have felt more excited. The only path available to him was that of the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, and if he didn’t walk it, his Dao of living forever would end.

But now he had four deva souls. All he had to do was find a metal-type soul... and he would have completed the set of five elements. With those souls, he could break out of the Gold Core stage... and forge that legendary item that, up til now, only the Celestial on Heavenspan Island had succeeded in forming... a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul!!

“After reaching Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment and Heaven-Dao Gold Core, my longevity has increased dramatically. Considering how difficult it is to reach the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, the longevity increase should definitely be heaven-defying!!” As soon as he had the earth-type deva soul, he threw it into his crystalline soulhoarding pagoda!

“He took the deva soul!”

“That was what Bai Hao was after, the deva soul!!”

“What does he think he’s doing? He killed Bai Qi, used his blood to open the restrictive spell, and then took the deva soul.... Does he really think that after all that, he can trade the deva soul in to the clan for a complete set of five elements deva beast souls?!?!”

The clan members outside of the ancestral land were all very puzzled. All they could think about was what they would do if they were in Bai Hao’s shoes. After killing Bai Qi, he would already be considered a traitor to the clan, so even if he got the deva soul, he would still face the wrath of the entire clan.

“He’s gone crazy! Not only has he turned traitor against the clan,

but he's trying to steal our deva soul!" Although cold expressions could be seen on the faces of all the clan elders, the eyes of some from the auxiliary bloodline glittered.

"Not necessarily. Perhaps Bai Hao killed Bai Qi because of some personal matter between the two of them. As for the deva soul, it should belong to whoever manages to get it...."

"That's right. If Bai Hao hands over the deva soul after he emerges from the ancestral land, and asks for the five elements deva beast souls, that would prove that he doesn't have a traitorous heart...."

Different thoughts ran through the heads of the different clan members. However, Madam Cai's shrieks intensified, and her venomous hatred only grew more intense.

Furthermore, the direct bloodline clan members began to speak up, voices filled with rage.

"He must die! He killed my Qi'er! He absolutely must die!!"

"I don't care what excuses you come up with, Bai Hao will die. He killed someone in the ancestral land, which proves he's a traitor!"

Even as the clan members clamored, the clan chief suddenly stopped battering at the stone gate. Spinning in place, he looked around with a vicious glare, killing intent surging as he roared in a thunderous voice that crushed all other sound: "On my authority as clan chief, I hereby declare that Bai Hao is a traitor, and shall be killed in body and soul! His name will be stricken from the clan records as a warning to anyone who would follow in his footsteps!!"

The icy coldness of his words couldn't have been clearer as he officially used his power to declare Bai Hao a traitor!

Meanwhile, in the hidden chamber in the clan's catacombs, the old patriarch sat in the middle of the circle of candles with their green flames. A mysterious glow could be seen in his eyes as he

seemingly ignored all of the chaos and shouting that was currently going on in the clan.

His gaze was fixed on the screen, and Bai Xiaochun, and his eyes were gradually beginning to glow with excitement and greed.

“He... is the perfect choice for my next incarnation....” The shriveled patriarch's chest heaved as he considered rising to his feet. However, after looking at the seven candles which surrounded him, he settled back down.

Meanwhile, back in the ancestral land, Bai Xiaochun put the deva soul away and suppressed his excitement. Then he opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye a crack, which enabled him to judge how much progress had been made in opening the ancestral land from the outside.

“I have about the time it takes half an incense stick to burn.... After that, they'll open this place up.” Although he was nervous, he took a deep breath to calm himself, then waved his hand to produce a bag of holding.

It was Bai Qi's bag of holding; after his death, his branding mark had faded away, leaving the bag ownerless. Bai Xiaochun quickly sent some divine sense inside to search around, whereupon his eyes began to glow.

Inside of the bag of holding was a bone slip which contained a complete record... of Bai Hao's research notes, which had previously been written on the floor of his hut, and had later been wiped away!

“The formula for fifteen-colored flame... as well as Bai Hao's augury technique....” Bai Xiaochun was elated, and could barely even breathe straight. The value of this information was no less than that of the deva soul he had just acquired. The formula for fifteen-colored flame was actually secondary. Most important of all was Bai Hao's augury technique, which pertained to many aspects of enlightenment regarding flame conjuring.

With that augury technique, Bai Xiaochun would be able to understand flame conjuring on a much deeper level, and improve his skill dramatically, just as he had with the medicinal knowledge he had gained in the Heavenspan River region.

Bai Xiaochun put the bone slip away, and then looked around with determination gleaming in his eyes. As of now, he had accomplished just about everything he wished to accomplish in the Bai Clan. There were a few other things, but they couldn't be handled right here and now.

“The most important thing right now is to get out of here safely....” As usual, Bai Xiaochun wanted to make sure that his poor little life was not in any significant danger. After he made sure it was not in any significant danger, he would reduce that danger even further.

As of this point, he could easily use his Undying Hex to pierce through the boundaries of the ancestral land. In fact, he might even be able to make it past the clan's grand spell formation. However, he still didn't feel safe. Even with the murdersoul spikes in place, he wanted a more stable plan.

“I only have one life. The slightest slipup or instance of overconfidence, and I could provoke a complete catastrophe....” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he blinked a few times, and then gritted his teeth.

“When it comes to my poor little life, making extra preparations will always be worth it. After I get out of the ancestral land, I need to make sure the clan is thrown into complete chaos. In fact, I also need to lock down the deva patriarch. That will make things much safer....” At that point, his eyes glittered.

“I know... if I cause heavenly fire to rain down onto the Bai Clan as I'm leaving, that will definitely cast them into turmoil. Even the deva patriarch will have to worry about protecting the clan!” His heart also surged with excitement over the realization that going

through with this plan would once again put his awesomeness on display for the entire clan to see.

The feeling of being able to show off a bit after keeping such a low profile caused his excitement to surge.

“Plus, any people hostile to the Bai Clan will definitely take an interest in me afterward....” Chuckling, he flew straight up into the air.

The sight of him flying up caused the hearts of the clan members on the mountain to begin to tremble in fear. Similarly, the clan members on the outside were all paying close attention.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun felt completely thrilled. His lifelong desire to be the center of attention had never been completely fulfilled in the River-Defying Sect, but out here in the Wildlands, it was becoming a reality.

Feeling very proud of himself, he waved his hand, causing a large group of vengeful souls to fly out of his soulhoarding pagoda.

As all clan members looked on in shock, he then made a casual grasping motion!

Instantly, his hand became like a black hole, which caused all of the souls to fly into his palm. He closed his fingers into a fist, and then slowly opened them to reveal... a tongue of one-colored flame!

On the ancestral mountain, numerous eyes widened in shock, and the same thing happened outside in the clan!

“He’s conjuring flame!!”

“Look at how smoothly he did it! It’s only one-colored flame, but even still, it worked instantly!!”

The clan elders’ eyes widened, and as for the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, his heart trembled in shock. After all, the grand elder was also adept at flame conjuring, and could instantly see

many things from how casually Bai Xiaochun had conjured the flame....

Of course, Bai Xiaochun wasn't finished. As everyone watched in amazement, he dispersed the one-colored flame, fed more vengeful souls into the fire... and then casually closed his fist.

Three-colored flame!

Five-colored flame!

Seven-colored flame!

In the blink of an eye, Bai Xiaochun conjured seven-colored flame, sending blistering heat out in all directions. Furthermore, his motions were all completely smooth and casual!

“A master necromancer!!”

“Heavens! I can accept that he's a master necromancer, but... the speed and accuracy of his flame-conjuring is impossibly high!!”

“Am I seeing things? One shot? In one shot, he conjured everything up to a seven-colored flame?!?!”

Chapter 608: Let The Show Begin

Bai Hao had risen to complete prominence. He had crushed Bai Qi and stolen the deva soul, inundating the Bai Clan with floodwaters of astonishment.

The representatives from the other two clans were astonished to the ultimate degree.

As for the emissary from Giant Ghost City, his eyes were shining brightly, and he had long since transmitted news back home about what was happening. Earlier, he had assumed the matter had already ended; never could he possibly have imagined that the show... was only just beginning!

“Master necromancer!”

“Everyone used to say that Bai Hao was the garbage of the clan, a bastard son who was so lowly he wasn’t worth paying attention to. They even said his latent talent was the worst quality possible. But now, the lowest of the low has practiced cultivation to an unheard-of level!”

“People said that he was equally untalented in necromancy. But now... he conjured a seven-colored flame in one fell swoop. If that’s not latent talent, then what is?!?!?”

“Unless... he's an imposter....”

However, even as everyone reeled in shock, Bai Xiaochun was there in the ancestral land, not yet finished with his flame conjuring.... The wave of his hand caused the seven-colored flame to spread out and gobble up more vengeful souls. The exact method being used would not have been noticeable even to ordinary necromancers, but the grand elder from the Hall of Justice and the other experts all gasped.

“That’s....”

A new color could be seen in the seven-colored flame as the sea of

fire converged back into Bai Xiaochun's palm. Then he opened his fingers to reveal... a tongue of eight-colored flame!!

That, of course, led to even more widespread shock, especially considering how smoothly Bai Xiaochun performed the task. It was almost as if conjuring eight-colored flame could not have been more of a simple task for him.

The implication caused the clan elders' eyes to narrow. However, they quickly went wide again as... the eight-colored flame spread out and then gobbled up more vengeful souls, causing another color to appear!

It was now...

Nine-colored flame!!

Before any cries of shock could be heard, Bai Xiaochun casually opened his fingers, causing the nine-colored flame to explode out in all directions.

Even as he hovered there, surrounded by a sea of fire, more vengeful souls poured out of his soulhoarding pagoda, to be absorbed by the nine-colored flame. Bai Xiaochun closed his hand, then opened it... to reveal fire with ten colors in it!!

“Ten-colored flame!!”

“The peak of the master necromancer rank!!”

“Heavens! Am I seeing things? He went from one-colored flame all the way to ten-colored flame in one quick motion? How is that even possible!?!?” At that point, no one could hold back from crying out in shock. One might think that they would grow numb to the situation, but Bai Xiaochun didn't give them the time for that. Every move he made stabbed them with astonishment, leaving them incredulous to the point of disbelief. And yet, many of them were now looking forward with anticipation to what was coming next....

As the cries of astonishment continued to echo out... Bai

Xiaochun went on with his work. Eyes shining brightly, he waved his hand to send the ten-colored flame spreading out in all directions. The sky in the ancestral land was on fire as a massive group of vengeful soul burst out from his crystalline soulhoarding pagoda.

The flames danced, becoming like a huge mouth that consumed the souls. At the same time, the onlookers' hearts were pounding, their eyes were bulging, and their minds were spinning.

Nobody needed any help to understand that Bai Xiaochun was attempting to conjure... eleven-colored flame!

The elders began to hold their breath as the ten-colored flame guzzled down the vengeful souls, and their faces flickered with countless emotions!

“Can he... can he conjure eleven-colored flame...?”

“There's no way!”

“Eleven-colored flame! That's the hallmark of terrestrial necromancers! There's no way that Bai Hao can conjure that level of flame!!”

After all... not a single one of the clan elders was higher than the master rank, and none of them had any hope of progressing any further.

And yet, Bai Hao had already surpassed them! With one more step, he would be a terrestrial necromancer, of which there were only two in the clan at the moment, the two grand elders from the Hall of Corrections and the Hall of Justice.

Not even the clan chief was at the terrestrial rank. Currently, he was staring at the screen on the stone gate, his heart racing with madness as utter incredulity swept over him.

However, the killing intent in his eyes only intensified; it wouldn't matter if Bai Hao were more of a chosen than he obviously was, he would still want to kill him!!

Madam Cai was even more enraged, with venomous hatred in her eyes that seemed to stem from the Nine Serenities underworld!

Countless eyes were glued to the ten-colored flame, and everyone was panting. As the vengeful souls were fed into the sea of fire, another color gradually appeared.

In that moment, the gasps ceased... and the entire world went silent.

Bai Xiaochun closed his fingers, causing the sea of fire to converge on his palm. Then he opened his hand, causing a radiant light to fill the entire ancestral land!

“Eleven colors!!”

“He’s... he’s not a master necromancer, he’s... he’s....”

“He’s a terrestrial necromancer!!!”

“Impossible! How could this be happening...?” Everyone in the Bai Clan, from the youngsters to the old-timers, were reeling in astonishment and disbelief.

“Terrestrial rank!!” The clan elders were trembling, their breath coming in ragged pants as their eyes bulged out of their skulls. What they were seeing now was the most unbelievable thing so far, even more unbelievable than watching Bai Hao kill Bai Qi.

The two grand elders’ jaws dropped, and their minds spun beyond their control.

Of course, most agitated of all were Madam Cai and the clan chief. Madam Cai stood there, completely stunned, a look of brutal ferocity frozen on her face. As for the clan chief, he felt like his mind were being struck by hundreds of thousands of lightning bolts, making it impossible for him to do anything other than stand there.

He had known that Bai Hao had latent talent in flame conjuring. However, latent talent didn’t necessarily manifest into action. But

right now, Bai Hao had casually conjured everything from one-to eleven-colored flame, leaving the clan chief shaken to his very core.

“This can’t be happening!!” he gurgled, his neck turning red from the humiliation and incredulity. It was almost as if that eleven-colored flame were about to burn his world to ashes.

The two representatives from the great clans and the emissary from Giant Ghost City were all flabbergasted. In all the lands controlled by Giant Ghost City, it would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find a terrestrial necromancer this young. As a result, they were all thinking the same thing: “Now that... is the qilin son of the Bai Clan....”

However, before people could finish their exclamations of shock, Bai Xiaochun once again waved his hand, causing a final wave of vengeful souls to erupt from his soulhoarding pagoda.

He now had almost no vengeful souls left. However, he had enough to push his eleven-colored flame to the next level. As the flame spread out around him, everyone looking on was stupefied.

“He’s... he’s going to conjure twelve-colored flame!!”

“Crazy! This is completely crazy....”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes radiated bright light as he looked around at the sea of fire. As the vengeful souls poured into the fire, unstable fluctuations suddenly appeared. Bai Xiaochun was well aware that all he had to do now was stop using the help of a clone, and the sea of fire would stabilize and transform into twelve-colored flame.

If he continued to try to conjure the flame as he was doing now... then his rain of magical fire would make an appearance again.

“And that’s exactly what I want!” he murmured through gritted teeth. A ghost image appeared, which was one of his clones. As the clone attempted to suppress the fire, heaven-shaking, earth-shattering light spread out in all directions.

The light was so bright and dazzling that even the people watching the screen were forced to look away, and were unable to see Bai Xiaochun's clone.

Not even the people inside the ancestral land were able to see clearly what was happening. All they could see was... a terrifying, twelve-colored sea of fire!

In that exact moment, the stone gate that was the entrance into the ancestral land... finally succumbed to the clan chief, and opened!!

“Time to die, Bai Hao!!” roared the clan chief. As soon as the entrance was opened, he stepped forward!

Simultaneously, Bai Xiaochun was there in the middle of the sea of fire. Looking up, he saw the huge rift open up, revealing the members of the clan outside of the ancestral land... and the clan chief, preparing to step inside. At that point, a look of madness appeared on Bai Xiaochun's face.

“Success or failure all comes down to this!!” Howling, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward, taking the twelve-colored sea of fire with him as... he emerged from the Bai Clan ancestral land!

Chapter 609: The Patriarch Makes A Move

“He’s coming out!!”

“He’s bringing that twelve-colored sea of fire with him... heavens!” The clan members outside the stone gate were trembling, especially the ones who weren’t very close to the gate itself. Their faces were as ashen as death, including one young woman who was the very same person Bai Xiaochun had encountered on his first day in the clan. Her expression was a mask of despairing terror.

Everyone in the entire clan was now looking at the stone gate!

As the entrance to the ancestral land opened, the clan chief bellowed and entered. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun shot toward the same location, taking the twelve-colored sea of fire with him.

The heat from the flame caused the clan chief’s face to flicker; he could sense how threatening it was, and yet, nothing could suppress the madness in his heart.

He had just watched his beloved son be cut down, and had simultaneously witnessed someone he viewed as trash, Bai Hao, rise to prominence. Bai Hao had trampled upon everything that was dear and important to the clan chief, and therefore... it was literally impossible to describe how enraged and insane he was. He wanted to kill someone, that person being Bai Hao, and as such, he drew upon the full, explosive power of his cultivation base, using the battle prowess of the mid Nascent Soul stage to become something like a sharp sword that stabbed toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Die, you unfilial bastard!!” The clan chief stabbed directly into the twelve-colored flame. However, before he could get very far, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, causing the devastating power of the flame to push the clan chief to one side.

As the intense rumbling sounds echoed out, Bai Xiaochun took a

deep breath and ignored the clan chief. Instead, he accelerated, causing everything around him to slow down.

He was moving with speed that was impossible to describe. The clan chief had been shoved out of his way, and now, Bai Xiaochun blurred past him, instantly appearing... at the stone gate, where he emerged out into the Bai Clan!

The moment he was out in the open, the twelve-colored flame roiled out in all directions, causing the sky to turn bright red, and filling the area with pressure and energy that left the members of the Bai Clan gasping.

Never before had they seen anything this unbelievable. Not only was the flame itself shocking, but the fact that Bai Xiaochun was right there in the middle of it was even more astonishing. He looked like the overlord of all fire!

All eyes were on Bai Xiaochun as he appeared out in the middle of the clan. As he did, the seven or eight clan elders who were from the direct bloodline all glared at him with killing intent, and then began to move in his direction.

Of course, they feared the twelve-colored sea of fire, so at the moment, their only goal was to surround and capture him.

And yet, it didn't matter how quickly they moved, they couldn't match the speed of Bai Xiaochun's left hand, within which suddenly appeared eight jade slips. He instantly crushed the first of those jade slips, which caused the hundreds of murdersoul spikes he had planted throughout the clan to simultaneously detonate in dramatic fashion.

Explosions rocked hundreds of locations in the clan, causing the defensive spell formation, the strongest spell formation in the entire clan, to ripple and distort. Then, cracks began to spread out across its surface.

The grand spell formation... was about to shatter!!

Next, Bai Xiaochun crushed the rest of the jade slips, which instantly caused the power of teleportation to rise up around him. Shockingly, those jade slips were all teleportation talismans!

All of this happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint; the grand spell formation began to fall apart, and the power of teleportation filled the area. However, even as Bai Xiaochun began to fade away, the clan elders chuckled coldly and sent their Nascent Soul divine sense out, locking the air down and nullifying the power of the teleportation talismans!

Nullifying teleportations was actually a common tactic, and considering that these were all Nascent Soul experts, it wasn't at all difficult for them to cause spatial chaos.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun's teleportation power was interfered with, his eyes widened, and his heart began to pound. However, he had planned for something like this. Without the slightest hesitation, he threw his head back and roared. Even as the Nascent Soul clan elders charged from one direction, and the clan chief charged toward him from within the ancestral land, he took a step forward.

With that step, he used the secret magic of the Undying Hex, causing his body to blur, ignoring the spatial chaos caused by the Nascent Soul cultivators.

The faces of the direct bloodline elders and the clan chief all fell dramatically. The type of spatial distortion being used by Bai Xiaochun was something they couldn't do anything about, especially considering that he was currently surrounded by a twelve-colored sea of fire that made him completely unapproachable.

However, just in the moment when it seemed Bai Xiaochun would teleport away, a cold snort echoed out from the catacombs beneath the clan. It was none other than the deva patriarch surrounded by the seven candles! His eyes were currently glowing

brightly as he made a grasping gesture, causing the air outside in the clan to distort as a powerful will appeared. It was a will that surpassed the will of the heavens, and took the form of a huge hand that began to close around Bai Xiaochun!

“You’re not going anywhere!”

The hand locked everything around Bai Xiaochun down, and although it didn't completely interrupt his Undying Hex secret magic, it did slow it down significantly.

Instantly, the faces of the direct bloodline clan elders and the clan chief went wild with joy.

“Patriarch!”

“The patriarch is making a move!!”

“You’re going to die beyond the shadow of a doubt, Bai Hao!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s face fell, and yet, he had also been prepared for something like this to happen. Eyes shining with cold light, he shouted, “You’re exactly who I’ve been waiting for!”

Even as the words left his mouth, he moved his hand, closing his fingers into a fist that forced the sea of fire to converge on his palm and take the shape of a twelve-colored flame.

As the sea of fire began to shine with dazzling light, it destabilized, and then suddenly erupted with an intense roaring sound.

Sensations of deadly crisis erupted within the direct bloodline clan elders and the clan chief. Before any of them could react, the sea of fire collapsed, causing deafening rumbling sounds to echo out!

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Twelve-colored flame roiled out for hundreds of meters in all directions, enveloping everything in its path. The clan elders and the clan chief backed up with utmost urgency, but the hand of the

deva patriarch didn't, and within the blink of an eye, made contact with the flame.

The resulting boom rose into the highest heavens!

The air in the area collapsed, and the sea of fire vanished. The deva patriarch's illusory hand survived, but was clearly in bad shape as it continued to close in around Bai Xiaochun.

However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't afraid of a weakened deva-level divine ability. Suddenly, three ghost images appeared as his three clones stepped out and shot toward the hand.

Howling, they used all the power at their disposal to fight back!

BOOM!

As soon as his wood clone touched the hand, blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he transformed into a beam of green light that shot back into Bai Xiaochun. However, the hand had been slowed, and was even dimmer than before.

BOOM!!

His water clone was next. He slammed into the hand, resulting in most of his body being destroyed. And yet, the hand stopped for a moment, and grew even dimmer!

Lastly was his fire clone. Instead of simply defending, he took the initiative to attack with all his power.

BOOM!!!

Blood sprayed out of the fire clone's mouth as he fell back. However, the huge hand had been damaged three times in a row, and was now little more than an outline. By the time it hit Bai Xiaochun's true self, all that happened was that he coughed up a mouthful of blood.

After wiping the blood off of his lips, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

"That's all you can do, deva?!?!" As his words rang out... he

began to fade away. Clearly, he was only moments away from piercing through the air and vanishing!

Chapter 610: Fleeing The Bai Clan

Not even the deva patriarch had been able to prevent Bai Xiaochun from escaping. The entire Bai Clan was dumbfounded, including the clan elders from the direct bloodline and the clan chief, all of whom were struck with disbelief that defied imagination.

They knew Bai Hao was strong, but he was still only in Core Formation. Despite the fact that their deva patriarch had not appeared in person, and had only sent out a divine ability, he was still a deva!!

Because everything had happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, none of them had seen Bai Xiaochun's three clones fighting back against that divine ability.

As Bai Xiaochun faded away from view, the deva patriarch sat grim-faced in his secret chamber in the catacombs, his eyes shining with intense coldness. Then, he extended his right hand, causing his withered body to fill back in with flesh and blood until he looked like a normal person.

At the same time, his right hand seemed to distort with the power of spatial manipulation, causing rumbling sounds to fill the area as heaven and earth seemed to collapse. Then he looked up in Bai Xiaochun's direction, clearly intent on trying to grab him a second time.

However, his face fell when he realized that he was grabbing down, not onto Bai Xiaochun, but onto thin air!

Even as he did that, the entire sky above the Bai Clan turned crimson, and fire began to rain down!

That fire was composed of twelve-colored flame!

As soon as the rain of fire began to fall, everyone in the clan began to cry out in alarm.

“A rain of fire!!”

“It was Bai Hao! He was the one who caused the rain of fire last time!!” The mere thought of a twelve-colored rain of fire caused all faces in the clan to fall. That type of fire was so hot it could melt stone and metal, and was already turning everything in the area into a virtual furnace.

Even worse, the grand spell formation had been damaged, and although it was already repairing itself, it was still weaker than the last time. Furthermore, the gaps in it were so large that the fire could obviously make it through them and land on the clan itself!!

If that fire landed on the clan... it would definitely damage it in a very significant way. Casualties would be severe. Even if the deva patriarch took a hand in defending the clan, he wouldn't be able to save everyone....

The only chance was to stop the rain of fire before it got past the shield!

The deva patriarch had been presented with two choices: either prevent Bai Xiaochun from fleeing, or extinguish the heavenly fire. The deva could only confidently pick one option. If he tried to do both at the same time, it could easily lead to a catastrophic slip-up.

The deva chose to extinguish the heavenly fire. As soon as his hand latched down onto thin air, another huge hand appeared in the sky above the clan. As the rain of fire descended, he reached out to grab it!

It only took the blink of an eye for the hand to grow dramatically in size, until it was fully 300,000 meters across. Conveniently, in addition to covering the flaming clouds above the clan, it also contained Bai Xiaochun within the shadow of its power.

Clearly, the deva patriarch was still not giving up on trying to get to Bai Xiaochun.

However, Bai Xiaochun was not an ordinary Core Formation

cultivator. He had reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, and also the Heaven-Dao Gold Core stage. He had three deva soul clones, and battle prowess that vastly surpassed the Core Formation level. He could even slaughter early Nascent Soul stage experts with ease!

In fact, he could also hold his own against the mid Nascent Soul stage, and if he used his clones, could crush someone in that level!

Thorough preparation can lead to shocking results, and that was exactly what Bai Xiaochun was doing as he made his way toward the Nascent Soul stage!

Just before the hand made contact with him, he vanished, teleported by the Undying Hex to a location outside of the Bai Clan!

As for the flames up above, the hand made contact with them, wiping them away, rain and clouds alike....

Down in the catacombs, the deva patriarch's expression could not have been more unsightly. Turning to look in the direction Bai Xiaochun had fled, he lifted his foot in preparation to give chase. But then, he looked at the green flames of the seven candles, and gritted his teeth.

“My Seven Life-Locking Candles have reached a critical stage. I can't just leave....” Taking a deep breath, he sat back down cross-legged and then issued orders to the clan.

“Use my divine will seal and these ships to track Bai Hao down! Get him back here within seven days!” The deva patriarch transmitted the orders with divine sense, causing his words to immediately ring out in the minds of the clan elders. All of the elders were shaken, and quickly clasped hands and bowed in the direction of the catacombs. At the same time, a seal formed from divine sense took shape in their minds.

Those sealing marks would help them determine Bai Xiaochun's position. Bai Xiaochun had managed to flee, but had been struck by

the deva patriarch, who had secretly branded him with a bit of divine will for the purposes of tracking him.

In addition to the divine sense seals, nine soulships flew out from the catacombs. Each of the ships had been forged by the deva patriarch himself, and were capable of speed equivalent to the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage.

A tremor ran through the clan chief, and his eyes began to shine with intense killing intent and madness. Although he wouldn't dare to disobey the orders of the patriarch, he knew that just because he had to apprehend Bai Hao didn't mean that he couldn't torture him a bit in the process. He had already decided to make sure his unfilial son knew what it was like to experience such pain that you wished to end your own life!!

Flicking his sleeve, he stepped onto one of the soulships, then reached out in the direction of the ancestral shrine hall.

“Patriarch, I request the use of a speed pennant to help me apprehend my unfilial son!”

“Permission granted!” Instantly, a violet beam of light flew out from the shrine hall, which transformed into a small flag that the clan chief grabbed out of the air.

“I don't care how far you teleport away, you unfilial bastard, you won't get away from me!” Snarling viciously, he blurred into motion, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as he chased after Bai Xiaochun.

Madam Cai stood in the crowd, trembling, her heart surging with both grief and venom.

“Bai Hao, you son of a bitch, I'm going to skin you alive! I'll feed you to the dogs! I'll extract your soul and torture you for lifetimes over!!”

Thanks to the representatives from the other clans and the emissary from Giant Ghost City, news of the drastic upheavals in

the Bai Clan would soon spread. It was easy to imagine how, in the near future, all of the territory under the control of Giant Ghost City would be buzzing with gossip.

Although it was a huge humiliation for the Bai Clan, the elders and other members of the auxiliary bloodlines only followed the patriarch's orders half-heartedly.

In contrast, the direct bloodline raged with killing intent. Everyone who could be mobilized was mobilized, and began looking for clues. Before long, the most powerful experts of the direct bloodline were chasing after Bai Xiaochun.

They needed to catch him within seven days as ordered, and hopefully, nip the rumors in the bud.

**

Deep in a valley not too far away from the clan, the air rippled and distorted, and then Bai Xiaochun flew out at top speed. After landing on the ground, he staggered a few paces, and then coughed up a mouthful of blood.

“I guess I underestimated devas....” he thought, shivering. Back in the clan, he had been fighting tenaciously. But now that he was out here on his own, the terror he felt finally showed on his face.

Taking a few deep breaths, he wiped the blood off of his mouth and chin and then looked around. Lingering fear still prickled in his heart, and yet, he also knew that he still had his demigod soul to use in case of emergency.

“Fudge! In the future, I definitely can't be so impulsive and trust in risky plans....” Shaking his head bitterly, he had to admit that his actions in the Bai Clan proved how brave he had become. But then, he realized that such thinking was actually mistaken. “There are a lot of important things in the world, but my poor little life is the most important of all....”

He thought back to all of the preparations he had made in order

to escape, including the murdersoul spikes, the teleportation talismans, his Undying Hex, and the secret magic of the rain of fire. His timing in everything had been perfect, and yet he still had only escaped death by the skin of his teeth.

If any of his preparations had been lacking in the least, then he would have had no choice but to use his demigod soul. And yet, even still, he was not completely and utterly confident that such a tactic would work.

“Bai Xiaochun, you need to make sure you've learned your lesson. Next time you're in a situation like this, you need to prepare even more thoroughly!” Pulling out some spirit alcohol, he drank deeply to restore his cultivation base, then pulled out a jade slip to make contact with Zhou Yixing and Li Feng and have them wait for him at a predetermined location.

Considering that they had helped him with his caper in the Bai Clan, he was fairly certain he could trust them. And yet, he still didn't feel comfortable trusting them enough to tell them where he was.

Finally, he looked down at the earth-type deva soul in his bag of holding, and his eyes shone as brightly as fire.

Chapter 611: Time To Die, Unfilial Bastard

“I got my earth-type deva soul.... My trip to the Bai Clan wasn’t without its dangers, but in the end... it was worth it!” With those thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun looked around with increased vigilance. Even as he contemplated how rewards come only with risk, he realized that his thinking was yet again getting out of line, and corrected himself.

“No, no, no. I can’t start thinking like that. It wasn’t worth it. It wasn’t worth it at all! I can’t use the deva soul to try to comfort myself.” He even smacked himself a few times to try to get some sense into his head.

“Although, on the other hand, the Wildlands is a fundamentally dangerous place for me, so I really had no choice!” With that, he pulled out the earth-type deva soul. Eyes shining with anticipation, he took a deep breath and then pushed it into his chest!

The instant it touched him, he used the secret magic he had learned in the sepulcher to merge with the soul.

Instantly, strands of yellow light spread out through his body, filling him.

It was a feeling he hadn’t experienced in quite some time, and also a feeling that virtually no one else in the world had ever experienced. And yet, he had experienced it three times already, with this being the fourth. After completely merging with the soul, and being filled with light, he slowly opened his eyes.

Although his cultivation base hadn’t improved, his battle prowess... was now far beyond what it was before. Furthermore, there were a total of four swirling vortexes hidden away inside of him, within each of which was a clone.

Each one of those clones was just as powerful as he was, both in terms of cultivation base and fleshly body power. Even their divine

sense was the same. Including his true self in the mix, he was now able to essentially become five people!

Five cultivators in the great circle of the Heaven-Dao Gold Core stage, five cultivators in the third level of the Undying Live Forever Technique! Any one of them could fight toe to toe with an early Nascent Soul stage expert, and possibly even kill that opponent!

If they all fought together, they would be so terrifying that even the mid Nascent Soul stage would be like nothing to them!

Bai Xiaochun was more excited than ever, and was now feeling a lot more confident about being alone in the Wildlands.

“With my four clones, I could most likely even handle someone in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage.... The only thing to really be scared of would be a deva. And if the Bai Clan deva patriarch tries to chase me, then I can always use my demigod soul!” He was still nervous, but at least he had options.

Of course, he knew that the Bai Clan would never let him off the hook. From now, he would have to worry about them trying to track him down. However, he was also confident that they wouldn't be able to keep it up forever.

“Let's just see how far they're willing to push things. If they make me, I'll use my demigod soul to injure their deva. Even if I only wound him, the other two clans and Giant Ghost City, as well as any other enemies they have, would surely take advantage of the situation to make a move!”

After thinking about the matter a bit more, he gritted his teeth and sped into motion, heading, not toward Giant Ghost City, but toward the depths of the Wildlands. His goal now was merely to buy time.

Meanwhile, outside the Bai Clan, the clan chief was flying along, surrounded by a murderous aura and grim coldness. Countless

vengeful souls had been formed together into a huge soulship which carried him along with frightening speed.

He was moving far more quickly than he could on his own, thanks to a secret magic that was quite draining. However, as the clan chief, he had access to plenty of soul medicine to make up for the loss.

And yet, he still wasn't happy with that level of speed, and also poured some power directly from his cultivation base into the soulship, giving it an even greater boost.

Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as the soulship shot along, leaving afterimages behind as the clan chief used the divine sense seal given by the patriarch to track down his quarry.

“Must go faster!!” Because of the divine sense seal, he could tell that Bai Xiaochun was picking up speed, but that he was actually very close. As long as he maintained his current speed, he would likely catch up within three days.

As those days went by, the patriarch's orders gradually grew weak in the mind of the clan chief; his desire to kill Bai Hao became like a black hole that sucked in everything else.

At one point, the clan chief suddenly reached up and hit the top of his head, causing a violet stream of light to emerge from his forehead.

The light rapidly formed into the shape of a little flag. Then, the clan chief performed an incantation gesture, which caused the flag to rapidly grow into a huge banner which he reached out and grabbed.

“You can't escape, you unfilial bastard!” He spit out some life essence blood onto the banner, which began to radiate scintillating light. At the same time, the clan chief produced a huge batch of soul medicine that he tossed into the banner.

Rumbling sounds echoed out, and lightning crackled around the

banner as the clan chief then planted it down onto the surface of the soulship.

RUMBLE!

Lightning danced around the soulship as its speed suddenly increased exponentially!

The blinding speed with which the ship now moved surpassed anything from the Nascent Soul stage. This was clearly the power of the Deva Realm!

Of course, for every breath of time that such speed was unleashed, a huge amount of soul medicine would be drained. Not even the clan chief had access to enough soul medicine to keep it going for more than about two hours!

“Two hours. That's all I need to catch up to you!!” In his madness, the clan chief was pulling out all the stops to try to catch Bai Xiaochun.

As the clan chief shot along with heaven-defying speed, time passed, and he could sense Bai Xiaochun getting closer and closer....

“He’s right in front of me!!” By craning his neck, he was now just able to make out Bai Xiaochun off in the distance.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked; considering how fast he was moving, only the deva patriarch should have been able to catch up to him so quickly.

In fact, as soon as he realized that someone was closing in on him, he quickly pulled out his demigod soulhoarding pagoda and looked over his shoulder with a serious expression. However, when he saw that it was just a soulship with the clan chief on it, his jaw dropped. He almost couldn’t believe that the clan chief had dared to chase after him alone....

Then he noticed the huge banner, and the shocking soul fluctuations coming off it. Furthermore, he got the sensation that

there was an eye looking at him from within the banner.

It didn't feel like the eye of a deva. Instead, it felt similar to the true spirit back in the River-Defying Sect, or the true spirit in the pagoda back at the Great Wall.... Although it wasn't as powerful as either of those other true spirits, it was similar.

“Don't tell me it's a counterfeit?” Although something seemed off about the situation, what was most important was that the clan chief was closing in on him with murderous rage.

“Die, you unfilial bastard!!” The clan chief shot toward him with incredible speed, apparently attempting to ram him with the soulship. Face falling, Bai Xiaochun drew upon his ability to make everything around him slow down, and yet, considering how fast the soulship was moving, it didn't do much good.

He just barely managed to leap out of the way in time, whereupon the soulship screamed past him.

“Considering how fast he's going, and the fact that he's relying on that treasure... don't tell me he really came alone to try to kill me?” Even as he fell back, he sent his divine sense out to check for anyone else, but to his surprise, didn't find anything.

“I can see you, Bai Clan patriarch!” he shouted. “Show your face! And you too, clan elders! I can see everyone! Stop hiding, all of you!” At that point, the clan chief leapt off of the soulship, performing a double handed incantation gesture that summoned a horde of vengeful souls, which merged together to make an enormous evil ghost head. Roaring, the head launched itself toward Bai Xiaochun to consume him.

“I can cut you down on my own, Bai Hao. You killed my son, so now I'm going to make you wish you could die!!”

Chapter 612: Crushing Father Bai

“He’s really alone?!” As the evil ghost head shot toward him, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered, and he performed an incantation gesture, summoning a huge violet cauldron, which went on to smash into the huge ghost head.

During the resulting boom, Bai Xiaochun quickly bit his tongue. Blood spurted out of his mouth, and he shrieked as he flew backward. He almost looked like he was scared for his life, and in fact, he even pulled out a handful of teleportation talismans.

However, his eyes continued to dart around; clearly, he still wasn’t convinced that the deva patriarch wasn’t in the area.

When the clan chief saw that Bai Xiaochun had pulled out a handful of teleportation talismans, and was about to crush them, he let out a defiant roar. On the one hand, he was fairly confident that, considering the current speed he was capable of, he would still be able to catch his quarry again even if he teleported away.

But eight teleportation talismans? In the Wildlands, even a single teleportation talisman was extremely expensive, the type of thing that required Heavenspan River water to acquire.

The clan chief’s eyes shone with intense killing intent; by now, he wanted to kill Bai Hao more than anything else. Performing a double-handed incantation gesture, he drew on the explosive power of his mid Nascent Soul cultivation base to summon a massive black hole that instantly caused the air in all directions to distort.

He also sent his divine sense streaming out as he took a step forward, a step that instantly placed him right in front of Bai Xiaochun. Then he reached out with a vicious motion to grab him.

“Even if you flee to the ends of the earth, I’ll still catch you!!”

His hand pierced through the air to appear in front of Bai

Xiaochun's face. If Bai Xiaochun crushed the talismans to teleport away, the clan chief would likely be able to stop him from getting away, but would be injured in the process.

From the vicious expression on the clan chief's face, Bai Xiaochun could tell what he was thinking. However, he was used to keeping his cool. Eyes flickering, it was without the slightest hesitation that he crushed the teleportation talismans!

RUMBLE!

Even as the clan chief's hand closed in, the power of teleportation rose up, and Bai Xiaochun vanished. The clan chief grabbed nothing but air.

"You're not getting away!!" the clan chief roared. Waving his sleeve in fury, he leaped back onto the soulship and once again used the violet banner and the divine will seal to give chase.

Enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn. Bai Xiaochun was some distance away, racing along and simultaneously contemplating what to do.

"If there were other people waiting around ready to jump into the fight, they wouldn't have just sat around and watched me leave.... Don't tell me that... the clan chief really came after me on his own?" Bai Xiaochun almost couldn't believe that it was true. The reality of the situation was that although everyone back in the Bai Clan had witnessed him survive the attack of the deva patriarch's palm, to them, it had seemed like someone in the great circle of Core Formation escaping from a deva by means of a few tricks. In fact, that was how they viewed everything, from the teleportation talismans to the murdersoul spikes.

The only thing that a Nascent Soul cultivator would have to fear was his twelve-colored flame. And yet, any Nascent Soul cultivator who truly went all out in the fight would probably be able to disregard that as a real threat. Besides, the clan chief was in the mid Nascent Soul stage, and was therefore completely convinced

that he would be able to kill him.

Bai Xiaochun was still unsure about the situation.

“Another thing. Was it really just a coincidence that the clan chief managed to track me down so quickly and accurately...?” Even as he pondered the matter, he suddenly spun in place, his eyes widening. There, off in the distance, was a violet glow, racing toward him at incredible speed. It was none other than the clan chief!

“He’s still chasing me.... Alright, he obviously knows exactly where I am. Not a bit of time was wasted. He must have a way to track me....” His eyes flashed, and his heart thumped with anxiety, but at the same time, he knew that there was no point in fleeing.

“Mid Nascent Soul stage.... alright, clan chief, you’re really forcing my hand!” Abandoning thoughts of escaping, Bai Xiaochun roared, drawing on the full power of his fleshly body to prepare to fight. Although it didn't look particularly special, the power of the third level of the Undying Live Forever Technique had long since filled his entire body.

He was like an explosive dragon in human form! As the clan chief closed in, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward, propelling himself ahead with such lightning-like speed that he became a blur of afterimages.

And yet, Bai Xiaochun... was still not satisfied with that level of speed!

“Mountain Shaking Bash!” he shouted, using one of the secret magics of the Undying Codex. His already astonishing speed increased, causing rumbling sounds to fill the air as he essentially vanished. When he reappeared, he was right in front of the clan chief, focusing all of the power in his body onto his right hand, which reached out in a grasping motion!

He was using... the Throat Crushing Grasp!!

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Furthermore, what was occurring seemed completely unbelievable; even the clan chief's eyes went wide, before settling back into a mask of viciousness.

“Feeling suicidal?!” His hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture before waving wide, which caused a violet shield of light to spring up around him. That shield was a defensive mechanism powered by his cultivation base and bolstered by some magical items. The clan chief's face was filled with murder and hatred as he then lunged toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Your cultivation base might be higher than I'd realized, you unfilial bastard, but I refuse to believe that it's the same with your fleshly body power!!” Even as the clan chief roared, the distance between him and Bai Xiaochun closed.

From a distance, they looked like two shooting stars, streaking through the sky on a collision course!!

The moment they collided, heaven-shaking, earth-shattering rumbling swept out. The air shattered as a huge boom filled the air, a deafening noise that vastly surpassed heavenly thunder. There were even rifts torn open left and right.

An agonized shriek escaped the clan chief's lips. Blood sprayed out of his mouth as the soulship was sent spinning off to the side, and he tumbled backward head over heels, his hair in complete disarray. Shock and disbelief could be seen on his face as he roared, “You're not Bai Hao!!”

Bai Xiaochun remained in the spot where they had collided, his body tingling a bit. It had been a long time since he bashed into someone like this, and it was also the first time that he was stricken... by how incredibly powerful his fleshly body was!!

Not only had bashing into his opponent not hurt, but the tingling sensation it left behind was actually slightly pleasurable. Bai

Xiaochun's eyes immediately began to glow brightly.

Of course, there was no time to sit around enjoying the pleasurable feeling. Seeing that the clan chief had lost the initiative in the fight, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward, smacking his bag of holding to produce Zhou Yixing's greatbow. Without any hesitation, he took advantage of the initiative he had gained to unleash more than a hundred arrows in a single volley!

He didn't need to summon the arrows himself, all he needed to do was feed some soul power into the bow itself, which would then create the soul arrows. Technically, Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base didn't operate on soul power, but after his spiritual energy was changed by his mask, it would function the same.

Twang! Twang! Twang! Twang!

In the blink of an eye, more than a hundred arrows shot into the air, becoming like a rainfall that could destroy anything it landed on.

The arrows moved with blinding speed, piercing through the air with rumbling sounds. Before the clan chief could even react, the first arrow was in front of him, where it exploded. Then, the other arrows arrived, all of them exploding in quick succession. The clan chief had no choice other than to anxiously evade the attack.

However, despite the quickness with which he moved, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered as he opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye. Instantly, a violet beam of light shot out and landed onto the clan chief.

"Take control!!" Bai Xiaochun shouted. The clan chief's heart began to pound with shock as he found that, unexpectedly... he had stopped moving.

Considering he couldn't move, there was nothing he could do to evade the force of more than a hundred exploding arrows!!

The air distorted and the lands quaked, and soon, it was almost

impossible to even see the clan chief!

There was even a nearby mountain that collapsed because of the force of the exploding arrows. However, that was when a shout of complete defiance and anger rang out.

“You still don't qualify to kill me!!”

Chapter 613: Heavens!

His voice contained incredible frustration and rage, the type of fury that could only come from watching one's own beloved son be killed. Based on the tone of his voice, it was as if every moment in which Bai Hao existed, there were countless invisible forces screaming at him in fury, accusing and blaming him for what had occurred.

Rage built upon rage, and echoed out with the clan chief's voice as an enormous soul fist smashed into the exploding arrows.

This soul fist was fully 300 meters from top to bottom, and was formed from countless souls. This was a secret magic of the Bai Clan, the 30,000-meter Soul Fist!

At the moment, it wasn't 30,000 meters, and that was because of the level of the clan chief's cultivation base. However, even a 300-meter soul fist was still nothing to scoff at.

Quicker than words could tell, the soul fist appeared, smashing through the air to bear down on Bai Xiaochun.

BANG!!

Deafening rumbling sounds filled the area. Bai Xiaochun's face fell, and he immediately fell back. However, even as he did, the clan chief roared, spinning in place as he released a second 300-meter soul fist, which rumbled through the air, emitting shocking pressure the entire time.

After that was a third fist, then a fourth....

In the blink of an eye, heaven and earth twisted and distorted as a total of nine fists in a row were unleashed on Bai Xiaochun.

Nine soul fists rumbled through the air like nine magical sealing marks. Before Bai Xiaochun could react, they were there in front of him, where they began to detonate. Although he immediately began to fall back, there was no way he could completely evade

injury.

As one explosion after another ripped through the air, Bai Xiaochun staggered backward several steps, his aura flickering and his eyes widening. This was the first time he had fought such a deadly battle with someone in the mid Nascent Soul stage. As of this moment, he was now convinced that, given his current battle prowess, he could fight someone in this level without the help of his clones, but most likely couldn't kill them.

“However, that just goes to show how much I've progressed!” Taking a deep breath, he endured the blasts of the clan chief's nine soul fists.

Even as the air was still distorted, the clan chief lunged forward, his hair in disarray and his eyes completely bloodshot as he became a flowing stream of light that attacked Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Clan secret magic, Hundred Ghosts Haunt the Night!!” His voice seemed to erupt from the Nine Serenities underworld. Gusts of sinister wind pulsed out as his divine sense filled the area. This secret magic was different from the similarly named secret magic from the Spirit Stream Sect. The Bai Clan's version used divine sense to transform into ghosts....

Despite the fact that it was clearly daytime, this secret magic caused the entire 300-meter area to become as dark as night!

It was a pitch-black night that the light of day could not pierce, a place ruled by a black sun! Furthermore, within that black sun... a hundred eyes suddenly opened!!

The eyes were as red as blood, and matchlessly vicious. At the same time, countless roars split the air, causing heaven and earth to shake. Then... a hundred evil ghosts poured out from the black sun!!

The ghosts themselves were pitch black, and each one sported two horns on its heads. They had long, sharp claws, crimson eyes,

and gaping, blood-red maws. They radiated the most sinister of auras, and truly seemed like the type of ghosts one would expect to haunt the night! After swirling once around the clan chief, they howled and followed the line of his finger to charge toward Bai Xiaochun.

These ghosts were the antithesis of sunlight, to the point where sunlight would retreat in front of them. As such, their passage only caused the darkness of the night to grow deeper....

“Let’s see how you get out of this alive, you unfilial bastard!!” the clan chief shouted, his voice vibrating with hatred. Bai Xiaochun was shaken; the sight of so many evil ghosts was definitely terrifying. However, after everything he had gone through in the labyrinth, and then his later experiences learning about flame conjuring in the Wildlands, he was no longer very scared of ghosts. In fact, the sight of so many evil ghosts baring claws and fangs as they rushed toward him only caused a serious expression to appear on his face.

“Alright, I’ll show you how I’ll get out of it alive!” His right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and an afterimage appeared, which was none other than his fire clone.

Instantly, the clan chief’s eyes went wide with astonishment.

“A clone?!” he blurted. “You actually have a clone!!?”

The fire clone looked like Bai Xiaochun’s true self in every aspect, including his appearance, his cultivation base, his fleshly body, and his overall strength!!

The only difference was that the clone's aura seemed to contain a small bit of fire-type power. As soon as he appeared, he joined with Bai Xiaochun’s true self to unleash a fist strike against the hundred ghosts!!

For this clone to join the fight meant that Bai Xiaochun’s battle prowess had instantly doubled. When the two of them unleashed a

fist strike, it caused a tempest to spring up in front of them, which swirled out to smash into the ghosts.

Booms filled the air, and at the same time, Bai Xiaochun's clone grunted and stumbled backward. As for the clan chief, his face fell as he also fell backward several paces, his fury blazing and his murderous desires growing.

“It doesn't matter if you have a clone. You still don't qualify to live when I attack you!!” With that, he took a step forward, performing something like a minor teleportation that placed him right in front of Bai Xiaochun. There, he summoned a 3,000-meter-wide cloud of souls and then lashed out at Bai Xiaochun with a palm strike.

“Minor teleportation? I can do that too!” Instantly, frigid qi poured out, filling a 3,000-meter area and transforming it into a land of ice, a world that belonged solely to Bai Xiaochun.

This was his frigid domain, and as such, the instant the clan chief's palm was about to strike him, he vanished, to reappear directly behind the clan chief! There, he unleashed his own palm strike!

At the same time, his fire clone also struck. Simultaneously, another afterimage appeared, along with another clone! It was... his wood clone, which didn't hesitate for the slightest moment to join his true self and the fire clone to also unleash a blow.

“Dammit!!” growled the clan chief. Spinning, he waved his right hand, causing the 3,000-meter cloud of souls to sweep toward Bai Xiaochun and his two clones.

Bang. Bang! BOOOOOOM!

The intensity of the resulting explosion caused the lands to shake violently. Crevices snaked out as the clan chief staggered backward, his face draining of blood as he glared at Bai Xiaochun. His eyes still shone with killing intent, but this time, there was also

incredulity present.

“Another clone? How many clones do you have!?!?” The clan chief was shocked at how difficult it was to fight Bai Xiaochun, and was enraged at how he could increase his overall battle prowess by adding more people to the fight.

“I refuse to believe that you have another one!” Gritting his teeth, he used another minor teleportation to charge toward Bai Xiaochun. In the face of this onslaught, Bai Xiaochun and his two clones had no choice but to fall back. As he did, his face fell with the realization that, even with two clones at his side, he still wasn't quite a match for the mid Nascent Soul stage.

Only by summoning his third clone could he bridge that gap....

If he had a fourth clone, he could be confident... in coming out completely on top!!

“Heavens! So... this is how the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage works. And I'm only in the beginning levels, still forming my clones. I can't even imagine what I'll be like in the great circle....” Looking over at the clan chief teleporting his way in again, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered, and he also used a minor teleportation.

Even as they closed in on each other, the clan chief could tell that the damnable Bai Hao was not yet going all out, and was actually using him to practice with his clones! Furthermore, he had shocking talent when it came to learning and adapting in the middle of a fight. And on top of all that, his battle prowess kept rising!

All of that left the clan chief wallowing in humiliation. Howling, he threw both of his hands out in front of him to perform a double-handed incantation gesture. Eyes shining with mysterious light, he summoned a total of nine soulhoarding pagodas.

Shrieks exploded from within the soulhoarding pagodas as a whole cloud of vengeful souls erupted. The souls which appeared

were clearly different from ordinary souls. Furthermore, instead of flying out to attack Bai Xiaochun, they actually shot toward the clan chief's eyes... and burrowed inside of him!

“Bai Clan Soul Symbiosis!!” The clan chief threw his head back and let out a howl of agony and rage. As the souls bored into his body, his skin bulged and rippled as faces became visible. He immediately began to grow and transform, causing incredible pressure to radiate from him in all directions.

As of this moment, a sensation of profound danger began to course through Bai Xiaochun!

Chapter 614: Father Bai Flabbergasted

Before reaching the Deva Realm, and in fact, before even reaching the true Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, he could not underestimate any Nascent Soul expert!

Perhaps he would have had an easier time with someone in the early Nascent Soul stage, but this was a level above that. People in the mid Nascent Soul stage often spent less time worrying about their next breakthrough, and more time focused on developing their trump cards!

The clan chief was the perfect example. Stepping into the late Nascent Soul stage wouldn't necessarily be an impossible task for him. But instead of concentrating on that, he had spent a lot of time perfecting his trump cards!

And that was exactly what the Bai Clan Soul Symbiosis was!

As soon as the vengeful souls entered his body, he felt as if he were being consumed alive. By drawing upon all the power he possibly could, he was able to use this secret magic to unify the power of tens of thousands of souls, utilizing his body as the medium with which to unleash heaven-shaking, earth-shattering power!

Even for someone in his level of power, using a secret magic like this would drain him significantly. And yet, in his rage, and in his desire to cut Bai Hao down, he found the determination to disregard all negative aspects.

“You will die!!” he screamed with vicious savagery. His voice sounded like a combination of tens of thousands of voices, causing brightly-colored light to flash above him in the sky, and a massive wind to suddenly sweep through the area.

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered with fear. As of this point, the clan chief didn't even look human anymore.

“Time to die!!”

The clan chief threw his head back and roared, simultaneously flinging his hands up, which sent a boundless black fog roiling out to form the shape of a gigantic ghost head.

The vicious head surrounded the clan chief, and then the both of them began to fly toward Bai Xiaochun.

The air shattered as they approached, and the ground was destroyed beneath them. Mountains collapsed as a huge, 3,000-meter-wide crater opened up.

Wailing screams filled the air like the howls of ghosts and wolves, countless voices, all of which poured out of the enormous head.

“Die!”

“Die!!”

“Die!!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s expression turned deadly serious, and at the same time, another afterimage appeared as his water clone stepped out!

As of this moment, he had three clones flanking his true self. All of them faced the enormous head, then shouted in an equally loud and shocking fashion.

“Living Mountain Incantation!!”

Booming rumbles filled the air!

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun’s true self began to grow in size. Countless boulders formed around him, until his body disappeared, replaced by a shocking, 300-meter-tall stone golem!

Actually, it was not a single stone golem....

His three clones also used the Living Mountain Incantation. A second, third, and fourth stone golem appeared. Then, all four of them launched themselves toward the incoming clan chief and the

gigantic head he had summoned.

The combined attack of the four stone golems caused heaven and earth to shudder, and when they slammed into the gigantic head, the resulting boom shook the highest heavens and the deepest parts of the underworld.

A mind-boggling shockwave spread out in all directions, spreading for tens upon tens of thousands of meters and destroying everything it touched.

The gigantic head immediately shrunk down by more than half, and at the same time, Bai Xiaochun's true self, along with his three clones, all tumbled backward, blood spraying out of their mouths. Popping sounds could be heard as spider-web like cracks spread out across the surfaces of the stone golems. Then, moments later, all of the stone golems simply shattered to pieces.

As Bai Xiaochun's true self and his clones fell back, the clan chief cackled with sinister laughter from inside of the huge head.

“What other tricks do you have, you unfilial bastard!?!?” Even as his laughter continued to ring out, the ghost head swept toward Bai Xiaochun with madness, killing intent, and intense rage.

From the look of it, the clan chief was trying to wipe Bai Xiaochun away with one, full-power blow!!

“How could I have guessed that even three clones couldn't beat his secret magic...?” Eyes shining with determination, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and then decided to use a move he had hoped to hold back.

Considering how the fight had escalated, the fact that no one had interfered indicated that the deva patriarch really wasn't in the area.

Presumably, other clan members were chasing him, but none of them were as maddened as the clan chief was, nor were they capable of his speed.

“It makes sense; I doubt anyone hates me as much as this clan chief does....”

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun didn't hesitate for another moment. Although he was trembling, his eyes shone with an intense desire to fight, a desire birthed of instinct, and impossible to avoid.

His Dao was to live forever, and he didn't like fighting and killing. He was even afraid of death. Although on many occasions it wasn't necessary to escalate to blows, sometimes, if you wanted to keep on living, you had to fight to the death. It had already become his nature to simply grit his teeth and fight, despite the fear which existed in his heart.

“Not even a deva could kill me, let alone some trifling mid Nascent Soul stage cultivator!!” His hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture, and another afterimage appeared! This time, it was his fourth clone, the earth clone!

He now had four clones surrounding his true self, one on each side, a formation that instantly caused thunderous rumblings to roll across the sky, and the lands below to quake.

The clan chief couldn't stop himself from gasping at the sight, and his face instantly fell. But then, he gritted his teeth and, seemingly ambivalent to his own life or death, sent the huge head of souls which surrounded him flying toward Bai Xiaochun, a vicious grin on its face.

Sighing, Bai Xiaochun murmured, “Bai Hao, the time has come for Master to teach your father a lesson, and make sure he understands the unimaginable difference between the two of you!”

He took a deep breath, and then he and all four of his clones raised their arms up into the air, just like a conductor would when leading an orchestra.

“Waterswamp...”

With his true self and all his clones doing the same thing, it caused the entire area for 30,000 meters to transform into a watery swampland!

Dense water vapor pervaded the surroundings, causing the soil to grow loose. As the mist and fog built up, an aura filled the area that seemed to come from chaotic, primeval times!

It seemed like the surrounding 30,000-meter area had been cut away from the Wildlands and become its own dimension. Yet again, the clan chief's eyes went wide, and a very unsightly expression appeared on his ashen face.

Before he could get any closer, Bai Xiaochun's eyes sparkled, and he threw his hands down viciously. At the same time, his four clones did exactly the same thing.

“... Kingdom!!”

BOOOOOOM!

RUUUUMBLE!!

THUMP THUMP!!!

A sound almost like a heartbeat filled the entire area, causing the sky to dim and the lands to tremble. Spikes appeared, shooting up out of the ground with shocking speed!

Beneath the spikes were five mountains of such enormous size that the mere sight of them would leave one's heart trembling!

The five pitch-black curved mountains were none other than the clawed hand of the beast that was Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit!!

Up til now, the full hand had never appeared, only the claws. As for the clan chief, it didn't matter what secret magics he tried to unleash; compared to this beast, he was like a firefly beneath the full moon.

The profound terror that gripped him left him physically

shaking, and unable to keep from screaming. In his long life of cultivation, he had not felt such astonishment and terror even when facing a deva patriarch. It gripped his chest like a vice, and caused his eyes to grow wide as a terrifying premonition ran through him....

Even if his trump cards were more powerful than they were, there was no way he could escape death at the hands of the enormous beast behind this huge claw!

“No... I can't die here!!” he screamed, his aura driven to complete chaos. Abandoning any attempt to attack Bai Xiaochun, he turned to flee.

The terror gripping his heart was the thing of nightmares. How could he have imagined that his unfilial son would be so powerful? He was so strong that the clan chief was filled with nothing but terror!

“You can't be Bai Hao!! Even if the clan spell formation didn't realize it, I know that you're not him!!” The shadow of death loomed over the clan chief to such an extent that he drew on all of his power, burning his cultivation base and longevity alike in his attempt to flee!!

If he didn't escape, he would die!

However, no matter how fast he moved, he couldn't move as fast as that beast claw!

Chapter 615: Captured Alive!

The Waterswamp Kingdom was a divine ability that Bai Xiaochun had learned in the Spirit Stream Sect. However, to date, the entirety of his life essence spirit had not yet been revealed. Only after merging with the deva souls he had acquired, and creating his clones, had he been able to reveal the beast's claws, to defend himself against Mistress Red-Dust.

However, the clawed hand visible now seemed much larger than the one that had appeared during his fight with Mistress Red-Dust. The energy surging out seemed to obscure the will of the heavens! Furthermore, down beneath the curved claws was something that looked like a black land mass!

However, it was no land, it was actually the hand of Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit!

It was impossible to even imagine what that hand would be like if it appeared fully out into the open. However, Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone in anticipation of the day when he would be able to fully employ his Waterswamp Kingdom, and see the beast as a whole.

"Even the claws should do...." One day, if that clawed hand ever fully appeared in the open, it would likely blot out the sky, and leave even a deva wallowing in despair.

"It's definitely going to happen one day!" Heart filled with anticipation, Bai Xiaochun simply watched as the curved claws descended onto the chief of the Bai Clan.

Even now, the incredible energy radiating from the gigantic claws seemed to indicate that one day, it would have the power to crush the heavens. From the perspective of the clan chief, those mountain-like claws filled the sky, and caused his heart to be overwhelmed by despair.

"No!!!" he screamed defiantly. In his madness, he held nothing

back as he sent his trump card, the enormous ghost head, shooting toward the claws in a futile attempt to block them.

Rumbling sounds filled the air, and at the same time, the world seemed to disappear around him. He screamed shrilly, but soon, the sound was drowned out.

Heaven and earth shook violently, and then, the claws began to fade away. The 30,000-meter swamp disappeared, and in the soil which was revealed, five enormous ravine-like gouges could be seen!

In the middle of them all was a person, blood oozing out of his mouth, his bones shattered, his chest barely moving. Anyone who looked at him would likely take him to be a corpse.

The clan chief had been completely incapable of escaping from the unprecedented power of Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom. He was a powerful expert in the mid Nascent Soul stage, but Bai Xiaochun, who himself wasn't even a Nascent Soul cultivator, had been able to best him in battle.

The clan chief was now seriously injured and gasping for breath. However, thanks to his powerful cultivation base and intense life force, he was still alive. Unfortunately, as he struggled to breathe, he realized that so many of his bones were crushed that he couldn't even move.

He could only glare spitefully as Bai Xiaochun, smiling bitterly, but eyes flashing with indescribable hatred.

"If you have what it takes, you unfilial bastard," he said, gasping angrily, "then just kill me!!" His grief and indignation were like oceans that completely inundated him. By this point, he refused to believe that this person in front of him was actually Bai Hao, and yet, couldn't imagine how an imposter could have fooled the clan's spell formation.

In fact, not even the deva patriarch had seen any clues to indicate

that this person was anyone other than Bai Hao.

“Don’t tell me you really are Bai Hao...?” Actually, the answer didn’t really matter anymore. Whoever he was, the clan chief wouldn’t hesitate to kill him if he could.

“Asking to be killed?” Bai Xiaochun brushed the dust off his body and then pulled his four clones back inside of him.

Then he walked a slow circle around the clan chief, looking at him closely to see how badly he was injured. Then he squatted down next to him and bopped him on the head. Glaring, he barked angrily, “Behave, alright?!”

“You!!” the clan chief growled, his anger surging again. The unfilial and rebellious behavior on display here was so outrageous that he felt utterly humiliated. Before, the difference between him and Bai Hao had been like that between heaven and earth. But now, it was the opposite, and that feeling pushed him further into madness.

“Unfilial bastard. Unfilial son of a bitch!!” Suddenly, the clan chief coughed up a mouthful of blood and then lapsed into unconsciousness.

“Uh... all I did was bop you on the head. I didn't even use any force.” Bai Xiaochun was already feeling slightly guilty. Considering that this was Bai Hao’s father, it would have been acceptable for him to be killed by the Waterswamp Kingdom in the heat of battle. But to end his life under these circumstances didn’t seem right. Besides, a living clan chief would be a lot more useful to him than a dead one.

“Ah, whatever. I’m not the kind of person who likes all that fighting and killing. I might as well just use him as my personal protective talisman.” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun sighed and performed a double-handed incantation gesture, then slapped his hands down onto various random places on the clan chief’s body, putting over a hundred

restrictive spells in place. Still not convinced that he'd done enough, he pulled out some medicinal pills and forced them into the clan chief's mouth.

Next, he helped himself to the clan chief's bag of holding, within which he found a sturdy rope. After imbuing the rope with some magical power, he bound the clan chief up. Throwing him over his shoulder, he said, "Hahaha! Let's see if the Bai Clan dares to make a move against me with this protective talisman of mine."

By this point, he felt prouder of himself than ever, and particularly clever. It was almost like he was able to have his cake and eat it too.

"It's too bad this guy is in the mid Nascent Soul stage. Doing a soulsearch on him wouldn't do much good. However, the fact that he was able to track me down so quickly indicates that there's some sort of branding mark on me. That's the only way they could follow me so easily." Then he thought back to when the deva patriarch had attacked him, and suddenly his eyes glittered.

"It must have been then. He must have hit me with some sort of seal." He felt at his mask for a moment. The mask was extraordinary, and could completely change his appearance and aura, but it wouldn't do anything against sealing marks which had been placed on him by exterior forces.

"Well, who cares? When I make a move, I frighten even myself!" Despite trying to work up his own courage, he was still worried. After taking a step forward, he flew up into the air, then looked over his shoulder at the clan chief.

"If Bai Hao's spirit is out there, I doubt he'll be unhappy with this. I'm his Master, after all!" Clearing his throat, he began to pick up speed.

Soon, the cold wind brought the clan chief to his senses, and when he realized the situation he was in, his eyes clouded with venomous rage.

“You unfilial son of a bitch! You’re going to die in pain!!”

Bai Xiaochun ignored him and kept flying. Three days passed by in a flash, during which time the clan chief’s voice grew very hoarse from the constant cursing and swearing.

In the end, Bai Xiaochun actually started to get angry.

Looking over his shoulder, he said, “Shut up! Aren’t you getting tired of talking!? If you keep yapping I’ll--”

“Kill me!!” the clan chief interrupted hoarsely, glaring at Bai Xiaochun.

“Don’t worry, I’m not going to kill you. But if you say one more word, I’ll strip you buck naked!” The clan chief’s eyes went wide, and he panted furiously. His face even turned bright red. However, he closed his mouth and didn’t dare to utter another word.

From what he could tell, the words uttered by his unfilial son were no mere threat. And the thought of being stripped of his clothes and hung out in the open was a level of humiliation that struck him with enough terror that he shivered.

Seeing that his threat had been effective, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered, and he smiled. The clan chief was trembling in rage, but doing his best to suppress it, the act of which seemed to be burning him alive from the inside.

However, he didn’t dare to push the envelope. As the chief of the Bai Clan, if he was humiliated in such a way, then after he died, the Bai Clan would become the laughing stock, not just of Giant Ghost City, but of the entire Wildlands. It would take years to live down such humiliation.

Despite feeling like his scalp was about to explode, the clan chief gritted his teeth and maintained his silence.

“If I had known this would work, I would have done it way earlier!” Bai Xiaochun felt slightly bad for the clan chief, but then he thought about how he’d treated Bai Hao, and his eyes began to

shine with cold light.

Chapter 616: I Want Him Alive

“People like this don't deserve compassion!” With that, Bai Xiaochun proceeded along his way. Eventually, he took out the soulship and the violet pennant to study them a bit.

They were clearly top-quality items, especially the little pennant. To his shock, he found that it was filled with more than 100,000 branding marks, all of them related to speed. Although it was very expensive to use, it could lead to speed of an indescribable level.

Not even the clan chief could fully utilize its powers. It was just too unimaginably expensive. After some calculations, Bai Xiaochun came to the conclusion that using it for only one breath of time would cost ten portions of mid-grade soul medicine!

Not even the Bai Clan could pay such a price for long.... Most importantly, all of the sealing marks on the soulship and the violet pennant had been placed there by the Bai Clan's deva patriarch, meaning that they would be impossible for him to fully use without first breaking all of them.

Even more worthy of note... was that both of the items had benefited from elevenfold spirit enhancements. Bai Xiaochun could see golden designs hidden on both of them. Unfortunately, all of these combined factors indicated that he couldn't use either of them at the moment.

“Well, just give me some time. Maybe I can use Heavenspan River water to wear them away....” After some thought, he tossed both of them into his big bucket of Heavenspan River water.

When not being used, the soulship was small enough to fit in his palm. After tossing it into the bucket, Bai Xiaochun stopped thinking about it and narrowed his eyes.

“I still have to deal with the sealing mark that was put onto me....” Frowning, he performed a double-handed incantation

gesture, then began to slap his hands down all over himself. His qi and blood began to surge in a certain rhythm, pulsing through him as he attempted to cleanse himself. At the same time, he continued to flee.

Another three days passed. It was afternoon as Bai Xiaochun fled when, all of a sudden, his expression flickered. Looking over his shoulder, he saw a brilliant beam of light streaking through the sky toward him.

Within that beam of light was an old man on a soulship, moving at incredible speed, his face a mask of vicious, killing intent.

Although Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure of the man's name, he recognized him. He was one of the Bai Clan elders, whose cultivation base was very close to the mid Nascent Soul level. He was also a member of the direct bloodline.

“Another one? Also alone?” Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times and then cleared his throat, then simply slowed down to a stop.

As the old man closed in and saw that Bai Xiaochun had the clan chief strung up and hanging over his shoulder, his eyes bulged, and he gasped. Without any hesitation, he lurched to a stop.

“He captured the clan chief alive!?!? How is this possible?!?!”

A look of complete incredulity played out on his face. He almost couldn't believe what he was seeing, and in fact, not even in his wildest dreams could he have pictured the clan chief being captured alive. It was impossible to prevent the fear from rising up in his heart; his cultivation base was lower than the clan chief's. Considering that the clan chief had already been captured... what would happen to him? Furthermore, when he saw how bedraggled the clan chief looked, his heart was seized with anxiety.

“I don't care how it happened, there's no way I'm going to risk putting myself in danger....” Sweat popping out on his forehead, he unhesitatingly pulled out a teleportation talisman and crushed

it....

Rumbling sounds filled the air as he faded away.

“Scared him off?” Bai Xiaochun muttered, looking surprised. “Well... he has some common sense, that's for sure. More scared of death than I am. And he's in the Nascent Soul stage....”

He had already been prepared to capture him alive and truss him up like the clan chief. Shaking his head, he looked at the clan chief with his closed eyes and gritted teeth, and couldn't help but smile and sigh.

“This protective talisman really is useful!” Feeling very pleased with himself, he continued along his way with the clan chief trussed up behind him. From that day on, every time someone from one of the auxiliary bloodlines of the Bai Clan encountered him, they would look at the clan chief, gasp, and then flee.

As for the clan chief, he preferred to simply remain unconscious....

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had captured the clan chief alive proved that no one else could do anything to him. After all, no one among them had a higher cultivation base than the clan chief.

Of course, the people from the direct bloodline were not so easily dissuaded. Considering that they could track him with the divine will seal, they began to team up and attack him in groups!

When that happened, Bai Xiaochun would fight back and spill blood immediately....

It wasn't just members of the Bai Clan who saw him going along with the clan chief trussed up. This was Giant Ghost City territory, so there were many soul cultivators and necromancers who also saw the scene.

Everyone who did was completely and utterly shocked.

“Who's that...? And why does that person he has tied up look

like... the chief of the Bai Clan!?”

“No way....”

More and more people saw what was happening, and many more heard the rumors. Soon, stories were spreading throughout Giant Ghost City territory.

At first, the rumors spread quietly, mostly because people couldn't confirm their validity. But soon, after the representatives from the two clans returned to their homes, as did the emissary from Giant Ghost City, the whispered rumors turned into an explosive torrent of gossip.

“What?! A qilin son rose up in the Bai Clan and killed Bai Qi? He stole their deva soul, survived an attack by their deva patriarch, and then escaped!?!?”

“After he escaped, his own father, the clan chief, tried to kill him, but then got captured!? Now the chief is tied up like a dog on his son's back for everyone to see?!?!?”

“Heavens! This Bai Hao... really did turn traitor against the Bai Clan!!” The rumors grew more and more intense, until large numbers of people were paying very close attention to what was happening. News also began to spread of how Bai Xiaochun was killing many of the Bai Clan cultivators who had been dispatched to chase him down. Before long, all of Giant Ghost City was in a commotion.

Within the kingly city, the heavenly marquises and members of the other clans were deeply shaken. Everyone had heard that a qilin son named Bai Hao had emerged from the Bai Clan, and that he had turned traitor, stealing the clan's deva soul and even capturing his own father. Plus... he had killed many fellow clan members in ruthless fashion!

“I heard that he suffered in silence in that clan for years, and was bullied constantly. He even came close to death on numerous

occasions. However, he endured quietly until they opened their ancestral land, which was when he exploded out in shocking fashion!”

“That’s nothing. I heard that this Bai Hao has shocking talent in flame conjuring. Also, his cultivation base is in the great circle of Core Formation. He's completely extraordinary!”

“I can’t believe the Bai Clan is so short-sighted.... But then again, this Bai Hao is clearly a vicious fellow. He actually kidnapped his own father!” Everyone in the area of Giant Ghost City was talking about the matter, and not a single person wasn’t shocked.

Although very few people had ever even seen Bai Hao, they now had a mental image of him. He was completely sinister, with heaven-defying latent talent. At the same time, he had reviled his own clan, and was completely and utterly ruthless.

Not only did the clans and the heavenly marquises learn about the matter, but word even spread to the very heart of Giant Ghost City. Located there was an enormous statue, upon the head of which was the royal palace.

Within the royal palace was a towering figure in a kingly robe, standing at a railing, his hands clasped behind his back. He looked very majestic as he stood there looking out at heaven and earth. He seemed like the personification of the will of the heavens, the type of person who even a deva would tremble in the face of.

It was as if in his presence, even heaven and earth would acquiesce!

He bore the appearance of a middle-aged man, his features angular but extremely handsome. He seemed superior in all ways, the type of person who could dominate anything in sight.

This man... was none other than one of the [four heavenly kings](#), and one of the most powerful people under the arch-emperor himself, the giant ghost king!! He was a person who towered above

all creation, and that was especially so in the current era, in which imperial power was waning. Any of the four heavenly kings were shocking figures who could shake the Wildlands deeply wherever they went!

“Bai Hao....” the giant ghost king said softly. “Interesting....” A strange light flickered in his eyes, as if he were thinking. After a moment, he smiled faintly.

“Duke Deathcrier,” he said loudly, “why don’t you go find this Bai Hao and bring him back here to Giant Ghost City. Arrange for a position for him as well.” The giant ghost king’s words were spoken with icy coldness, but at the same time, profound meaning could be seen within his smile.

Even as his words echoed out, an old man appeared in the left hand of the enormous statue, which was itself another enormous palace.

He seemed ancient to the extreme, with eyes that shone like the sun and moon. The aura which surrounded seemed to fuse with heaven and earth. Shockingly... this man was in the Deva Realm!

The old man clasped hands and bowed deeply. “Yes, your majesty!”

Then he turned his head and simply vanished.

Chuckling coldly, the giant ghost king said, “If the Bai Clan wants him dead, then I want him alive! The three great clans are most likely finishing their preparations.... Let’s see which of them will make the first move!”

To the giant ghost king, Bai Hao was insignificant, and in fact, his life or death didn’t matter at all. However, considering that he was connected to the Bai Clan, it meant that he was the perfect tool to feel them out.

Hey everyone, a quick note that the heavenly kings mentioned in this chapter are not the same as the "Undying Heavenly King"

technique that Bai Xiaochun cultivates. In retrospect, I should have named the technique something else. In fact, I'm thinking of going back to make it the "Undying Celestial King" technique or maybe something completely different. Until then, though, just please be aware that the 'heavenly kings' of the wildlands are completely unconnected to that technique, at least as far as the Chinese characters go. Since he's already finished with that level of the Undying Codex, I feel like it's not really a big deal at this point.

Chapter 617: The Patriarch Arrives

Meanwhile, back in the Bai Clan, silence prevailed. In the recent days, the matter of Bai Hao had become something of a crisis.

Because of all the rumors spreading in the area, the entire clan was feeling unstable. Bai Hao had turned traitor, killed Bai Qi, stolen the deva soul, captured the clan chief, and killed many of the direct bloodline clan members who had chased after him.

Everyone in the clan was left with pounding hearts, especially in the higher echelons of leadership. Different people had different opinions, and many of the auxiliary bloodlines were using the matter to denounce the direct bloodline.

“Bai Hao is the true qilin son of the Bai Clan. You direct bloodline people forced him to turn traitor!!”

“He's a true chosen of the heavens! If he were still in the clan, he could break into the Nascent Soul stage and lead our clan to new heights!”

Talk like this grew more common. The more glory Bai Hao earned for himself, the uglier things got for the direct bloodline, and the more they wanted to kill him. Unfortunately, there was currently nothing they could do about that.

Considering that he had already killed some of the mid Nascent Soul clan elders, what could anyone else do? Some of the clan elders who were in the late Nascent Soul stage went out to try to capture him, but none of them succeeded. The direct bloodline... was being completely routed.

The grand elders of the Hall of Justice and the Hall of Corrections were not part of the direct bloodline, and although they had followed the orders of the patriarch to send people out to search for Bai Hao, it was obvious that any failure to catch him... was really the fault of the direct bloodline.

When Madam Cai looked around at the situation in the clan, she felt bitterness and despair in her heart. In the past, it would have been impossible for her to even imagine that a nobody like Bai Hao would end up causing such a commotion.

Her son had been killed and her husband taken captive, and it left her heart feeling like it was being ripped apart. At the same time, her venomous hatred for Bai Hao had reached indescribable proportions.

If it weren't for the fact that there was a deva patriarch in the clan, fighting would have already broken out. Therefore, all of the conflict was happening behind the scenes.

Most importantly, the deva patriarch hadn't yet stated his opinion on the matter. The auxiliary bloodlines... were all waiting to see who the deva patriarch would side with. That would be very telling. However, at the moment, the deva patriarch was not interested in paying attention to what was happening within the clan.

In fact, he didn't even really care that the clan chief had been captured. As long as the clan itself still stood, he was content. Worst case scenario, he would have to select a new clan chief.

Right, the main thing on his mind was Bai Hao!!

“What a bunch of good-for-nothing fools! I can't believe the whole clan has been mobilized, and even then they can't bring Bai Hao back!” A look of determination appeared in the patriarch's eyes as he sat there in his subterranean chamber.

“I can't keep waiting. If things go on too much longer, and the giant ghost king interferes, then I will have lost an important opportunity.... I guess I just need to risk it!” Gritting his teeth, he rose to his feet.

Something profound and unfathomable could be seen in his eyes as he looked around at the green flames of the seven flickering

candles around him. After a moment passed, he took a deep breath, and then stepped forward.

That single step caused a wind to spring up in the chamber around him. The flames of the seven candles danced, and then began to wink out....

Without any hesitation, the patriarch stepped beyond the spell formation created by the candles, whereupon all of the flames... vanished!

At that point, cracking sounds could be heard from inside the patriarch, almost like bones grating against each other. Then, all traces of withering on his body vanished, and he became a middle-aged man.

Shocking cultivation base fluctuations rumbled out, and his eyes flashed as if with lightning. The way he stood there made him seem like he was the representative of the will of the heavens.

“My Seven Life-Locking Candles can lock my longevity in place and help me live a bit longer.... Unfortunately, I can only use them once in my lifetime. Bai Hao... you had better not disappoint me!” Eyes shining with profound maliciousness, he tore a rift open in the air in front of him, stepped through it, and vanished.

In that same instant, a peal of thunder shook the sky above the Bai Clan....

Quite some distance away from the Bai Clan, Bai Xiaochun was speeding through the air. He had killed quite a few members of the Bai Clan recently, although it was not because he had taken the initiative to attack them, but rather, because they had insisted on surrounding him and ambushing him.

When Bai Xiaochun fought back, he struck to kill. He had even killed three clan elders so far. By this point, he was almost at the border of the region considered Giant Ghost City territory.

At the moment, his face was bright red, and as he flew along, he

performed constant double-handed incantation gestures, and would then slap his hands down onto himself. This was a secret magic he had picked up in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, useful for expelling sealing marks.

By using the power of his own qi and blood, he was able to remove all sealing marks from inside of himself, and although it worked well, the power of the seals themselves was a critical factor. If they were weak, they could be dispelled easily, but if they were powerful, it could take years or even longer.

Another factor was the strength of one's own qi and blood.

Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun had particularly strong qi and blood. After several days of utilizing this secret magic, it was having an effect. At a certain point very close to the border of Giant Ghost City, he suddenly stopped in place and coughed up a mouthful of blood.

This particular batch of blood wasn't red, but rather, brown. As soon as it was ejected from within his mouth, it swirled through the air to form a head, with the face of the Bai Clan's deva patriarch. The face stared malevolently at Bai Xiaochun for a moment before fading away.

Bai Xiaochun wiped the remaining blood from his lips and let out a long sigh. At long last, he felt completely free and clear.

“At least I finally got that damned sealing mark out of me!” Feeling much more relaxed, and even enlivened, he began moving again.

“Four hours at the most, and I'll be out in the desert. Out there... the Bai Clan will never be able to find me now that I've gotten rid of the sealing mark!”

As he moved along, he pulled Bai Hao's notes out of his bag of holding and began to study them. These notes were Bai Hao's life's work, complete with his augury technique, as well as detailed

information about souls and multi-colored flame.

Bai Xiaochun had studied the information frequently over the past few days, and had benefited significantly every time he did. At the same time, he sighed constantly about the fact that Bai Hao had been killed.

“The kid had incredible talents. If he had lived, then as my apprentice, he could have directly helped me with his augury. With his help, I wouldn’t have needed to go anywhere to figure out the formulas. We could have done it together.” Sighing, he picked up speed.

About the time that Bai Xiaochun was finally removing the sealing mark from within him, there was an ordinary Nascent Soul cultivator flying through the air some distance away on a soulship. Suddenly, the old man’s face fell, and he stopped moving.

That old man was one of the direct bloodline members in the late Nascent Soul stage who had been chasing after him. He was the last member of the direct bloodline who had any hope of actually catching up to Bai Xiaochun. Moments ago, the divine will seal that had enabled him to track Bai Xiaochun had suddenly vanished.

The Wildlands was a huge place, so without that sealing mark, it would be virtually impossible to find Bai Xiaochun. The old man flew as quickly as possible in the direction he had been moving, but had no hope that Bai Hao would be so stupid as to just sit there waiting around.

Before long, the old Nascent Soul cultivator reached the last spot he knew the sealing mark had been, only to look around and find nothing. Furthermore, there was no indication which direction his quarry had taken.

“To the west is the desert. To the north is the Ageless Frigid River. To the east is the imperial city.... Which way would Bai Hao have gone...?”

Further away, the deva patriarch was flying through the air, his expression extremely grim.

“It doesn’t matter that you erased my sealing mark. Devas... can do things beyond your imagination! There is nowhere you could possibly run to that I couldn’t find you!” His right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he waved his finger, causing his body to age visibly, but at the same time, creating ripples in the air in front of him, ripples which rapidly coalesced into the shape of a screen.

Within the screen, a vast wasteland was visible, into which the deva patriarch stepped. A moment later, he was actually within the wasteland, where he once again used the same method. And then again...

By the third time, the image he summoned revealed Bai Xiaochun, speeding along!

“Not slow at all... really looks like you live up to expectations!” Grinning, the patriarch stepped into the screen!

Chapter 618: Another Battle With A Deva!

This area was still considered to be under the control of Giant Ghost City, and therefore, could be considered to belong to the giant ghost king himself. And of course, the giant ghost king was a person who surpassed the heavens in terms of status here.

Bai Xiaochun was reaching the border, however. He could actually see the vast desert off in the distance, a place filled with swirling winds.

Eyes sparkling because of the enlightenment from Bai Hao's notes, he gathered his thoughts and then pushed on toward the desert.

"I'll head out into the desert for a few months to let the situation calm down. Then I'll consider whether to come back here, or go to one of the other kingly cities. All of them have teleportation portals that could get me home.... In the meantime, I can spend more time studying Bai Hao's notes." By this point, he felt that he had made significant progress when it came to thirteen-colored flame, and was getting more confident in succeeding with it.

It was in that moment that suddenly, his expression flickered, and he looked up into the air. When he did, his pupils constricted as he laid eyes on an enormous vortex rumbling into existence.

Within a single breath of time, it transformed into a 30,000-meter-wide portal, from within which erupted shocking pressure.

RUMBLE!

A tremor ran through the lands, and then all of the soil suddenly went completely still, as if the entire area had been cut away from heaven and earth to become its own special space.

Bai Xiaochun's breath caught in his throat, and he felt as if the air around him had solidified. The pressure weighing down made it almost impossible to move.

The clan chief's eyes snapped open, and he shouted, "Patriarch!!"

"This Bai Clan patriarch seems even stronger than Mistress Red-Dust!" Up above in the huge vortex, the image of a face appeared, which was none other than the face of the deva patriarch, staring down coldly at Bai Xiaochun.

"A Core Formation cultivator dares defy the heavens!?" He spoke exactly eight words, which, as they left his mouth, became eight magical symbols, dazzling and bright, that instantly shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

As they flew through the air, the symbols transformed into eight giants clad in golden armor.

Bai Xiaochun was immediately shaken. The deva's mere words immediately transformed into soldiers willing to follow his every command!

He now realized... that he had underestimated devas. During his fight with Mistress Red-Dust, she had been affected by a curse, and had been unable to use some of her most powerful divine abilities. Furthermore, she was also on a lesser level than this Bai Clan patriarch.

It was a moment of critical danger; eight golden-armored giants were bearing down on him, howling and roaring. That was when afterimages blurred around him, not one, but four.

However, he wasn't summoning his clones. He was directly drawing on the power of their cultivation bases, fleshly bodies, and divine sense!

He was making himself four times stronger!!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Moments before, the pressure surrounding him had been sealing him in place, but now, fissures spread out in the air around him. In almost the same moment that the eight golden-armored giants arrived, he looked up and roared, simultaneously flying backward

at top speed.

Then, a boom echoed out as the eight giants landed in the spot he had just occupied. As they did, they transformed into eight golden chains that sealed the entire area.

During the process, the clan chief was sent tumbling off to the side, where he coughed up a mouthful of blood before lapsing into unconsciousness.

“Very interesting.” The deva patriarch’s eyes flickered with surprise. Back in the Bai Clan, his cultivation base had been limited because of his Seven Life-Locking Candles, and he had been unable to personally take charge of the situation. That was why Bai Xiaochun had been able to flee to begin with, and had not actually been completely surprising. But now, here he was in person, and his quarry was still causing problems for him, which he actually found quite interesting.

The huge face in the vortex began to shrink down until it formed the patriarch himself, hovering there in midair, emanating an aura that seemed capable of causing instant transformations in heaven and earth.

He wore a white robe, and had an icy cold expression on his face as he looked down at Bai Xiaochun. Then he took a step forward, a step which caused an enormous foot to appear up above in the sky!

The 3,000-meter-long foot descended, destroying the clouds and causing the lands below to shake. Even the air distorted as the foot rumbled toward Bai Xiaochun.

The foot caused incredible pressure to weigh down on Bai Xiaochun, almost as if the will of the heavens were crushing onto him!

There were a few reasons Mistress Red-Dust ended up being at such a disadvantage when they fought. Because of being in the second generation arch-emperor’s sepulcher, and because of the

curse she had suffered, she wasn't able to draw upon the power of heaven and earth. Even despite that, Bai Xiaochun had barely been able to escape with his life.

Now, he could see how truly powerful devas were.... The Bai Clan deva patriarch was fighting right outside his own city, in an area he was very familiar with. He was able to fight with the true power of a deva!

Bai Xiaochun was shocked, and it only took a moment for him to realize why the Bai Clan patriarch seemed so much stronger than Mistress Red-Dust. There wasn't time to ponder the situation, though. He was gripped by a sensation of deadly crisis, and knew that if he tried to directly fight against this huge foot, he would likely be wiped out of existence!

As his mind spun, the foot closed in, and he took a step back. During that process, his body began to fade, and then he suddenly disappeared.

In the moment he disappeared, the foot landed, crashing into the ground and causing countless amounts of dust and rubble to rise up.

"You won't be able to escape from me a second time," the patriarch said coolly. He waved his hand, causing rumbling sounds to fill the air as another huge vortex appeared.

The patriarch moved his right hand, causing the vortex to spin and simultaneously echo with thunderous roars. At the same time, a powerful gravitational force erupted, causing the air to distort as the power of time travel appeared!!

This wasn't the true power of time travel, but it did wrap up everything in the area and pull it toward the vortex with destructive force, including nearby boulders, trees, and even mountains!

At the same time, some distance off, Bai Xiaochun was fleeing

with the power of his Undying Hex. However, as soon as the deva patriarch unleashed his shocking magic, Bai Xiaochun's face fell, and his technique was interrupted.

As soon as he appeared in the open, the shocking gravitational force grabbed onto him, and began to drag him backward toward the vortex.

Even as it did, his eyes sparkled, and he spun in place. Then, afterimages blurred around him as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then threw his hands up above him!

“Waterswamp... Kingdom!”

His four clones stepped out to surround him, and also unleashed their Waterswamp Kingdoms. Instantly, a watery swamp appeared, and the shocking roar of a beast echoed out from inside. Then, numerous spike-like mountains began to rise up.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The five curved, mountain-like claws that appeared created a scene that would shock anyone who was able to observe it. As they appeared in the open, the sky dimmed, and they slashed toward the vortex!

“What is that!?” Up til now, the deva patriarch had remained completely cool and expressionless. But when the life essence spirit of Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom appeared, his face fell!

Chapter 619: Decree From The Heavenly King

The claws of Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit brimmed with mind-bogglingly deadly energy. Five curved, mountain-like claws with all-destructive power shot directly toward the enormous vortex!

When the two struck each other, a deafening boom filled the area. The sky went dim, and a huge blast of wind filled the area, a shockwave that rolled out in all directions.

However, the vortex was backed by the power of a deva, and although Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom was powerful, considering the current level of his cultivation base, that power was limited. Moments after the initial collision, the claws vanished, and the Waterswamp Kingdom faded away.

The only thing that remained was an echoing, beastly cry. However, the attack had not been completely ineffective. Cracking sounds echoed out from the vortex, and five enormous rifts appeared within it. Those rifts grew wider and wider, casting the gravitational force into chaos. The vortex even started to wobble on the verge of collapsing.

Bai Xiaochun's face was pale as he coughed up a mouthful of blood. His clones all seemed to be in a similar state, and quickly returned into his true self. Then, Bai Xiaochun glared up at the deva patriarch, and slowly pulled out his crystalline soulhoarding pagoda.

His eyes shone with madness, his aura was teetering unstably, and he was trembling physically. However, there was no time to sit around thinking about what to do. He quickly sent some divine sense into the soulhoarding pagoda; with a single thought, he could break the seal inside, and release the destructive power of the demigod soul.

“Don’t push me too far, old man!!” he said, his eyes shining with madness. He wasn’t completely sure whether the discarnate demigod soul could really kill the deva patriarch, but if it did, perhaps he would be able to get his hands on the final deva soul he needed.

Even as the thought entered his mind, he shook his head and dismissed it. He didn’t even know how to properly harvest the soul of a deva who had perished. Most likely, only a demigod cultivator could actually do something like that.

Besides, it was likely that he wouldn’t even be able to kill the Bai Clan patriarch. However, he was confident in being able to seriously injure him in a way that he couldn’t quickly recover from. And that would likely give him enough time to get out of Giant Ghost City territory!

The deva patriarch’s eyes narrowed as he looked at the soulhoarding pagoda Bai Xiaochun held, from which he couldn’t sense anything dangerous. Then he looked back up at Bai Xiaochun, and his eyes began to shine with a strange light.

“I really did underestimate you, kid. Well, that’s fine. Wonderful, in fact. I’m not sure how you reached this amazing level, but I can sense from your blood that you really are from the Bai Clan. Truly spectacular.” Smiling faintly, he lifted his foot again and began to take a step. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun shouted loudly, preparing to break the seal in the soulhoarding pagoda.

However, in that very moment, a bellow filled the area that caused everything to shake. At the same time, a whistling sound could be heard, as though someone were approaching the area at top speed.

“Stay your hand, Brother Bai! I’m here with orders from King Giant Ghost himself. He’s issued a summons for Bai Hao!”

The Bai Clan patriarch’s face fell, and his eyes flickered with indecision for the briefest of moments before he stepped down

with his foot, instantly placing him in front of Bai Xiaochun, whom he reached out to grab.

However, Bai Xiaochun had been ready. The moment he saw the patriarch's foot moving, he shot backward. However, instead of using his soulhoarding pagoda, he summoned his four clones to defend himself.

A boom filled the area, and his four clones coughed up blood before shooting back into his body. However, they had bought him the time he needed to once again use his Undying Hex.

Right before the deva patriarch's hand reached him, he vanished. The deva patriarch's eyes flashed with cold light as he turned to look in a different direction.

“Show your face!”

His words seemed to replace the will of the heavens, causing crushing pressure to appear that wrenched Bai Xiaochun out into the open, blood oozing out of the corners of his mouth. His hair was in complete disarray, and cracking sounds could be heard as the air around him shattered. Although it seemed as if heaven and earth were about to stamp him out of existence, his eyes flickered with an imperceptible gleam.

And that was because the instant he appeared in the open, a golden beam of light shot through the air toward him. Even as the deva patriarch took control over heaven and earth in the area, a whooshing sound could be heard, and a jade pendant appeared in front of Bai Xiaochun!!

The pendant emanated golden light, and was carved with the image of a two-horned giant ghost that was roaring to the sky. As soon as the jade pendant appeared, the cracking, shattering air around Bai Xiaochun stabilized.

The Bai Clan patriarch's face turned very grim as the air rippled, and an old man appeared.

He wore a black robe, and his face was completely expressionless. However, his cultivation base fluctuations were no weaker than the Bai Clan patriarch's. He seemed icy cold and completely sinister, and caused the air around him to ripple.

It was almost as if two streams of divine will had clashed, causing thunder to echo out and crackles of lightning to appear. Even the ground began to quake.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the jade pendant and then the old man, and his heart began to pound. When he had initially fled the Bai Clan, he had hoped that other clans or groups in the area would try to take advantage of the situation, and perhaps help him.

After a while, he had come to suspect it wouldn't happen after all. But now that this black-robed old man was here, it was obvious that the giant ghost king had taken an interest!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes narrowed, and his heart began to twinge with nervousness. He kept his hand clenched onto the soulhoarding pagoda, ready to detonate the demigod soul at a moment's notice.

The Bai Clan patriarch stared grimly at the black-robed man, and then spoke in a voice as cold as ice. "This is a private matter of the Bai Clan, Deathcrier! What's the meaning of this!?"

"There are no private matters for subordinates of the heavenly kings," Duke Deathcrier replied. Eyes flashing with cold light, he took a step forward, causing a powerful wind to spring up around him. "Are you going to disobey the decrees of his heavenly majesty, Bai Zishan?"

The deva patriarch looked back grimly at Duke Deathcrier, then waved his hand, causing the unconscious clan chief to vanish, then reappear next to him.

"Since his highness the king has summoned this rebel, then of course I won't interfere." Gritting his teeth inwardly, the deva

patriarch clasped hands and bowed to the jade pendant, then looked back at the black-robed old man. “However, I will have to go visit his highness the king personally to get to the bottom of this matter!”

During the entire exchange between the two devas, the patriarch never once looked at Bai Xiaochun. Finally, he turned and vanished.

At that point, everything in the area went back to normal. The thunder faded away, the lightning vanished, and finally, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. Relaxing his grip on the soulhoarding pagoda, he looked over at Duke Deathcrier.

Duke Deathcrier looked in the direction in which the Bai Clan patriarch had left, then turned his lightning-like gaze onto Bai Xiaochun.

He was wizened and skinny, with a hawk-like nose that made him seem particularly sinister. Furthermore, his gaze was so sharp that it seemed to pierce all the way into Bai Xiaochun’s heart and mind.

“Come with me. From now on, your life is in my hands, and you work for his highness the king.” The man didn't say anything about the deva soul. Apparently, he didn't want to get too involved in the affairs of the Bai Clan.

Chapter 620: Giant Ghost City

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened into a glare, and he impulsively roared, "Bullcrap! My life belongs to me, not anybody else!"

At least, that was what happened in his mind. The words that came out of his mouth were a bit different....

Face filled with gratitude, he clasped hands and bowed deeply. "Greetings, Senior Deathcrier! Many thanks for the kindness of saving my life!"

"Don't thank me. If you want to thank someone, thank his highness the king." With that, Duke Deathcrier waved his hand, causing everything within 30 meters to suddenly blur and ripple, as if it were separating from the area around it.

Bai Xiaochun's heart trembled as he looked around at what was happening. Soon, it became clear that what was actually happening was some sort of major teleportation.... It was almost as if the entire area were simply being plucked up and moved somewhere else.

Rumbling sounds filled his ears, and then everything vanished.

When he and Duke Deathcrier reappeared... they were in front of a spectacularly immense city!

It was currently afternoon, and brilliant sunlight shone down on the enormous city, making it seem particularly impressive. It looked like some primeval beast, baring its fangs at all creation!

And that was just the sense Bai Xiaochun got without even looking closely at it.

Even at a glance, Giant Ghost City seemed to be as big as 10,000 Bai Clans put together. There were countless richly ornamented buildings and other dazzling structures, and the entire city seemed filled with the auras of innumerable soul cultivators and necromancers....

Bai Xiaochun had never seen a place as big as this before. The population must surely be in the tens of millions....

Even more shocking was that Giant Ghost City itself existed in the middle of a massive, bottomless pit. The pit was so wide that not even divine sense could span it from one side to the other.

And that was just the width, not the depth....

“Giant Ghost City is big, but this pit is even bigger. The city could fit inside of it dozens of times over.”

Giant Ghost City itself existed on a huge column that rose up from within the bottomless pit! Far down in the pit was a hazy mist filled with endless vicious faces and heads, a horde of ghostly souls which screamed constantly.

To get from the cliffs that were the border of the pit to the city itself, one had to cross any one of a number of violet chains, each one of which as thick as a person was tall. They hung like suspension bridges over the misty depths of the pit.

Bai Xiaochun could see people off in the distance, flying toward the city in beams of light. However, they didn't dare to fly over the pit and into the city, but instead dropped to the ground and then walked along the huge chains.

Going or coming, that was the only way to get into the city.

As Bai Xiaochun continued to examine the area, he realized to his shock that in the middle of the city... was an enormous, shocking statue!

It was a giant ghost with two horns on its head and green skin, tens upon tens of thousands of meters high. It was so high that it seemed to be holding up the sky! Furthermore, on its head was a royal palace!

The palace itself was difficult to make out, and although it was impossible to tell who resided there, it didn't take much guesswork on Bai Xiaochun's part to come up with an idea.

“That must be where King Giant Ghost lives....” Even just looking at the royal palace, Bai Xiaochun could sense a pressure like that of all heaven and earth weighing down on him.

It left him with the sensation that whoever was in that royal palace was not a person, but rather, some sort of god!

Another shocking thing he noticed was the giant statue held a palace in each of its hands. Furthermore, both palaces had huge stone steles in front of them, with the name of the palace inscribed for anyone to see. In the left hand was Deathcrier Palace, and in the right hand was the Netherworld Palace!

Bai Xiaochun was shaken by the mere sight, and was immediately certain that those palaces belonged to devas. And considering that the left-hand palace was named Deathcrier... he was eighty to ninety percent sure that it belonged to the black-robed old man standing next to him.

Bai Xiaochun was not as ignorant about Giant Ghost City as he had been when he first arrived in the Wildlands. During his days in the Bai Clan, he had done quite a bit of digging around for information, and now knew a little bit about the place.

For example, he knew that Giant Ghost City consisted of an inner and outer city. The inner city was strictly controlled, and only people with high status could enter it. Most of the people who lived there were nobility, ministers, and other people with close connections to the royal house.

The outer city was where the common people lived, and was a much livelier place.

There was a moat that separated the inner and outer cities, the water of which contained demigod-level restrictive spells. Without the proper command medallion, anyone who tried to cross that moat would be melted into nothing but bones.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was already pounding as he wondered why

he had been brought to Giant Ghost City. Although he was very nervous, he put on the most charming expression possible as he stood there behind Duke Deathcrier. He had already decided that, no matter why the giant ghost king had summoned him, it was a good thing to be in Giant Ghost City. After all, the teleportation portal he needed to access to get back home was located in this very city.

“If my mask can fool the Bai Clan’s spell formation, and their deva,” he murmured to himself, “then it should be able to fool the teleportation portal, right?”

Duke Deathcrier’s face was completely expressionless as he led the way, and he didn’t say a single word. Furthermore, they didn’t enter the city via the chains, but rather, by flying directly into the city.

As soon as they appeared in the city, the soul cultivator guards on duty looked over with reverent expressions and bowed respectfully.

“Greetings, Duke Deathcrier!”

In addition to bowing in greeting, everyone surreptitiously sized up Bai Xiaochun, which he noticed. As he proceeded along, he decided that since the giant ghost king had summoned him, he should be on his best behavior. Perhaps, if Duke Deathcrier put in a good word for him, he could get a high position in the city. That way, the Bai Clan definitely wouldn’t be able to touch him.

“Wait, no. That would be too dangerous. I need to figure out a way to get to that teleportation portal and get back to the Great Wall.... It’s just too bad that I’m still missing a deva soul.”

With such thoughts on his mind, he followed Duke Deathcrier through the city.

Duke Deathcrier led him directly toward the inner city, and within the space of a few breaths of time, they were standing in

front of the moat that separated the two cities.

The water was black, and looked incredibly dangerous. In fact, Bai Xiaochun even took a few steps back when he saw it. Then he looked over at Duke Deathcrier, wondering why they had stopped moving.

“Uh, Senior... aren't we supposed to be going over there...?” Blinking, he looked meaningfully toward the giant ghost statue.

Ignoring Bai Xiaochun, Duke Deathcrier coolly said, “Li Xu, get out here immediately!”

His voice didn't seem to echo out very far. However, in response, the waters of the moat rippled, and then a whirlpool appeared, out of which stepped three middle-aged men.

Bai Xiaochun could already sense that something was off about the situation. Why wasn't he being taken to see the giant ghost king?

Of the three newcomers, the man in the lead position wore a green robe, and was clearly half a step into the Deva Realm. As for the other two, they seemed a bit weaker, and were obviously the man's subordinates.

The green-robed man immediately flew over to stand in front of Duke Deathcrier, where he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Greetings, Duke Deathcrier.”

Duke Deathcrier gestured at Bai Xiaochun and then said, “This is Bai Hao. I'm handing him over to you. Set him up as a guard in Devil Penitentiary.”

Li Xu and his two subordinates immediately voiced their assent. Without another word, Duke Deathcrier turned and flew toward the giant ghost statue.

His mission from the king had been to bring Bai Hao back and then give him a job in the city. As for what exact position to give

him, the giant ghost king naturally didn't care. Therefore, Duke Deathcrier didn't put much thought into the matter, and simply handed him over to the city's famous Devil Penitentiary.

“Devil Penitentiary? A guard?” When Bai Xiaochun heard what had just been said, his jaw dropped. He had assumed that the giant ghost king must have summoned him to be at least a bodyguard of some sort. Never could he have imagined that he was to be a prison guard....

Chapter 621: Fly Off Into The Sunset....

This was not Bai Xiaochun's first time hearing about Devil Penitentiary. Early on, the chief of the Bai Clan had threatened to have him thrown in that very prison, which had sparked Bai Xiaochun's curiosity. Afterward, he had asked Zhou Yixing for some information about the place, and had learned that Devil Penitentiary was a prison in Giant Ghost City. It was a very famous place, with all sorts of dangerous prisoners locked up inside. They were all evil villains who, for various reasons, had not been put to death. Instead, their cultivation bases had been sealed, and they had been imprisoned. In any case, they were all the type of people that no one would ever want to run into on the outside....

Furthermore, there was a saying in Giant Ghost City. Death isn't frightening. Get locked up in Devil Penitentiary, and you'll wish you were dead!

"How could an illustrious major general like me serve as a lowly prison guard...?" Bai Xiaochun thought angrily. However, he knew that a true leader should be flexible. Plus, if he pulled off the act successfully, he might be able to use this as an opportunity to get access to the teleportation portal and get home.

Before he could even say anything, Duke Deathcrier was gone, and Li Xu and his subordinates straightened up from their bows. Li Xu was the type of person who looked threatening without being angry. After coldly looking Bai Xiaochun up and down, he said, "So you're Bai Hao from the Bai Clan?"

From the cold tone of his voice, he didn't seem too pleased to see Bai Hao standing there, and it was the same with the other two men. After all, they had all heard stories about him recently.

They knew that he was vicious and cruel, the type of person who didn't care about family, and could hide his intentions easily. He had even killed numerous members of his own clan. A ferocious

person like that was not the type that people would like to get close to. Of course, at the same time, no one would want to offend him either.

“You can’t act the way you did back in your clan. Now that you’re here, you have to live by my rules. In Devil Penitentiary, I’m in charge! The prison isn’t open at the moment, so come back tomorrow at this same time.” Without even waiting for a response, Li Xu waved his sleeve, causing the whirlpool to reappear in the black waters of the moat. Deep at the bottom of the whirlpool was a cave that Li Xu immediately entered, followed by his two subordinates. Then the whirlpool vanished.

“Gone, just like that?” Bai Xiaochun thought, eyes widening. Obviously, they were trying to impress him with the fact that it wasn’t easy to get into Devil Penitentiary. The message was clear: from now on, stick your tail between your legs and behave!

“What kind of a crappy place is this prison anyway?” he muttered angrily. “I’m definitely not going in there!” After all, he was a major general, and although he had originally forced himself to go along with the idea of working as a prison guard, that changed when people tried to threaten him.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he snorted coldly and walked away.

It was currently noontime. Giant Ghost City was a huge place, and the outer city seemed to go on and on without end. People were everywhere, including soul cultivators, necromancers, and even a lot of savage giants.

This was one of the five major cities of the Wildlands, a place which kept watch over a huge area, and was filled with plentiful resources. Just about everything one could imagine was available for purchase, and the streets were packed and loud no matter where one went.

Occasionally, patrols of city guards would fly overhead.

However, it was rare to see anyone else flying around. Other than the city guards, the only people allowed to fly were devas.

Still prickling with anger, Bai Xiaochun strolled around and tried to find out where the teleportation portal was. As it turned out, it was no secret, and he was soon heading in that very direction.

“I guess I’ll just have to do without that extra deva soul. Once I get back to the Great Wall, I’ll figure out what to do about the situation.”

Giant Ghost City’s teleportation portal was located in the northern part of the city, in the middle of a huge public square. It was an enormous gate made of glowing light, with a constant flow of soul cultivators, necromancers, and savages going in and out.

By the time Bai Xiaochun got there, it was already evening. After sizing the place up, he noticed that there were city guards in charge of the place.

However, Bai Xiaochun had seen a lot of city guards already, and wasn’t worried about them. As he neared, his eyes began to glitter. This teleportation portal represented his ticket back to the Great Wall. Although it wouldn’t take him directly there, he would at least get close. Considering the level of his cultivation base, making it back from that location shouldn’t be difficult.

His heart was already pounding with excitement, and yet, he couldn’t help but worry about something he had learned while in the Bai Clan. Supposedly, the teleportation portal would check your identity strictly before allowing you to use it.

Ever since Zhou Yixing had told him that, he had begun to wonder how the process worked. Therefore, he stopped some distance away from the portal itself and looked around the area more closely.

Almost immediately, his expression flickered as he noticed that every single soul cultivator who entered the teleportation portal

would be touched by flickering ripples. After studying the ripples for a short time, he realized how they worked.

Clearly, they represented some magical technique that assessed a person's identity....

“With my mask, I shouldn't have any problems, right...?” After some hesitation, he looked up into the evening sky and then gritted his teeth. “I might as well give it a shot!”

Making sure to breathe calmly, he walked toward the teleportation portal. None of the guards paid any attention to him, and after paying the requisite soul medicine tax, he was given access.

Those few short steps were ones of incredible anxiety. Then, he found himself standing in front of the shining light, his eyes alive with anticipation.

“It's definitely going to work, and then, I'll fly off into the sunset!” Taking a breath, he stepped forward, putting him in contact with the light.

However, as soon as he made contact, his heart leapt as a strange, prickly sensation spread across him. It was almost as if some spirit automaton were examining him. Rumbling sounds echoed out from the teleportation portal, and the fluctuations entered him, seemingly intent on scouring his soul!

It was a soulsearch to confirm his identity!

Thankfully, his mask quickly went to work to conceal his true identity. However, the power levels involved surpassed imagination, and Bai Xiaochun could tell immediately that the mask would only be able to hold out for a brief moment under such intense scrutiny. If he didn't pass this test and allow the soulsearch to confirm his identity, he wouldn't be able to teleport away, and would also be revealed as an imposter!

In the moment of time that the mask bought him, he stepped

backward, away from the teleportation portal. As he did, quite a few people noticed, and strange expressions appeared on their faces.

Seeing so many eyes on him, his heart trembled nervously. Raising his voice, he said, “Ah, forget it. I'm not going anywhere. Giant Ghost City is the best place to earn a name!”

With that, he walked away.

People continued to look at him curiously until he melted into the crowd and vanished.

Some distance away, he hurried along, ashen-faced and heart pounding.

“What do I do?” he wailed inwardly. “If I can't use the teleportation portal, how will I get home?” He wanted to cry, but no tears would come. All of his hopes had been wrapped up in the teleportation portal, and yet now, he knew he couldn't use it....

A bit later, he blinked a few times and then sighed at how bitter his life had become. Feeling completely crestfallen, he found a random inn to stay the night. The next day, he walked out of the inn bleary-eyed.

“If I can't get back, I guess I just need to rise to prominence here. Perhaps that's just my lot in life. How completely annoying for a low-profile kind of person like myself.” Sighing helplessly the entire way, he headed back toward the moat....

Now that he thought about it, being a guard at Devil Penitentiary might not be that bad after all. With that status, he would be temporarily safe from the Bai Clan, which was a good thing.

He got to the moat early, whereupon he sat down cross-legged and frowned his way until evening. At that point, the whirlpool sprang up again, and one of Li Xu's subordinates appeared. When he saw Bai Xiaochun, he gave him an expressionless nod.

“Alright, come with me,” he said. Without another word, he

turned and headed back toward the whirlpool.

Chapter 622: Devil Penitentiary

Bai Xiaochun couldn't stop sighing in his heart about how humiliating it was for a spectacular major general like himself to be in this situation. However, considering the circumstances, he knew that he simply had to come to terms with it....

“Ah, whatever. Considering that I, Bai Xiaochun, am so outstanding and awesome, it doesn't matter where I end up, I always earn a new level of respect!” As he tried to pump himself up, he looked at the man who had just stepped out of the whirlpool. By this point, he realized that Li Xu must be the leader of Devil Penitentiary, and also his own future superior. Furthermore, this man here must be an assistant of some sort to Li Xu.

“Get moving,” the man said, “otherwise you'll have to wait outside for another day.”

Bai Xiaochun already didn't like this guy.

“I didn't do anything to offend him!” he complained inwardly. However, there was no other option for him than to bow his head and hurry into the whirlpool.

They disappeared, and began to sink down toward the bottom of the moat. Considering that this man was Li Xu's assistant, it was no surprise that he had an extraordinary cultivation base. He also had a command medallion that emanated a soft light, protecting both himself and Bai Xiaochun from the deadly black moat water around them.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit nervous as he looked out at the inky blackness. Not only could he not see anything, but he felt a sensation of profound danger just looking at the black water, as if terrifying beasts lurked within it.

He kept his guard up as they pierced their way downward.

Eventually, he realized that he could see two green points of light up ahead in the black water.

They seemed to pulse with a netherworldly aura, and almost looked like eyes. Merely looking at them caused his hair to stand on end.

However, the man escorting him didn't seem to have any reaction whatsoever, so Bai Xiaochun merely followed along, maintaining full vigilance. As they proceeded forward, the two green lights grew larger and larger.

The closer they got, the clearer things became, until Bai Xiaochun's heart leapt; there at the bottom of the moat was an enormous stone statue!

The statue depicted a gigantic xuanwu turtle that pulsed with spatial distortions. The two green lights that Bai Xiaochun had spotted earlier were actually the turtle's eyes.

It also seethed with a profoundly murderous aura that seemed to be contained in the area with magical seals. Were it not for those sealing marks, the aura would have seeped out and caused drastic transformations in heaven and earth.

Bai Xiaochun was already shaken, but then he realized that, for some reason, the turtle actually looked familiar. After studying it closely for another moment, his eyes went as wide as saucers, and his heart began to pound in his chest.

“That statue looks a lot like the little turtle....” The little turtle had been missing for a long time now. Bai Xiaochun had searched his bag of holding thoroughly on a few occasions looking for him, but couldn't find him. Even still, Bai Xiaochun had the feeling that he was there inside, somewhere.

Even as Bai Xiaochun hesitated about what it all meant, the man led him toward the turtle statue's left eye. Nervous about everything, Bai Xiaochun followed along, and soon they entered

the eye itself.

A diaphanous barrier kept the black water out, which the man's command medallion allowed them to pass through.

Bai Xiaochun soon found himself in a large stone cavern filled with criss-crossed stalactites and stalagmites that looked almost like vicious fangs. There were four soul cultivators waiting there, who clasped hands and bowed deeply as soon as they saw the man leading Bai Xiaochun.

“Greetings, Left Dharma Protector!”

Their voices weren't loud and booming, but rather, bone-chillingly cold. They seemed like people who lived on the border between life and death, whose mere gazes could pierce to the heart. After looking at them for a moment, Bai Xiaochun determined that all four were Nascent Soul cultivators.

“This Devil Penitentiary isn't some ordinary prison!” he thought. As he continued to look around, he noticed four tunnels leading off in four directions, with a fifth tunnel-like opening in the ceiling.

“Sun Peng, this is one of the new guards the warden just assigned to Cellblock D. You arrange everything for him.” After issuing his orders, the man clasped his hands behind his back and flew up into the fifth tunnel overhead.

The group of four soul cultivators clasped hands to him as he left, then dispersed into the four corridors, with the exception of an old man. Frowning, he looked at Bai Xiaochun and said, “If Li Xu personally handed you over to the Left Dharma Protector to arrange things, then logically speaking, you should have been assigned to Cellblock A, not my Cellblock D.”

The old man seemed to think something was a bit strange about the situation, but still smiled at Bai Xiaochun.

Although it was a friendly smile, it looked ghastly to Bai Xiaochun. Coupled with the old man's sinister aura, it caused a

chill to run down Bai Xiaochun's back.

“May I ask your name, Fellow Daoist?” the old man asked.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and then carefully answered, “I'm Bai Hao.”

“Bai Hao. Bai Hao... Bai...?” After thinking for a moment, the man's eyes went wide. “Bai Hao from the Bai Clan?”

Pleased at the man's reaction, Bai Xiaochun proudly said, “Yeah, that's right. I'm none other than Bai Hao from the Bai Clan.”

The old man sucked in a breath. Now he understood why Li Xu had assigned this person to Cellblock D.

“Well aren't you a hot potato,” he thought. “The fact that Li Xu handed you off to the Left Dharma Protector means that the original orders came from higher up. And the only person with a status high enough to give orders like that would be Duke Deathcrier. And the only person who can order Duke Deathcrier around is the heavenly king himself.

“The Bai Clan has a bounty on this kid's head, but the heavenly king sent him here....” The old man didn't dare to ponder the matter any more deeply. Sighing, he realized that he couldn't afford to offend this newcomer. After all, according to the rumors, he had reviled his own clan, and even gone so far as to kidnap his own father.

Not only did he have profound levels of patience, but he was completely and utterly vicious....

“Welcome to Cellblock D of Devil Penitentiary, Fellow Daoist Bai Hao. Come, come, let me show you around.” Forcing a smile onto his face, he led Bai Xiaochun toward the northernmost of the four tunnels. “Although Devil Penitentiary exists inside of a stone turtle statue, it's actually very large inside. Five unique dimensions exist here, namely Cellblocks A, B, C, D, and the Supermax Cellblock.

“The Supermax Cellblock is run by the exalted warden himself,

and is the core of Devil Penitentiary. Normally, no one ever gets inside without being summoned.

“As far as the other cellblocks go, the prisoners get locked up in them depending on how important or dangerous they are. The most important prisoners go to Cellblock A. All of the prisoners here are dangerous and vicious people, but the prisoners in Cellblock D are almost like children compared to the others.

“Every cellblock has a group of roughly a hundred guards, with ten captains and a deputy warden. I'm the deputy warden of Cellblock D.

“Of course, Warden Li Xu is in charge of the the four deputy wardens....”

Sun Peng led him directly to Cellblock D and began to show him around. He had already decided that since Bai Hao had been delivered to him, and he couldn't get rid of him, that he might as well treat him well. After all, with so many people in Cellblock D, having an extra guard around wouldn't hurt anything.

Of course, he wouldn't go beyond what was necessary.

Eventually, Sun Peng led Bai Xiaochun to an area in the middle of the Cellblock D part of the prison, a sprawling square, in the middle of which was a glowing door.

The door emanated intense pressure, and occasional rumbling sounds.

Surrounding it were ten areas that Sun Peng explained were the barracks where the ten teams of guards resided. As for the glowing door, it was the actual entrance to the cellblock.

The ten barracks all looked exactly the same, constructed from green limestone, but decorated in colorful fashion. However, perhaps because they were located in the middle of Devil Penitentiary, Bai Xiaochun found them particularly sinister.

Still depressed over the matter of the teleportation portal, Bai

Xiaochun sighed and thought to himself, “Ai. I can’t believe I’m actually becoming a prison guard.”

Chapter 623: Facing The Facts

Sun Peng assigned Bai Xiaochun to Squad 9. Then, just like Duke Deathcrier and Li Xu, he hurried away.

The captain of Squad 9 didn't see Deputy Warden Sun Peng very often, but considering that the man was his direct superior, he quickly picked up on the unspoken hints he had given regarding Bai Xiaochun's status.

The captain was a burly man who appeared to be about forty years of age. He almost immediately recognized this fair young man as the recently famous Bai Clan rebel, and realized he needed to pay special attention to him. In fact, he even transmitted orders to the guards under his command, explaining who Bai Xiaochun was.

Bai Xiaochun could see how the captain and the other guards of Squad 9 reacted when he smilingly told them his name. They sized him up, and although they weren't extremely cold, they were by no means warm and welcoming. Bai Hao had been a popular topic of conversation recently, and therefore, all of them had at least some impression of him. They knew that he was a vicious fellow who had reviled his clan, and was the type who shouldn't be provoked. After seeing him in person, though, he didn't seem to match up to the rumors.

Before Bai Xiaochun's arrival, Squad 9 had consisted of a total of eleven people: ten guards and the captain. But now there were twelve. There were no women, only men, and all of the other guards seemed middle-aged, with cultivation bases in Core Formation.

The fact that even such a group of low-ranking guards was so powerful further showed how important Devil Penitentiary was.

When Bai Xiaochun realized that the group was not being very welcoming, he felt a bit awkward.

To try to smooth things over, the captain quickly assigned him quarters in the barracks.

“Why don’t you rest up a bit, Bai Hao?” he said. “The truth is that we aren’t very busy here in Devil Penitentiary. The squad doesn’t really know much about you now, but there will be plenty of time later for you all to get to know each other.” With that, he left. As far as he was concerned, the situation wasn’t very complicated. When dealing with a fiendish killer that you couldn’t get rid of, the best thing was to try to get along with him, but not get too close. One just had to be careful not to treat him too coldly.

Bai Xiaochun already had a good impression of the captain. At the least, he was better than Duke Deathcrier or Li Xu.

His quarters weren’t very large, and contained only a bed and a chair. It was a simple room, but it had a remarkable spell formation that was connected to the stone turtle statue, giving it exceptional defensive capabilities.

After looking around, he sat down cross-legged and frowned.

“Ai. How cruel the twists of fate. Here I am, a prison guard....”

The events of the past two days had been quite complicated. The Bai Clan patriarch had attacked, then Duke Deathcrier showed up. After that, the teleportation portal plan failed, and now he was a prison guard.

“Ah, whatever. If I’m a guard, I’m a guard. The most important thing now is to keep myself safe.... Plus, I need to get on the good side of my squad.... If I can get them to like me, they’ll probably be a lot of help to me later.

“I still don’t know why the giant ghost king saved me, but at least I’m in a pretty safe situation, at least for the moment. How long will that last though...?” He sighed, and eventually his thoughts turned to deva souls, whereupon he gritted his teeth angrily.

“It’s all the fault of that Granny Red-Dust!! And Chen Hetian!!

Well, whatever. Might as well forget about the teleportation portal. The best thing to do is increase my cultivation base and figure out another way to get back to the Great Wall.... I already have four deva soul clones. All I have to do now is get a metal-type deva soul, and I can step into the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage!” When all was said and done, Bai Xiaochun felt very nervous. It was like he was walking along the edge of a cliff; the slightest misstep could lead him to a disastrous fall.

However, there was nothing he could do about the situation. The teleportation portal wasn't an option, and therefore, unless he simply gave up on the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul idea, that meant he only had a bit over a thousand years before he ran out of longevity. Then, his dream of living forever would be impossible to realize.

If he wanted to live forever, then he had to walk along that cliff. If he wanted to get home, he simply had to grit his teeth and keep going.

Actually, up to this point in his life, his cultivation had always gone quite smoothly, whether it was in the Spirit Stream Sect, the River-Defying Sect, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, or the Great Wall. It was only after entering that sepulcher in the Wildlands that he finally experienced the feeling of being stuck in place, with the shadow of death looming larger behind him.

“Once I get that metal-type deva soul... I'm never going to risk my life like this again!” He was actually so worried about the situation that he almost felt like crying. There was almost nothing in the world he wanted more right now than a deva soul.

“Where am I supposed to get that deva soul from...? Plus, it has to be a metal-type deva soul.

“The giant ghost king is a demigod expert, so he probably has one... but... how would I get my hands on it?” He clenched his hands into fists and thought as hard as he could, but couldn't come

up with any ideas.

“Although I know a bit about Giant Ghost City, I definitely don’t know enough. Whether it’s news about deva souls or the details of why King Giant Ghost saved me, I need more information....” Eyes flashing, he took out a jade slip to send messages to Zhou Yixing and Li Feng.

The first thing he said was that they didn’t need to wait for him in the appointed location any longer, and could just return to Giant Ghost City. Second, he asked Li Feng to give him some more details about Giant Ghost City.

It didn’t take long before Li Feng sent back a wealth of detailed information. As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw it, his eyes went wide, and his heart began to pound.

“Five devas....”

The most powerful person in Giant Ghost City was the demigod heavenly king. Beneath him were five dukes and ten marquises. The dukes were all devas, and the marquises were all half a step into the Deva Realm.

Of the five devas, three were the patriarchs of the three great clans. The other two were Duke Deathcrier and Duke Netherworld!

In terms of the ten marquises, they led the ten armies that were garrisoned in Giant Ghost City, and were people with close connections to the royal throne. Each and every one of them was a very important person.

Bai Xiaochun also learned that although the patriarchs of the three great clans were technically subordinates of the giant ghost king, they had formed their own separate faction.

“In the end, the giant ghost king is a demigod expert, so he could kill them all with the wave of a hand.” In Bai Xiaochun’s opinion, there seemed to be something fishy about the whole situation. However, Li Feng couldn’t provide any further details. These were

just the things he had heard about here and there.

“Maybe the giant ghost king saved me because he wanted to test out the Bai Clan’s attitude? But why would he need to do that? He's a demigod, after all....” No matter how he analyzed the situation, it only seemed to lead to more questions.

It was a complicated state of affairs, and he simply had too little information, which made it hard to make a good assessment. However, from what he could tell, the three great clans must have some trump card that enabled them to maintain a somewhat antagonistic relationship with the giant ghost king....

Most likely, the giant ghost king wasn't very happy about the arrangement.

“That’s probably the gist of things, at least. As long as the giant ghost king isn’t too happy about being on equal footing with the three clans, then I’m probably safe here in Giant Ghost City....

“So, what I need to do now is get that metal-type deva soul as quickly as possible, before things get dicey. Then I can just run away.” Frowning at his lot in life, he took a deep breath to focus, then closed his eyes to start his auguries regarding thirteen-colored flame.

The formula for thirteenfold flame was completely different from that of twelve-colored flame. It even had different requirements in terms of divine sense, requirements that he would never have been able to meet before acquiring the deva soul from the Bai Clan.

But now he had a fourth clone, which boosted his divine sense even more. With that, he was confident of being able to use Bai Hao’s research notes to eventually succeed with thirteen-colored flame.... In fact, he suspected he might even get so far as fourteen-colored flame.

As he was wrapped up in performing auguries and seeking

enlightenment, the night passed uneventfully.

Although it was impossible to see the sun or moon from Devil Penitentiary, because of the spell formation which protected it, the phases of night and day were as normal.

When night gave way to day on the outside, Bai Xiaochun was still in the middle of his work, and didn't even notice.

Three days passed in the blink of an eye.

During those three days, no one bothered him. Around dawn on the fourth day, he opened his eyes when a voice reached his ears from outside his room.

“Bai Hao, Squad 9 is on patrol duty today. Everyone is waiting for you.” It was the voice of the captain, and it sounded very serious.

“Since this is your first time going out on patrol, it will be a good chance for you to see what kind of prisoners we keep in Cellblock D.”

Chapter 624: Captain, What Exactly Are They Going Off To Do?

“Prisoners....” Bai Xiaochun got nervously to his feet and walked out of his room. The captain was waiting there outside, a smile on his face.

Bai Xiaochun knew that he needed to develop a good relationship with the squad, but that wasn't very difficult. He just needed to stop thinking about how he was a Core Formation expert with four deva soul clones, and that he could even kill lofty Nascent Soul cultivators. He just needed to act like an unimportant person. Therefore, he put a look of both respect and cheer on his face as he clasped hands and bowed, then said, “Captain, you really didn't need to come in person. If you have orders for me, just send a message.”

Actually, Bai Xiaochun already liked the captain to begin with, so it was easy to give him a particularly deep bow.

The captain seemed a bit surprised. The truth was that he had no other choice than to come get Bai Xiaochun. According to the rules of Devil Penitentiary, all guards had to participate in patrol duty. If Bai Xiaochun knew about that and chose not to join, then he would be to blame. But if the captain didn't personally notify him, then he would be held responsible.

The other guards might be keeping their distance, but when the captain thought about all the rumors he'd heard, he really felt he had no other choice.

However, to his surprise, the reportedly vicious, family-killing fiend who had turned traitor against his clan and kidnapped his own father, Bai Hao, was actually being very polite.

The captain laughed heartily. “Oh, no problem at all! You're part of Squad 9 now, and since you just arrived, how could I not come

to give you the news personally! Listen, Bai Hao. To people on the outside, everything about Devil Penitentiary is a big secret. After all, only two types of people can actually go into the cellblock: the prisoners, and us guards!”

Although he didn't yet have a very good impression of Bai Xiaochun, the captain seemed a bit more sincere than before, and he even began to explain more information as they walked along.

After following the captain for a bit, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but ask, “Captain, what kind of cultivation bases do all the prisoners have?”

“It doesn't matter!” the captain replied proudly. “Everyone who comes to Devil Penitentiary has to submit. Even dragons!” Before long, they were approaching the huge glowing door in the middle of the square.

Bai Xiaochun's curiosity was growing. He had experienced a lot of things in his life, but had never been inside of a prison. The idea of descending into the depths of Devil Penitentiary had him filled with anticipation.

The other soul cultivators who were part of Squad 9 were all waiting impatiently by the doorway, and many of them seemed to get even more irritated when they saw Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun could see that, and considering that he had no idea how long he would be serving as a guard, he hurried forward and said, “Hello, brothers! I'm new here and don't know the rules. I'm terribly sorry for keeping all of you waiting.”

Currently, he looked like Bai Hao, young, pure and fair, even delicate. Furthermore, he spoke in a very pleasing fashion; almost immediately, some of the irritation in the eyes of the other guards faded.

After all, Bai Hao's reputation was that of a vicious beast. But here he was politely and passionately offering an explanation and

apology. The other guards were surprised, and weren't quite sure what to say. In any case, Bai Xiaochun's smiling face made it hard for them to stay angry.

Beyond that, the way he rushed forward and treated them all like older brothers caused strange feelings to rise up in their hearts. Almost immediately, the coldness that many of them felt toward him began to fade.

The only exception was one long-faced young man who responded with a cold snort. Apparently, he had a rather high standing in Squad 9. When the other guards saw his reaction, their expressions went back to being icy.

Bai Xiaochun was not very happy about that.

"I never offended this guy!" he thought.

The captain pretended not to notice what had happened. Laughing, he said, "Alright, everyone's here, let's head in!"

Swishing his sleeve, he produced a command medallion, which he extended toward the glowing door. Almost immediately, a rift opened up in the middle of it.

The captain went in first, and everyone else followed behind, with Bai Xiaochun taking up the final spot.

As soon as he entered the light, a feeling like that of teleportation swept through him. It was like heaven and earth crushing down on him, and was a very unpleasant sensation. However, it only lasted for a moment before fading away. Then, Bai Xiaochun's vision cleared, and he found himself looking at... a very peculiar dimension!

There was no sky or land, only a black void. Hanging down from the vast, seemingly never-ending darkness above were countless chains made of bones.

Hanging at the end of the bone chains were enormous skulls, each one several dozens of meters tall. They were vicious-looking

things that had clearly been hanging there in this void for tens upon tens of thousands of years.

They seemed to be arranged in some sort of pattern, almost as if to form some enormous, densely-packed spell formation.

Of course, none of them were located too close to any of the others.

Those skulls were the prison cells!

In terms of color, they weren't white. In fact, they seemed to be constantly flickering with random colors, almost as if there were some type of magic at work inside of them. In addition, it was possible to hear the occasional bitter scream coming from inside.

Those screams came from the prisoners!

The prisoners in the skulls all wore ragged clothing, and some of them were even naked. There were men and women, and even the occasional savage giant, forced to shrink down in size to fit in the skull cages.

Quite a few were soul cultivators, and there were also necromancers present. All of them were gaunt and emaciated, and yet, each and every one burst with a murderous aura and an air of brutality.

In addition to the prisoners in the skull cages, there were also soul cultivators roaming around in gray robes, their hands and legs in shackles. They were also prisoners, but weren't dangerous enough to keep in cages, and were free to roam about among the cells.

Quite a few of the prisoners were female, and many of them were extremely beautiful.

When the gray-robed soul cultivator prisoners saw the guards of Squad 9, they rushed over, trembling, to kowtow. Flattering, fawning expressions could be seen on their faces, and as for the beautiful female prisoners, they made sure to reveal their ample

cleavage as they bent over. When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he was quite shocked.

At this point, the captain bellowed, “Alright, we’ll be on patrol for three days. For the first six hours, we’ll do things like usual. Go have some fun and don’t cause any trouble! When the six hours are up, we’ll meet at Old Devil Zhou’s cell. Let’s see if we can finally get him to spill the beans.”

After the captain finished speaking, Bai Xiaochun watched as the smiling guards dispersed in various directions.

When that happened, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide with shock as he saw many of the gray-robed prisoners flocking around the guards as if they were old friends. Some of them even began to massage the guards’ shoulders and lean down to whisper things in their ears. Furthermore, even more fawning expressions than before could be seen on the prisoners’ faces.

When the captain saw how befuddled Bai Xiaochun looked, he smiled, lowered his voice, and said, “Those people are like stewards here in Devil Penitentiary. None of them committed particularly serious crimes, and they tend to behave well. As for how easy or difficult their lives are, that’s up to our whim.

“The prisoners in the skulls are the really important ones.” He pointed at one nearby skull, within which was an old man with a red birthmark on his face. He looked particularly ferocious, but currently had his eyes closed, as if he didn’t care at all about the world around him. “For example, that guy. He pissed off his highness the king two hundred years ago, and has been locked up ever since. He doesn’t have any secrets worth extracting, so he’ll probably just die of natural causes eventually.

“Alright, well go have some fun. As guards, we’re like gods here. The lives of the prisoners are in our hands, and therefore... as long as you don’t do anything too excessive, you can pretty much do anything you please.”

“Anything we please?” Bai Xiaochun thought incredulously, his mind spinning at how different Devil Penitentiary was than he’d imagined.

Even more shocking was how the long-faced youth from moments ago was surrounded by a group of eight beautiful female prisoners, who were pulling him off into the distance with flirtatious looks on their faces.

He couldn’t help but blink a few times and even lick his lips when he saw that. His heart actually started to beat as well. After all, there were a couple of female prisoners in that group who he found particularly attractive. Pointing in their direction, he said, “Captain, what exactly are they going off to do?”

Chapter 625: Pure Bai Xiaochun

The captain cleared his throat. “Just keep your eyes to yourself. Don’t be such a prude. Oh right. Don’t forget to leave the prisoners in the cells alone. They’re murderers and fiends, every last one of them. Accidents have happened in the past, you know. Their cultivation bases are sealed, but on one occasion, one of them bit off the ear of one of the guards.”

After giving a few more reminders and warnings, the captain left to enjoy himself.

Bai Xiaochun felt like a new world had been opened up to him. After looking around, he realized that quite a few of the gray-robed prisoners were looking over at him. They quickly identified him as a new guard, and hurried over to offer greetings.

“Greetings, exalted one....”

“If you need anything, exalted one, please just say the word....”

“You’re so young, exalted one. Now that you’re a guard in Devil Penitentiary, you have boundless prospects for the future. You’re like a dragon among men....”

As everyone began to fawn over him, Bai Xiaochun noticed several attractive female cultivators giving him the eye. Obviously, they were trying to seduce him!

Bai Xiaochun’s heart started to pound with the realization that all he needed to do was point his finger, and any of those female cultivators would cater to his every whim....

“Fudge, this place is evil!!” Panting, Bai Xiaochun realized that this really wasn’t the type of place for him. As he continued to revel in the praise of the prisoners, and the gentle voices of the female cultivators, he continued to stew in anxiety....

“Who would ever have thought that Devil Penitentiary would be like this?” he thought. “Bai Xiaochun is a pure person! How could

he deign to wallow in a place like this...?”

As he anxiously allowed the prisoners to lead him off into the distance... he came to understand what Devil Penitentiary was really like, that it was the type of place where you could truly say... anything goes.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun realized that he really liked Devil Penitentiary, and that the world really was a wonderful place.

“But Bai Xiaochun is a clean-living and honest person. I definitely won't do anything to violate my conscience!” Six hours later, Bai Xiaochun felt more wonderful than ever about being in Devil Penitentiary. At that point, he followed the directions given him by the helpful prisoners to meet back up with the rest of the squad.

The captain was already present, as were seven or eight of the other guards. Everyone seemed to be in wonderful moods, and were chatting happily. However, the long-faced young man was also there, and as soon as he saw Bai Xiaochun, his expression turned grim.

He held this traitor from the Bai Clan in complete contempt. As far as he was concerned, anyone who would kidnap his own father and kill his own fellow clan members was completely perverse, and the type of person who actually deserved to be locked up in Devil Penitentiary.

Furthermore, he had been friends with Bai Qi, which deepened his hatred.

As for the other guards, they simply pretended not to see Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun stood there feeling a bit awkward, and starting to get angry.

“What's the deal with this guy?” he thought. “What's he picking on me for?” With that, he began to assess the young man's cultivation base, which caused the young man to look over at him

with icy eyes.

The captain could see that tension was building up between the two of them, so he quickly planted himself in the middle and then pointed at a nearby skull.

“Alright, let’s get to business. See that guy, Bai Hao? That’s Old Devil Zhou.”

The long-faced young man snorted coldly, and Bai Xiaochun suppressed his anger to look in the direction the captain was pointing.

Within the huge skull sat a burly man who, despite being seated cross-legged, was still nearly two meters tall. From the look of it, if he stood up, he would almost be as tall as one of the savage giants. He was a real brute.

His eyes glowed red, and a ferocious-looking smile twisted his lips. Furthermore, he looked at the guards with a greedy expression that almost made it seem like he wanted to eat them.... As soon as Bai Xiaochun laid eyes on him, he got the sense that the man was a cannibal of some sort.

He had a murderous aura that made him seem completely impervious to reason, the type who would murder people left and right without the slightest compunction.

“This is Old Devil Zhou,” the captain continued. “Not only is he a cold-blooded murderer, but he’s addicted to eating children. A hundred years ago, he ate so many children it was impossible to count. However, because of his connections to the Cai Clan, one of the three great clans, he managed to get spared from the death penalty!”

Bai Xiaochun frowned. He wasn't the type of person who instantly believed everything he heard. However, although the captain's story seemed a bit unbelievable, based on what this Old Devil Zhou looked like, it seemed possible.

“But now that he's here,” the captain continued icily, “he has to live a life of suffering.” By this point, all of the rest of the guards had gathered.

“Alright, let's begin. This is our last chance to get him to talk!” The captain waved his sleeve, and Squad 9 headed, grim-faced, toward Old Devil Zhou's cell.

When Old Devil Zhou saw them coming over, his vicious grin widened, and his eyes glittered. Suddenly, he jumped to his feet, grabbed the eyeholes of the skull, and let out a furious roar.

That roar caused everyone to stop in place for a moment.

“Useless fools! I, Zhou Yunlong, have eaten so many people like you I've lost count!”

“Shut up!” barked one of the guards, jumping forward and performing an incantation gesture. Then he waved his finger at the skull, which changed colors. At the same time, the flicker of lightning could be seen inside, causing Old Devil Zhou to tremble, and then let out an agonized shriek.

The guards of Squad 9, looking very fierce and dangerous, went about using all the tricks they could think of.

“Tell us where the treasure is!”

“Spit it out and we won't torment you! But if you don't talk, then don't blame us for what happens!”

“Senior Zhou, there's no need to be like this. Now that you're in here, you won't be getting out. None of your assets on the outside will do you any good. Why not just reveal the truth? Then things will go easy for you! In fact, life inside could actually be pretty nice for you.”

Some of them threatened, some of them cajoled. Every method possible was pulled out to try to get him to reveal the location of whatever treasure it was they were talking about. However, no matter what they did, and no matter how Old Devil Zhou

screamed, the vicious smile never left his face. And in fact, it only grew more vicious.

Finally, the long-faced young man strode forward. Laughing coldly, he said, “Not gonna talk, huh? Fine, I’ll force it out of you!”

As soon as the young man walked forward, the other guards started to get excited.

“Zhao Feng is Squad 9’s inquisitor! If you don’t talk, then he’ll pry your mouth open!”

“That’s right! The other eight squads might not have succeeded, but Zhao Feng can!”

Even the captain’s eyes were glowing with anticipation. As for Bai Xiaochun, he simply watched what was happening. Although he wasn’t sure what an inquisitor was, he had the feeling that the long-faced young man must have some higher standing than everyone else. It sounded like inquisitor was a title or rank of some sort.

The long-faced young man walked up to the cell and performed a double-handed incantation gesture, summoning a long black needle. Instantly, the needle shot forward and stabbed into Old Devil Zhou, provoking an unprecedentedly ragged scream.

A moment later, Old Devil Zhou’s eyes turned bright red, and yet the arrogance within them didn’t fade in the least. Eventually, he stopped screaming, and then started laughing.

“That’s all you’ve got? I’ve eaten tons of inquisitors like you in the past. Delicious, every last one of them! I wonder what you taste like though?”

The long-faced young man looked angrily at Old Devil Zhou, then went to work on another incantation gesture. However, no matter what he did, Old Devil Zhou just kept laughing and laughing. Furious, the other guards did everything they could to help out.

Bai Xiaochun stood off to the side, looking on in shock as the

guards of Squad 9 interrogated and tormented Old Devil Zhou. Nearly a day passed, and although Old Devil Zhou was left gasping for breath, he still didn't say a word about his treasure.

“Dammit this guy is tight-lipped!” Eventually, the guards began to back down, glaring at Old Devil Zhou as if they wished they could break into his brain to get the information they wanted. That was especially true of the long-faced young man.

“When Old Devil Zhou was incarcerated recently,” the captain explained, “he didn't have a thing on him. But he built up quite the treasure trove in his life. He obviously hid it away somewhere!

“He was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, half a step into the Deva Realm. He dominated the world for an entire sixty-year-cycle, and massacred more than thirty entire clans! He definitely has a lot of treasures!”

After seeing how angry his fellow guards were, Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, and then finally asked, “Um... why don't you soulsearch him?”

Chapter 626: I Hope You'll Break The Record

The other guards couldn't help but sneer at the question, and the long-faced young man actually laughed sarcastically.

The captain shook his head. Sighing, he explained, "Some people can be soulsearched. But once your cultivation base reaches a certain level, and your soul fuses with your fleshly body, you can use all sorts of methods to defend against soulsearches. At that point, forcing a soulsearch won't lead to good results."

Raising his voice to reach all the guards, he said, "We don't even have two days left now. If we don't get the answer soon, then Squad 10 is going to come along and take over."

Then he looked back at Bai Xiaochun and continued his explanation. "The prisoners here are all powerful and important people. Most of them have secrets, and many of them were rich. According to the rules of Devil Penitentiary, whichever squad can pry the information out of them can benefit from what they learn. A split has to be given to the higher-ups, but the rest can be divided among the squad."

Now Bai Xiaochun understood the situation much better. The guards took a short break, and then resumed interrogating Old Devil Zhou. However, as the third day neared, they still weren't able to get a single word out of him, and finally reached the point of giving up.

Smiling bitterly, the captain said, "Well, I guess it doesn't matter. Old Devil Zhou's treasure trove must be destined to go to one of the other squads."

With that, he prepared to lead Bai Xiaochun and the other dejected guards away. However, as he gave one final look to Old Devil Zhou, the man suddenly spat a blood-infused gob of spittle out of his mouth and then began laughing maniacally. From the way he was looking at the guards of Squad 9, he really seemed like

he wanted to eat them.

“People always talk about how Devil Penitentiary is a brutal place!” he laughed. “They say nobody can keep their mouths shut in here. But things have been easy so far!”

His words got the guards even angrier than before, but there was nothing they could do.

“Let’s go,” the captain said through gritted teeth, turning to leave.

However, it was at that point that Bai Xiaochun hesitantly said, “Captain, can I have a try? I think I might be able to get him to talk....”

Actually, he had been itching to have a shot for the entire past day.

“You?” Zhao Feng said with a cold laugh. He was of the opinion that if he, the squad’s inquisitor, couldn’t pry Old Devil Zhou’s mouth open, and the inquisitors of the other eight squads couldn’t either, then there was no way this newcomer could. Obviously, he was feeling a bit too cocky for his own good. He didn’t do anything to cover up his disdain and scorn, as if he were trying to vent his frustration at Old Devil Zhou’s stubbornness onto Bai Xiaochun.

The other guards frowned. They all knew that Bai Hao was a vicious killer, but killing and torture were two different things. Interrogating people required a level of control that ordinary cultivators often lacked.

Therefore, no matter how confident Bai Hao claimed to be, they wouldn’t be so easily persuaded.

“Not even Inquisitor Zhao Feng could get any information out of Old Devil Zhou. This Bai Hao... really overestimates himself. Interrogation is an art, not something that any random person can do.”

“He might have a reputation for being vicious, but in Devil

Penitentiary, everybody has that kind of reputation!”

Bai Xiaochun wasn't too happy at the things the guards were muttering. After all, he hadn't boasted or anything! Although he wasn't supremely confident, he was at least confident enough to give a try.

The captain frowned in thought. Considering that Bai Xiaochun was now a member of Squad 9, letting him experience first-hand how difficult interrogation was would probably be a good thing.

“Alright, Bai Hao. If you want to give it a shot, be my guest!”

Bai Xiaochun immediately stuck his chin up, clasped his hands behind his back, and strolled up to Old Devil Zhou's cell. Behind him, the other guards looked on with knowing smiles as they waited for him to fail in his attempt.

“Bai Hao has a reputation for being vicious, but he doesn't look that scary to me. He probably just has a big mouth.”

“Supposedly he has a lot of patience, but it doesn't look like it to me.”

Zhao Feng looked especially scornful as he crossed his arms and looked on with cold eyes. “Hmph. If I, Zhao Feng, can't get this guy to talk, then what makes him think he can?!”

As everyone stood by waiting for him to fail, Bai Xiaochun looked into the cell at Old Devil Zhou, who looked back at him with yellowish teeth and gluttonous eyes.

“Fair skin,” Old Devil Zhou said, “very tender-looking... My three favorite things to eat are children, elegant women, and beautiful men.... This kid is a perfect example of the third type.” With that, he began to cackle madly.

“Makes me think of a soul cultivator I ate ten years ago. Looked similar to this, very pure and fair. I ate him and brutalized him at the same time! Wonderful flavor. Simply delicious!” Old Devil Zhou licked his lips and looked at Bai Xiaochun with an intensely

malevolent gaze.

His words coupled with his expression made him look profoundly sinister, and caused the expression on the faces of the guards to turn even grimmer.

As Old Devil Zhou's laughter rang out, Bai Xiaochun gasped. He couldn't help but visualize some of the things the man had just said, and realized that he was definitely vicious beyond compare. He even stopped walking for a moment.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun was hesitating, Old Devil Zhou chuckled, and then went on with more detailed descriptions. "I ate that fancy little soul cultivator one bite at a time, starting with his nose. After that I went on to his eyes...."

By this point, Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding in his chest. Obviously, this Old Devil Zhou was a complete monster. That, coupled with the fact that interrogation really didn't suit him, made him begin to think about giving up. Old Devil Zhou could tell what he was thinking, and flung himself against the eye-holes of the skull that made the window, where he let out a powerful bellow.

Although it wasn't as loud as thunder, when coupled with the things he had just been saying, it was startling enough that Bai Xiaochun jumped backward in fear.

"Scared, kid? Come, come, let me have a taste of you!" Old Devil Zhou then went on to laugh maniacally. Clearly, he was having a lot of fun playing around with this fair, pure young man.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun got angry. After all, he was in the great circle of the Gold Core stage; to be startled by this old guy was a real humiliation. Glaring, he said, "Alright, old man, you brought this upon yourself!" Looking very serious, he turned to the captain and said, "Captain, please open the door of the cell!"

The captain hesitated for a moment, but then performed an

incantation gesture with his right hand. Instantly, an opening appeared in the huge skull, and before Old Devil Zhou could jump out, Bai Xiaochun was inside.

He immediately waved his hand, causing a black smoke to spring out, powered by his mask, which instantly filled the skull and made it impossible for anyone to see what was happening.

The guards of Squad 9 were a bit surprised, and hurried forward cautiously.

“What is he doing?”

“He’s making it so we can’t see?”

Zhao Feng laughed coldly and said, “Trying to pull a fast one, huh?!”

Inside the cell, Old Devil Zhou was shocked to find Bai Xiaochun right there in front of him. However, he quickly licked his lips and smiled, revealing yellow teeth. Saliva even began to flow down his chin.

“I never thought you would have the guts to come in here with me, kid. Think you’re safe because my cultivation base is sealed?”

“Considering how brave you are, if you let me eat one of your arms, I’ll give you a clue about my treasure trove. What do you say? One arm for a clue. Or hey, how about four limbs for four clues...?” With that, Old Devil Zhou began to laugh madly. Despite the fact that his cultivation base was sealed, he was still completely stubborn, and clearly not afraid of Bai Xiaochun at all.

After all, he knew that these people wouldn’t kill him, only torture him a bit.

“I don't care where your hidden treasure is!” Bai Xiaochun said with a glare. Snorting, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a medicinal pill.

It was none other than... an Aphrodisiac Pill!!

Old Devil Zhou seemed a bit taken aback. But then he saw that it was only a medicinal pill, and his expression became that of scorn.

“A torture pill? How amusing.”

“We’ll see how amusing you think it is in just a moment,” Bai Xiaochun said proudly. Waving his hand, he sent the Aphrodisiac Pill flying toward Old Devil Zhou, who, because he lacked a cultivation base at the moment, was incapable of dodging. The pill entered his mouth, and immediately dissolved.

Sticking his chin up, Bai Xiaochun waved his sleeve and loftily said, “Alright Mr. Devil. In the past, some people have lasted for as long as two hours when I torment them. That’s the ultimate limit. But I’m hoping you’ll break the record.”

Chapter 627: Promoted To Inquisitor...

The rest of the members of Squad 9 couldn't see what was happening inside of the skull cell. All they could see was dense, black smoke that was impenetrable even by divine sense.

“What is Bai Hao doing?”

“He's in there alone with the prisoner, hidden by black smoke? Don't tell me the two of them are working together to plot against us?!”

“Something seems off....” The various members of the squad were all whispering back and forth to each other, some of them with expressions of disdain, others with frowns. The captain was starting to worry that he might have been a bit impulsive.

Zhao Feng stood there with his arms crossed, smiling coldly as he said, “Like I said, this guy--”

However, before he could finish his sentence, a maniacal scream suddenly erupted from within the black smoke.

The shocking scream clearly came from the mouth of Old Devil Zhou, and sounded like the scream of someone who had something pent up inside of them that they wished to release, but couldn't.

“What's going on!?” Everyone was now completely focused on the cell, their expressions those of curiosity and suspicion. The sound of the scream was strange; after having interrogated Old Devil Zhou for a few days, they had heard him scream on numerous occasions, but none of those screams had sounded as pent-up as this one.

Before any of the Squad 9 guards could do anything more, the screams intensified until they became a seemingly endless howl.

“What did you just feed me!?!? Aaaaggghhh! Dammit. Dammit!!! Let me out of here!!!”

The terrifying nature of the screams caused everyone's hair to stand on end.

The guards of Squad 9 were looking on with wide eyes. Throughout the past days of interrogation, Old Devil Zhou had never reacted like this; now he almost seemed to be pleading for mercy.

“What is Bai Hao doing?” The captain’s heart was shaken, and as for Zhao Feng, he couldn’t keep his expression still. As for the other nearby gray-robed prisoners, they were looking over in complete shock.

The screaming and howling didn’t last for very long, but as it filled with increasing levels of desperation and horror, it left everyone with the feeling that Old Devil Zhou was being subject to the most bone-piercingly painful type of torment possible.

None of the members of Squad 9 had ever even heard screaming like this before; it was filled with hair-raising desperation, the type which would be present in people who wished to die rather than be alive.

“His voice... it's like something is suppressed inside of him that wishes to explode out, but can't, and instead, pushes him into complete madness!!”

“Heavens! How is Bai Hao doing this?!?!”

“Whatever interrogation method he’s using to get Old Devil Zhou to scream like that, it shows he's already on the path to success! Nobody could possibly endure under such pent-up pressure!!”

The captain was having trouble breathing calmly, and all the other guards were completely stunned. Zhao Feng was shaking visibly; as an inquisitor, he was well aware that being able to fill someone with pressure and make them unable to release it was extremely, extremely difficult.

“Don’t tell me he's an inquisitor too? Impossible!!” A defiant

gleam could be seen in Zhao Feng's eyes; in his mind, Old Devil Zhou was an extraordinary individual who could likely continue to endure.

Old Devil Zhou's howling turned more piercing and became more filled with insanity. The level of pain in his voice caused all of the prisoners in the entire cell block to look over in astonishment.

“Old Devil Zhou is incredibly tough, but look at him now!!”

“Who was that kid who went into his cell just now...?”

The process lasted for about an hour before Old Devil Zhou finally began to beg for mercy.

“I'll talk! I'll reveal everything! I'll tell you where my treasure trove is....”

“Shut up! Lord Bai doesn't want to know about any hidden treasure!”

“Forgive me, Lord Bai. I'm truly sorry.... Let me off the hook....” The guards of Squad 9 almost couldn't believe what they were hearing. All attention was on the cell as they pondered what torment Old Devil Zhou was undergoing to get him to start begging for mercy.

However, Bai Hao's viciousness seemed to have no limits. It was almost as if... he was enjoying himself, and that the answer to the original question wasn't really important to him.

Everyone was filled with icy coldness as Old Devil Zhou continued to scream and beg for mercy for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn. Finally, he started to tire out. Then, the smoke swirled as Bai Xiaochun appeared, hands clasped behind his back, chin stuck up, an expression of complete indifference on his face as he strutted out into the open.

Everyone was looking at him, guards and gray-robed prisoners alike. Even the dangerous prisoners in the nearby cells were staring.

He looked exactly as he had earlier, without the slightest change in facial expression. However, when everyone looked into the cell, they began to cry out in shock and alarm.

“Heavens....”

“Is that... is that Old Devil Zhou?!”

“What... what did Bai Hao do to him!?!?”

Old Devil Zhou had once been big and burly, but now he seemed shriveled up, almost as if he had been burned up from the inside out. His life force and even his soul seemed mostly gone, and the flame of his life force was barely flickering.

He seemed wilted as he crouched there, trembling, his skin covered with scratch marks so deep that bones and organs were visible through some of them.

Clearly, he had been clawing at himself....

As he looked out of the cage at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes shone with indescribable terror, as though Bai Xiaochun were an evil ghost the likes of which could strike fear deep into the heart. No one had ever seen Old Devil Zhou with an expression like that in his eyes. It was as if Bai Xiaochun was so terrifying to him that he was a nightmare eternally branded into the man's mind.

All observers were left gasping. The difference between the Old Devil Zhou from earlier, and the Old Devil Zhou from when Bai Xiaochun came swaggering out of the cell an hour later, was staggering.

Guards and prisoners alike now stared at Bai Xiaochun with serious and even awe-struck expressions.

Under the reverent stares of everyone present, Bai Xiaochun walked up to the captain and then tossed him a jade slip.

“His confession,” Bai Xiaochun said, feeling very pleased to be the center of so much attention. Keeping his hands clasped loftily

behind his back, and with a profound look in his eye, he strolled off into the distance.

The captain looked down at the jade slip, stunned. Then he looked back up at Bai Xiaochun walking off, and it almost seemed as if he were looking at a god.

Zhao Feng couldn't even breathe for a long moment. When he could, he rushed over to the cell to look at Old Devil Zhou twitching and trembling in the corner.

“He didn't leave any marks.... He got him to scream endlessly from the pent-up pressure.... The prisoner was ready to confess, but he wouldn't let him. He made him feel hopeless.... Plus, he seemed to love the process of inflicting the torment.... Heavens! There is no higher level among inquisitors!!! Bai is definitely an inquisitor... no, wait, he's an inquisitor among inquisitors. He's a dark inquisitor!!” Zhao Feng swiveled his head to look at Bai Xiaochun off in the distance, his eyes burning with zeal.

Earlier, he had looked down on Bai Xiaochun, but now, everything had been turned upside down. As an inquisitor, he couldn't help but be in awe of Bai Xiaochun's techniques, which caused passion to flare in his heart.

“Wait for me, Brother Bai!” he blurted excitedly as he hurried to catch up. The other guards in Squad 9 were all staring at Bai Xiaochun with worshipful expressions. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had forced Old Devil Zhou to finally open his mouth meant that Squad 9 would not only earn a lot of face, but they would also be able to get Old Devil Zhou's hidden treasures. Almost immediately, their opinion of Bai Xiaochun changed completely.

The captain was panting, and his eyes were shining brightly. He knew exactly what it meant to have an inquisitor like this on Squad 9, and he quickly hurried to catch up.

The gray-robed prisoners and the dangerous prisoners in the cells watched the guards hurrying to cluster around Bai Xiaochun, and

then turned to look at the twitching and trembling Old Devil Zhou. At that point, all of them decided that this was an inquisitor they could never afford to provoke!!

He was the stuff of nightmares!

Chapter 628: Splitting The Loot....

As Bai Xiaochun strutted along, the captain and guards of Squad 9 hurried along beside him, their eyes shining with reverence and awe.

In the cultivation world, people always respected the powerful. It was almost like a natural law. However, in Devil Penitentiary, there was an additional law, and that was to respect inquisitors!

Inquisitors were the ultimate representations of wealth and status!

In the past, Zhao Feng had been quite popular as the inquisitor of Squad 9, and had been treated with incredible respect by the captain. The inquisitors of all squads were treated similarly.

But now, everyone could tell that Bai Xiaochun was an incredible inquisitor; even Zhao Feng was convinced. Therefore, it was only natural for everyone's passions to be aroused.

“Brother Bai is actually a top master!”

“Hahaha! Sorry for the misunderstanding earlier, Brother Bai. But let's forget about that. From now on, we're brothers!”

“With such abilities as an inquisitor, Brother Bai, you can soar to the highest heights in Devil Penitentiary!”

Zhao Feng's previous hostility was long gone, replaced by awe and reverence. “Squad 9 has struck gold! With Brother Bai, we're all going to have the best of the best.”

Earlier, there was no way Bai Xiaochun could have imagined that getting Old Devil Zhou to talk would result in having everyone suddenly fall in love with him. The realization that he was completely outstanding caused him to sigh in his heart. No matter where he went, he ended up shining like a treasure, and he couldn't stop that fact from causing his eyes to glitter brightly.

“I’m simply too outstanding,” he thought. “How could I be this outstanding? Even I have no choice but to admire myself.” Although he enjoyed reveling in his success, he was also the type of person who knew how to treat others smoothly. Clearing his throat, he began to laugh and chat with the other guards.

Slapping his chest proudly, he said, “Ah, that was nothing. From now on, our Squad 9 is going to be one big family! We’re all brothers!”

Such talk continued as he and Squad 9 made their way out of the cellblock.

That very day, the captain sent some of the guards outside of Giant Ghost City to the spot that Old Devil Zhou had confessed was the location of his hidden treasure. Sure enough, there was an immortal's cave hidden by a magical technique, within which lay Old Devil Zhou’s life savings, which was subsequently brought back to Devil Penitentiary.

Soon, Squad 9 was having a meeting in the captain’s quarters, in which they split up all of Old Devil Zhou’s treasure. Bai Xiaochun got the largest share of all, a soulhoarding pagoda filled with countless vengeful souls and more than a thousand portions of mid-grade soul medicine. Even Bai Xiaochun gasped at the sight of all the treasure.

“This Old Devil Zhou was totally rich!” he thought. At that point, the captain waved his sleeve, sending jugs of fine liquor out to all the guards.

Laughing, the captain raised his jug up and then loudly declared, “This is all thanks to Brother Bai Hao’s hard work, everyone. Come, come, let’s drink to him!”

The other guards laughed and raised their jugs to Bai Xiaochun. They had all benefited greatly just now, and from the way their eyes shone when they looked at him, it was almost as if they were looking at the endless treasure they would surely get in the days to

come.

Flicking his sleeve, Bai Xiaochun raised his jug. “Brothers, I'm new to Devil Penitentiary, and still don't know all the rules. Please, I hope you can forgive me for any faux pas I might make.

“By the way, some of the rumors which have been spreading about me are quite painful, and I'd rather not discuss them. In any case, you're my family now, and going forward, I'm going to do everything I can to make sure we all have a wonderful life. Please, allow me to drink to you!” Bai Xiaochun was very impressed with how wonderful his words were as he took a long drink.

The fact that he seemed so pure and fair, and even delicate to some degree, seemed somewhat disparate with his bold words. However, that simply provoked a cheer from the other guards, who then laughed as they drank deeply from their alcohol jugs.

Even as they lowered their jugs, it was possible to see that their relationship had improved vastly. Bai Xiaochun was now one of them, and all of them were laughing loudly as they addressed each other as brothers.

Even the captain did so. Claspings Bai Xiaochun warmly on the shoulder, he said, “The reason we treated you so ambivalently before was because of those rumors. Everyone said that you were vicious, with no toleration of filial piety. However, those rumors were clearly false. Brother Bai Hao, you are just our type of person. Furthermore, you obviously have great potential as an inquisitor. Coming to Devil Penitentiary was definitely the right decision. Who cares about some crappy Bai Clan? From now on, if the Bai Clan dares to show their face here, we brothers will show them a thing or two!”

Everyone laughed heartily. Then, Zhao Feng clasped his alcohol jug in his hands and gave a deep, sincere bow.

Bai Xiaochun was very moved. In fact, he even threw off his outer garment and set a foot atop one of the [alcohol jugs](#) in a heroic

pose.

“Thank you, my brothers!” he said loudly. “From now on, all of you are my big bros!”

Zhao Feng raised his alcohol jug and said, “Brother Bai, I treated you poorly before. Let me drink to you!” He drank deeply, and once again bowed to Bai Xiaochun. “There’s no way I could have the face to continue to serve as Squad 9’s inquisitor. Brother Bai, please, I beg of you to take over the position!”

The other guards shot to their feet and voiced similar thoughts.

“That’s right, Brother Bai Hao. Why don’t you be Squad 9’s inquisitor!?”

“With your potential, you’ll surely become the most famous inquisitor in Devil Penitentiary!”

Even the captain joined in. Bai Xiaochun’s heart pulsed with happiness at being so popular. After a bit more time went by, he decided to ask some questions about inquisitors.

Zhao Feng looked at Bai Xiaochun with praise in his eyes as he offered an introduction. “Most of the prisoners in Devil Penitentiary can’t be soulsearched. That’s why we have inquisitors, whose job it is to formally interrogate the prisoners. Only people with incredible skills in interrogation can become inquisitors.

“Each of the four main cellblocks in Devil Penitentiary has a highly respected inquisitor, whose standing is second only to that of a deputy warden. Because of the darkness which fills their hearts, they are known as dark inquisitors! In addition to the four great dark inquisitors, each of the squads in the four cellblocks all have their own inquisitor.

“Old Devil Zhou was a nut that none of the inquisitors in Cellblock D have been able to crack. In fact, even the dark inquisitor from Squad 1 failed with him. Now that you’ve

succeeded, Brother Bai Hao, that means you have the potential to become a dark inquisitor!”

Bai Xiaochun blinked in surprise at this new information about Devil Penitentiary. Then he thought about Old Devil Zhou, and how many vengeful souls he had earned because of him, and his heart began to pound.

“I still need that last deva soul,” he thought. “Until I get it, my cultivation will be stuck at a standstill. For now, the best way to keep my poor little life safe is to use the power of magical items.... In that case, flame conjuring is still going to be very important, and in turn, that means that I need to have a lot of souls....”

With those thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, waved his hand, and said, “Well, since you all insist, then I guess I might as well agree to be your inquisitor.”

The guards cheered, and unanimously raised their alcohol jugs in a toast.

Then someone suggested that they should start visiting some of the most tight-lipped of the prisoners, people who had never revealed the location of their hidden treasures.

“With Brother Bai here, we’re all going to be rich! Brother Bai, did you know that in Cellblock D, there are over a hundred prisoners who have never talked!?”

“That's right! All of those prisoners have tightly-kept secrets. If we can get them to talk, we could probably get as much out of each one as we just got from Old Devil Zhou!” As the conversation progressed along this line, the guards began to look over at Bai Xiaochun with pounding hearts.

Even the captain was obviously getting excited. Slapping his chest, he said, “Brother Bai, I can go talk things out with the captain of Squad 10, and get him to agree to let us take their patrol duty this time around.”

Bai Xiaochun was trembling with excitement at having suddenly become so important. Sticking his chin up, he said, “Very well. Since that’s what you wish, my brothers, then let’s do it right now. I refuse to believe that these prisoners can keep their mouths closed around me!”

The excitement in the eyes of the guards couldn’t have been more evident. The captain laughed heartily, and then rushed over in the direction of Squad 10. When he returned, he waved his sleeve and said, “They agreed! We have Squad 10’s patrol duty!”

1. The alcohol jugs referenced here are most likely [these kind](#). They can come as small as a hand or as large as a person, and can be drunk from directly. Presumably the ones they are using here are rather large, making it possible to put your foot on top of one and strike a dramatic pose.

Chapter 629: Dominating Cellblock D

Squad 9 rushed back into the cellblock, their hearts surging with excitement. The gray-robed prisoners had recovered from the sight of Bai Xiaochun interrogating Old Devil Zhou, and quickly rushed over.

Each and every one clasped hands and bowed, saying things like, “Heavens! The dark inquisitor is back!”

Not in the mood to pay any attention to the gray-robed prisoners, the guards rushed Bai Xiaochun toward one of the old-time prisoners who had never talked.

Bai Xiaochun kept his hands clasped behind his back as they neared one of the cells off in the distance. As they got closer, the gray-robed prisoners in the area eyed them nervously.

Glaring at the prisoner in the cage, the captain said, “Brother Bai, this is Old Devil Xu. It was an entire sixty-year-cycle ago that he was one of the most powerful Nascent Soul experts around. Back then, he murdered 99,999 pregnant women and used their placentas to forge a powerful magical device. It was really a shocking thing that got everyone up in arms!”

Bai Xiaochun could see an old man sitting cross-legged in the cage, looking very calm. The man’s eyes flickered up to look at him, and they were ice-cold, as if he didn’t care about any living thing in the world.

When he spoke, his voice was just as cold as his gaze. “It’s been a long time since anyone tried to get me to talk. Let the fun begin, shall we?”

After actually laying eyes on Old Devil Xu, Squad 9’s confidence in Bai Xiaochun suddenly began to wane. Old Devil Xu was extremely famous, and even Cellblock D’s dark inquisitor had repeatedly failed to get any information out of him.

“Let’s see how Squad 9’s inquisitor deals with Old Devil Xu!” Among the gray-robed prisoners in the area, there were many who already revered Bai Xiaochun. However, most of them were still more in awe of Old Devil Xu.

Even as everyone pondered what was going to happen, Bai Xiaochun looked Old Devil Xu up and down, then entered the cell. Moments later, a black smoke filled the area, and before long, howls rang out that were very similar to the howls that had just been heard from Old Devil Zhou.

Almost immediately, the eyes of the Squad 9 guards lit up. As for the gray-robed prisoners, their hearts began to pound, and many of them gasped.

“Even Old Devil Xu is reacting like this!?”

“No way! This is Old Devil Xu we’re talking about! Not even Cellblock D’s dark inquisitor could get him to talk!”

Roughly an hour later, the howls turned to pleas for mercy. Everyone was shaken, especially the dangerous prisoners in the nearby cells, whose faces had become masks of terror.

Then Bai Xiaochun emerged, looking as calm as ever, a jade slip in his hand.

“Here’s his confession,” he said. “Who’s next?”

Zhao Feng was shivering with excitement, and the captain looked extremely happy. By this point, Bai Xiaochun was like a god to the guards, and it was with great zeal that they led him to another area.

And that was how things went at the second cell, then the third, and then the fourth....

During the following three days, it was to the complete stupefaction of everyone present that Bai Xiaochun swept through each of the old-time prisoners in Cellblock D that he was taken to!

A few managed to hold out for as long as four hours. However, in the end, none of them could hold their tongues. All of them revealed their deepest secrets to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was already very impressed by how he was benefiting from all of this. In fact, many of the old-time prisoners ended up telling him, not only their own secrets, but secrets belonging to other people....

There were secrets which had never before been uttered to anyone, which were now revealed because of Bai Xiaochun. At first he took it all in stride, but as more and more secrets were revealed, his eyes began to shine brightly.

He was really starting to feel that he fit in in Devil Penitentiary. Furthermore, as he interrogated all of the various prisoners, he came to the realization that all of them had really committed heinous crimes that were worthy of execution!

“I guess the giant ghost king... really knows what he’s doing,” he thought.

As for Squad 9, they were already starting to grow numb to what was happening. Considering how profoundly skilled Bai Xiaochun was at performing interrogations, and considering how many jade slips were piling up in the captain’s hands, their eyes began to shine like diamonds.

Every jade slip he held represented vast wealth, and when the guards thought about what their lives would be like going forward, their devotion to Bai Xiaochun grew stronger.

Of course, the gray-robed prisoners were even more profoundly affected, and would stare at Bai Xiaochun, trembling with fear and reverence.

Shaken, and filled with deep admiration, the captain gritted his teeth and paid a heavy price to make contact with the captains of the other squads. It was impossible to say exactly how he did it, but

he managed to get Squad 9 assigned to patrol duty for an entire month straight.

When the rest of Squad 9 heard the news, they erupted into cheering. In sharp contrast, shocked expressions could be seen on the faces of the gray-robed prisoners and the prisoners in the cells.

Slowly but surely, the month went by.

During that time, Bai Xiaochun completely dominated Cellblock D. One by one, he visited all of the old-time prisoners.

During each interrogation session, screams would erupt from the cell, leading to widespread shock among everyone present.

It was all made even more terrifying by the fact that no one could actually see what was happening during the interrogation.

Whenever Bai Xiaochun emerged from an interrogation session, it didn't matter how brutal or savage the prisoner had been in the past, they all ended up trembling and terrified. In fact, for days after any given interrogation, such prisoners would lurk in their cells like scared rabbits, shaking physically.

Squad 9 was delighted by this, and Bai Xiaochun's fame spread throughout Cellblock D, until everyone stared at him with either terror or awe.

Bai Xiaochun was more entranced by Devil Penitentiary than ever, mostly because of all the secrets he was learning. Most such secrets pertained to the Wildlands, and to Giant Ghost City. In fact, during the month which passed, Bai Xiaochun came to learn... far too many secret matters.

When it finally came time for Squad 9 to end their patrol duty, the prisoners sighed in relief. Bai Xiaochun had created a nightmare for them the likes of which they had not experienced for years. As for those who had been interrogated, their fear could only be described as deep and profound.

Of course, Squad 9 really had struck the jackpot. Furthermore, as

they collected and split all of their loot, the other squads in Cellblock D were completely shaken as they received the shares they had been promised in return for giving up their patrol duty.

Once inquiries were made, and the other squads came to realize that the reason for it all was Dark Inquisitor Bai Hao, they couldn't have been more shocked.

“What? He got all the old-time prisoners to talk in one month?!?! That's impossible!!”

“Dammit! No wonder Squad 9 wanted to switch patrol duty with us....”

“I can't believe that Bai Hao knows dark inquisitor techniques. If the stories are true, then he's no ordinary dark inquisitor. After all, not even Cellblock D's official dark inquisitor could do what he did!”

As more inquiries were made, and the stories were confirmed, the other squads began to tremble and stare in jealousy at Squad 9.

Even the deputy warden of Cellblock D, Sun Peng, was completely shaken by the news.

“He got all the old-time prisoners to talk in only one month!?” When he saw all of the soul medicines and magical items that the captain of Squad 9 had sent him, he realized that he had no choice but to believe this unbelievable news.

“This Bai Hao is so vicious! Well, considering that he even reviled his own clan, I guess the role of dark inquisitor really does fit him.” Then Sun Peng realized that Cellblock D would finally have a chance to shine with glory in front of Warden Li Xu. Without any hesitation, he sent down orders that Bai Hao could enter the cellblock at any time he wanted, and interrogate even the most dangerous prisoners!

The other squads could only go into the cellblock itself once per month for three days. But Bai Hao faced no such limitations.

Ordinarily, such an arrangement would have caused widespread anger. However, because of Bai Xiaochun's shocking performance, not a single person raised an objection.

Chapter 630: Mysterious Old Man

The month that passed was a month of bounteous harvest for everyone in Squad 9. In fact, they didn't have to do anything other than escort Bai Xiaochun around and reap the rewards.

After all, the more than one hundred old-time prisoners all had indescribable caches of wealth. Although the guards would only get a small portion of it, when you combined it all together, it was still a shocking amount.

It was no wonder that Sun Peng, who got half of everything, would give Bai Xiaochun special treatment. Of course, Bai Xiaochun got the largest share after Sun Peng, and yet, considering his personality, he wasn't the type to be a miser....

He had long since made contact with Zhou Yixing and Li Feng, and given them information that they could use to profit as well.

There were many people in Devil Penitentiary who realized this, but actually, it didn't break the rules. As long as Bai Xiaochun wasn't too excessive in how he helped his people on the outside, no one would cause any problems for him. After all, few people would ever risk causing trouble for a dark inquisitor.

Besides, Bai Xiaochun knew how to conduct himself with integrity. Whether it was his way with words or his generous nature, he always left people feeling good about him.

In the end, Bai Xiaochun's greatest reward wasn't all the wealth, but rather, the secrets he learned.... Those secrets weren't something physical that could be counted, but were vastly valuable.

“There used to be five great clans in Giant Ghost City, not just three. Two of them... were exterminated overnight by the giant ghost king!”

“The giant ghost king has a demigod cultivation base, but rumor

has it that there is a fatal weakness in the technique he cultivates.”

“There are a few of the ten marquises who actually want to rebel against King Giant Ghost!”

Those were only a few of the secrets he had learned, all of which caused his eyes to sparkle with curiosity.

“Who would have ever thought that I would gain so much in this prison!?” Chuckling to himself, he looked at his crystalline soulhoarding pagoda and the vast collection of vengeful souls he had, which was the largest collection he had accumulated in his entire time in the Wildlands.

“I'm almost finished with my auguries of thirteen-colored flame....” He was almost inclined to make an attempt at conjuring thirteen-colored flame, but his residence was too small. Besides, if he lost control, it could lead to a huge disaster.

After some thought, he walked out of his quarters and headed toward the entrance to the cellblock.

Along the way, any of the guards he saw would greet him very politely. In return, he would smile, reveling in the feeling of being so important to everyone. Before long, he was passing through the entrance.

Inside, he ignored how his arrival instantly caused a stir of fear among the gray-robed prisoners and the prisoners in the cells. During his month-long stay recently, he had found an area some distance away from the entrance that was relatively wide-open, which was where he headed now.

After arriving, he set up numerous spell formations, then sat down cross-legged and took a deep breath. After taking a moment to review the formula he had come up with for thirteen-colored flame, he performed an incantation gesture and waved at his soulhoarding pagoda.

A vast amount of vengeful souls swept out of the soulhoarding

pagoda, filling the entire area. Then, a serious expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face as he waved his hand to produce a twelve-colored flame.

“I started working on thirteen-colored flame back when I left the Bai Clan, thanks to the inspiration I got from Bai Hao's research notes. After plenty of augury, I'm now eighty percent certain that I'll succeed!

“Even if I fail, it shouldn't matter. I can just determine the cause of failure, then make some adjustments, and be even more confident than before!” Without the slightest hesitation, he performed an incantation gesture and pointed at the twelve-colored flame, which spread out into a sea of fire and then began to consume the vengeful souls.

Although the process went quickly, it all went according to the complicated method Bai Xiaochun had come up with in advance. Time passed, and the souls disappeared. Gradually, another color became visible within the flame, but unfortunately, along with it came an uncontrollable instability. No matter how Bai Xiaochun tried to adjust things, nothing worked, and the flame finally fell apart into nothing.

Frowning, he contemplated the matter for a bit, then tried again.

One day. Two days. Three days.... Before long, half a month had gone by. Bai Xiaochun had tried several dozen different methods, all of which had failed, but all of which had given him new directions to attempt.

As time passed, his confidence in being able to produce thirteen-colored flame grew. At one point, he suddenly looked up, his eyes bloodshot, but his expression lively. Furthermore, his eyes were shining in anticipation.

“That was the last issue. As of this moment, I am completely confident in being able to succeed!” He waved his sleeve, causing a huge amount of vengeful souls to fly out of the soulhoarding

pagoda and into the twelve-colored flame. Bai Xiaochun was concentrating completely, and his body even blurred with afterimages as he boosted his divine sense using his clones. Gradually, as he exercised rigid control over the process, a thirteenth color appeared in the flame!!

Almost immediately, rumbling sounds echoed out, and the heat emanating from the flame grew exponentially intense. It was almost like a tempest of fire swirling around him.

The prisoners who had been watching him this whole time were completely shocked, and didn't dare to get near. Even many of the prisoners in the cells were looking over.

In fact, in a location not too far away from Bai Xiaochun was one cell that housed an old man with a red birthmark on his face, who suddenly looked up. In that instant, his eyes flickered... with immense shock!

The most important prisoners, the ones in the cells, all had their cultivation bases sealed, making it impossible to use them. And yet, this old man could clearly sense that Bai Xiaochun was working with thirteen-colored flame. The fact that he could sense that... was extremely bizarre!!

That old man had been pointed out to Bai Xiaochun when he first came to Devil Penitentiary. As the captain had explained, he had supposedly offended the giant ghost king, and had been locked up for more than two hundred years because of it.

A moment after opening his eyes, he closed them and went back to meditation, as if thirteen-colored flame was something that could only hold his interest for a moment.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun had no idea about what had just occurred. Keeping his aura under tight control, he cautiously closed his fingers over his palm, causing the sea of fire to shrink back down, accompanied by intense rumbling sounds. Then, when he opened his hand again... he had a tongue of thirteen-colored

flame!

“It worked!” he said, laughing loudly. Thanks to Bai Hao’s notes, now that Bai Xiaochun had succeeded with thirteen-colored flame, he knew that he wouldn’t have much trouble with fourteen-colored flame.

After all, both flames were in the same overall level. However, fifteen-colored flame was a dividing mark, separating the terrestrial rank from the celestial rank.

Celestial necromancers... could be considered reserve powers in necromancer clans! After all, if a soul cultivator wanted to break through from the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage and step into the Deva Realm, he would need an object with a fifteenfold spirit enhancement. Only in that way could he gain enlightenment of heaven and earth, and also, earn the chance to become a deva.

“I already feel confident enough to take a shot at fourteen-colored flame....” he thought, his eyes shining with determination.

Another half a month went by.

Bai Xiaochun’s hair was disheveled, and he looked like a mad devil. He was now at a critical juncture. During the past half month, he had failed on numerous occasions, but had also advanced by leaps and bounds.

“It should only take me five more tries to succeed!” he said, his eyes bloodshot. With that, he slapped his soulhoarding pagoda, causing more vengeful souls to fly out. However, it was at this point that he realized he actually didn’t have enough souls!

Eyes widening in shock, he said, “I’m all out?”

From what he remembered, he had built up a huge amount of souls. After sitting there mutely for a while, he chuckled bitterly at the realization that his expenditures during the past month had been immense.

“I wasn’t paying attention and went overboard....” Scowling, he

sighed and thought back to all of the souls he had handed in to the pagoda back at the Great Wall.

“It's too bad I gave all those vengeful souls over to get battle credit....” When he thought about how foolish he had been to do such a thing, his heart pulsed with regret.

“All of the old-time prisoners in Cellblock D have already talked. However, Zhou Yixing should have benefited from the information I sent him a while back.

“Ah, whatever. I guess I'll just go see how many vengeful souls he's managed to get his hands on.” Although he was worried about his lack of vengeful souls, at least he had a lot of soul medicine in his bag of holding.

Chapter 631: Too Domineering

“I really ought to take some time to explore Giant Ghost City a bit too....” Now that he had a prison guard's command medallion, leaving Devil Penitentiary was easy. He emerged from the stone turtle's left eye, whereupon the medallion shone with a soft light that protected him from the black waters of the moat.

Before long he was out of the moat, and basking in the afternoon sunlight. Giant Ghost City was bustling like usual, with a good number of people about even on the streets near the moat.

The splash of the water as he emerged attracted the attention of quite a few nearby soul cultivators, and as soon as they laid eyes on him, they realized where he must have just come from.

“He's from Devil Penitentiary....”

“Devil Penitentiary....”

Virtually all soul cultivators in Giant Ghost City were terrified of Devil Penitentiary, so as soon as they saw Bai Xiaochun, they lowered their voices and averted their gazes.

There even happened to be some city guards on patrol nearby, and as soon as they saw him and realized who he was, they simply pretended to have not noticed him, and hurried away.

“Wow, I never realized people from Devil Penitentiary have such a high standing!” Although he had heard some rumors before about how people viewed Devil Penitentiary, to experience it firsthand as a prison guard was very different.

“I guess becoming a guard really was a good thing!” Clearing his throat, he began to make his way down the street, simultaneously sending a message to Zhou Yixing to come meet up. Then he began to look around for somewhere to buy vengeful souls.

Zhou Yixing actually wasn't very far away, but since flight was prohibited within the city limits, he was forced to hurry along on

foot toward Bai Xiaochun.

As Bai Xiaochun waited for Zhou Yixing to find him, he walked along and took note of several shops that sold vengeful souls. Some were large and luxurious, while others were smaller and more specialized. However, after asking around a bit, he was saddened to find that all of the shops were running very low on supply. In fact, none of them were actually selling vengeful souls, only buying them.

After checking seven or eight shops and finding that it was the same with all of them, Bai Xiaochun started to get nervous. After all, he had come out with the specific purpose of buying some souls.

“What’s going on? Why do all the shops that specialize in selling vengeful souls not even have any souls to sell?” With that, he headed to another street, where he checked in with another seven or eight shops. To his shock, he found that it was the same with all of them.

Finally, in one of the larger shops, he grabbed a salesperson by the arm and asked, “How come none of you have any souls for sale? What’s the deal?”

“How should I know?” the salesman replied with a glare. “We’re out of stock! What are you grabbing me for? What, are you gonna try to take my soul or something?”

This salesman had worked in Giant Ghost City for many years, and had come to have quite an eye for customers. He could tell by looking at Bai Xiaochun, and also from the way he asked his question, that he was a new arrival. Completely uninterested in dealing with a newcomer, the salesman gave him another glare and then prepared to rebuke him a bit more.

Irritated by the man’s attitude, Bai Xiaochun thought about how the city guards had reacted upon seeing him fly out of the moat earlier, and quickly pulled out his Devil Penitentiary prison

guard's command medallion.

“Do you have the guts to say that again?!” he asked angrily, holding the medallion right in front of the man's face.

At first, the salesperson seemed irritated, but when he realized that a Devil Penitentiary command medallion was being flashed in his face, he gasped. Scalp tingling madly, he shivered, and then plastered a huge smile onto his face.

Considering that he had been in Giant Ghost City for many years, he obviously knew that people from Devil Penitentiary were among those who should never be offended. Devil Penitentiary was a place that even ghosts and gods were afraid of. The guards there were known to be vicious fiends, not to mention the inquisitors, who were brutal and cruel to the extreme.

“Please forgive me, exalted one! The truth is that none of the shops in Giant Ghost City have souls right now. We're completely sold out....”

“Sold out?” Bai Xiaochun said with a frown, his anger beginning to fade.

“Yes, that's right. The three great clans have been hoarding souls recently, presumably because of the matter of the hell-emperor's successor.... If you have an urgent need, exalted one, we do have a few random souls here at the shop, just not very many.” Claspng hands nervously, the salesman hurried behind the counter and into the back of the shop to gather a few of the random souls that were available. Clearly, he didn't want to offend this person from Devil Penitentiary, and just wanted him to be on his way as quickly as possible.

“How domineering!” Bai Xiaochun thought. “I can't believe they bought all the souls just because of some hell-emperor successor thing.” Never could he have imagined that the as-yet distant matter of the hell-emperor's successor would already start to negatively influence him.

Considering that flame conjuring would require more and more souls, the fact that Giant Ghost City was almost completely sold out could make things very troublesome.

“What am I supposed to do now? The three great clans are way out of line here! I guess I should have cleaned out the Bai Clan even more than I did.” Sighing, he realized he had to rest all of his hopes on Zhou Yixing, and whatever vengeful souls he had managed to get his hands on with the information Bai Xiaochun had sent him from the interrogated prisoners.

Even as Bai Xiaochun was pondering the situation, the salesman returned from the back of the shop with a soulhoarding pagoda in hand. Bowing and scraping, he said, “Exalted one, here are about 100,000 souls. It's really everything we have left.”

Bai Xiaochun scanned the soulhoarding pagoda, and confirmed that it contained far from the amount he was looking for. However, it was better than nothing. Nodding his head, he was just about to pay for the souls when a bored-sounding voice echoed out from the entrance of the shop.

“I'll take those souls.” Two young men strolled into the shop, dressed in expensive clothing that seemed to be woven from spirit silk. Their robes glittered like magical treasures, and if one looked closely enough, it would be possible to see designs on them indicating that they had received sevenfold spirit enhancements.

In the Wildlands, spirit enhancements were more common, but the success rates were the same as back in the lands of Heavenspan. The higher the level of the spirit enhancement, the more likely it was that it would fail.

A failure would lead to the complete destruction of the item and the ingredients, and that meant that any item which had numerous spirit enhancements represented heaven-defying good luck.

Both of the young men were in the great circle of Foundation

Establishment, and from their magical clothing, it was easy to tell that they were no ordinary cultivators. They were flanked by eight middle-aged soul cultivators, most of whom were in Foundation Establishment. However, two of them clearly had Core Formation cultivation bases!

Considering that the entire group of eight carried themselves like servants, it made the two young men stand out in even more grand fashion.

Bai Xiaochun eyed the clothing on the two young men, and could hear the stifled gasps coming from the other people in the shop. A look appeared on the salesman's face that seemed even more polite than the look he had given Bai Xiaochun earlier. Rushing over, he said, "Well met, Prince Chen, Prince Cai."

"Give me those souls," said one of the young men, the one whom the salesman had addressed as Prince Cai. Although the young man had spoken in a relatively calm voice, from the look in his eye, he clearly viewed himself to be vastly superior to Bai Xiaochun. One of his servants immediately stepped forward with a bag of holding to take the soulhoarding pagoda.

Of course, there was no way Bai Xiaochun would simply agree to that.

"Slow down, there," he said angrily. "I'm buying those souls!"

The two young men looked at him coldly, and could quickly see that he had a Core Formation cultivation base. However, they didn't seem to care about that, nor did they notice that he was Bai Hao from the Bai Clan.

"We'll pay double," Prince Cai said. With that, he and Prince Chen simply turned and walked out, clearly bored.

Bai Xiaochun was already feeling quite humiliated, especially considering that the salesman had just glanced at him out of the corner of his eye, clearly delighted to be able to watch this scene

play out. Anger rising, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward and loudly declared, “I’ll pay triple!”

Outside, Prince Cai didn’t even turn around before replying, “I’ll pay ten times the original price!”

These two young men were direct bloodline clan members of the Chen and Cai Clan, and were responsible for coming to clear out the souls of the various shops in Giant Ghost City. Although 100,000 wasn’t a very large number when it came to souls, their clan elders’ instructions had been very clear. They had to get as many souls as possible!

Bai Xiaochun was getting angrier. To him, it felt as if someone had slapped him across the face with a pile of money! Just when he was about to continue speaking, his transmission jade slip in his bag of holding began to vibrate. After scanning it with some divine sense, he heard an anxious message from Zhou Yixing.

“Milord, I’m just east of the teleportation portal! Someone’s trying to kill me and steal all the souls I got for you. Help!!!”

Chapter 632: Once The Heavens Change

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the message, his eyes turned even more bloodshot than before. If Zhou Yixing had merely been involved in a deadly fight, it would have been more acceptable, but to hear that someone was trying to steal his souls was a different matter....

Right now, Bai Xiaochun wanted souls more than just about everything else. And considering that none of the shops in the city had any souls to spare, Zhou Yixing was his last hope.

“I only need to practice five more times and I’ll be able to conjure fourteen-colored flame. As of this moment, anyone who tries to steal souls from me is my enemy!” Enraged, and having no time to argue with the two crown princes, he rushed out and headed in the direction of the teleportation portal.

As soon as he was out in the open, he flew up into the air and hung his Devil Penitentiary command medallion around his neck. Although flying was prohibited in the city, when the patrolling city guards saw his medallion and realized who he was, they simply pretended not to notice him.

He was already relatively close to the teleportation portal, so coupled with the fact that he was flying, it only took him a few breaths of time to reach his destination.

As he rumbled through the air in a beam of light, he attracted quite a bit of attention. Even before he landed, he could see Zhou Yixing to the east of the teleportation portal, a look of desperation on his face as he struggled with a group of a dozen or so cultivators. One of the cultivators in that group... was the very same chief of the Bai Clan whom Bai Xiaochun had captured when fleeing the clan!

Madam Cai was also there, accompanied by a contingent of followers, most of whom were members of the Bai Clan. There

were two other soul cultivators present who, based on their clothing, were obviously from two of the other great clans.

As Bai Xiaochun closed in, the clan chief thrust his hand out, causing a black wind to swirl around Zhou Yixing, locking him in place and making it impossible for him to flee.

Seeing Zhou Yixing in such danger, Bai Xiaochun roared, “How dare you, Bai Clan lowlife!!”

As his voice echoed out like heavenly thunder, the group from the Bai Clan turned to see who was approaching. When Madam Cai recognized who it was, she shrieked, “Bai Hao!”

Bai Hao’s father, the clan chief, looked up and began to tremble. As thoughts flashed through his mind regarding how he had been kidnapped, he gritted his teeth and growled, “Bai Hao!!”

The other members of the Bai Clan were all shocked, and were immediately reminded of all the humiliation which had been heaped onto their heads because of Bai Hao.

“It’s Bai Hao!!”

“The patriarch wasn’t able to kill him back then, and he ended up getting taken away by the giant ghost king....”

Zhou Yixing was on the verge of tears, his heart gripped by a sensation of imminent crisis. “Help me, milord....”

The clan chief’s eyes burned with rage; a later investigation regarding the murdersoul spikes had led him to Zhou Yixing, and he quickly realized that he was working with Bai Xiaochun. Therefore, after laying eyes on him during this visit to the city, he had immediately attempted to kidnap him.

However, now that Bai Xiaochun had appeared, the clan chief changed his plan. Instead of trying to kidnap Zhou Yixing, he would try to kill him! Snorting coldly, he reached out and made a grasping motion in Zhou Yixing’s direction, causing the black wind to transform into a wind blade.

“We might not be able to touch you because of your status in Giant Ghost City,” he growled, “but that doesn’t mean I can’t kill your follower!!”

Hope had just appeared in front of Zhou Yixing, only to be replaced by the black wind blade, which now slashed down toward him, filling his heart with despair. Although all of these things take some time to describe, they happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Seeing what was happening, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes narrowed, and he burst forward with greater speed than ever!

He wasn’t using the Mountain Shaking Bash, he was using... the Undying Hex!!

Anyone observing him would see him become a blur, while to him, his surroundings suddenly slowed down. Then he vanished. Meanwhile, the wind blade was slashing down toward Zhou Yixing, and he was wailing miserably. But then a screaming sound could be heard as Bai Xiaochun suddenly appeared right in front of Zhou Yixing.

There, he reached out and smacked the wind blade.

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

The wind blade shattered into countless pieces which spun out in all directions. At the same time, the Bai Clan cultivators all stepped back.

Pupils constricting, the clan chief took a step forward, performing an incantation gesture with his right hand as he said, “Feeling suicidal, Bai Hao?!”

Instantly, the wails of ghosts and wolves could be heard as he used his distinctive Bai Clan secret magic, causing his divine sense to transform into countless shadow ghosts that pounced toward Bai Xiaochun.

“I beat you once before, are you really crazy enough to try

again?!” Bai Xiaochun shot backward, slamming into the shocked Zhou Yixing to send him tumbling away.

Then, Bai Xiaochun glared at the clan chief as several afterimages appeared, which were none other than his four clones. Even as they appeared out in the open, they simultaneously unleashed a fist strike onto the clan chief!

A huge boom rolled out to fill nearly half of Giant Ghost City. Instantly, numerous beams of light began to shoot in their direction.

“Magical combat is prohibited in Giant Ghost City. Stay your hands immediately!”

“Stop right there!” Voices rang out from the huge giant ghost statue in the middle of the city, as well as streams of shocking divine sense.

Simultaneously, Bai Xiaochun and his clones slammed into the clan chief, after which all of them staggered backward. As for the clan chief, blood was oozing out of his mouth, and he was panting as he glared angrily at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was also backing up, but wasn't hurt. It was even as he pondered the advantages and disadvantages of fighting the Bai Clan inside of Giant Ghost City that the voices and divine sense of the city guards appeared, much to his relief.

Without any hesitation, Bai Xiaochun shouted, “How dare you ambush someone from Devil Penitentiary, old man Bai! This is Giant Ghost City, not your Bai Clan! Brothers from the city guard, I'm Bai Hao from Devil Penitentiary. These people are violating local law. Not only are they ganging up on me, they're intentionally disrespecting Giant Ghost City!” With that, he grabbed Zhou Yixing and prepared to leave.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun was getting away, Madam Cai completely ignored the city guards and shrieked, “Bai Clan

cultivators, kill him immediately!!”

The venom in Madam Cai’s eyes couldn’t have been more evident. Her hatred for Bai Xiaochun had reached unimaginable heights. However, the other members of the Bai Clan hesitated, fully conscious of the razor-sharp gazes of the city guards.

Seeing that the Bai Clan cultivators weren’t giving chase, Madam Cai screamed, “Get moving, all of you! Kill him!!”

Then she turned to the nearby Cai Clan cultivator, and was about to say something, when the Bai Clan chief growled, “Shut up!”

It was a mere growl, but it echoed like thunder, causing Madam Cai to shake visibly as she turned to stare at her husband.

Expression very grim, he said, “King Giant Ghost bequeathed that scum with a title. If the deva patriarch had to give him up, then what do you think we can do? Besides, killing is prohibited within the city limits....”

Madam Cai didn’t seem inclined to agree, but had no choice. However, the rage in her heart was so intense that she was shaking violently.

As for the city guards, when they saw that the Bai Clan was standing down, and that Bai Xiaochun was already leaving, they looked around vigilantly for a bit, then left.

Before long, the street had calmed down. The Bai Clan cultivators exchanged awkward glances, and Madam Cai was gnashing her teeth.

Glancing grimly at the fleeing Bai Xiaochun, the clan chief turned to Madam Cai and quietly said, “Just wait a bit longer. Once the heavens change, we’ll have our chance.”

Madam Cai was taken aback, but quickly realized what the clan chief was talking about....

Chapter 633: Two Birds, One Stone

Bai Xiaochun took Zhou Yixing with him as he left the area of the teleportation portal. After checking to make sure they weren't being followed, they stopped in a random alley to catch their breath. Then Bai Xiaochun finally took a moment to think about how the three great clans had been buying so many souls that he was left with almost nothing to buy. In fact, they had even gone so far as to offer ten times the normal price for some souls just now.

“Complete bullies. Well... Bai Xiaochun is the type of person who knows how to be flexible. I'll just have to sit back and hold tight!” Considering how terrifying the Bai Clan patriarch was, and the fact that he was temporarily stuck in the Wildlands, he realized that he had no other choice.

It was at this point that Zhou Yixing, aware he had just escaped a disaster, clasped hands and said, “Many thanks, milord. If you had come even a moment later, I... I probably would never have been able to see you again.”

“Sorry to have dragged you into it,” Bai Xiaochun said. “Oh, right. Did you get your hands on all the loot I messaged you about?”

“All of it!” Zhou Yixing replied. But then he grimaced. “Unfortunately... those people from the three great clans... they robbed me clean....”

“What!?” Bai Xiaochun said, eyes widening.

Bai Xiaochun was so angry he felt like exploding. “Complete and utter bullies!” he thought. “Bai Xiaochun is the type of person who knows how to be flexible, but this time, I can't just sit around and do nothing! This is ridiculous! You big bullies! You're obviously just trying to take advantage of how honest I am!! The Bai Clan, Cai Clan, and Chen Clan are all full of scoundrels!!”

The more he thought about it, the more angry and humiliated he got. After all, he hadn't robbed anything from the three great clans, and yet they had gone and robbed him! Well... he had robbed the Bai Clan to some extent, but that didn't give the Cai Clan and the Chen Clan the right to do the same.

Zhou Yixing was a bit taken aback at how angry Bai Xiaochun was getting. In recent days, he had often had certain suspicions about what exactly was going on. However, he had never been willing to put too much thought into the matter.

“It doesn't really matter who this Bai Hao really is....” he told himself, ducking his head.

Anger burning, Bai Xiaochun muttered, “I'm not going to sit around and do nothing!”

Then he gritted his teeth and paced back and forth in thought for a moment. Finally, his eyes began to shine as he thought back to the soulgrounds in the Bai Clan. The so-called soulgrounds were specially-constructed areas filled with auras of death. Such locations were even more well-suited to keeping souls fresh than soulhoarding pagodas. In fact, not only did they keep souls fresh, but they could slowly improve their quality.

All-in-all, with the exception of a few special types of soulhoarding pagodas, there was nothing that could compare to a soulground. Furthermore, soulgrounds could hold more souls overall.

Obviously, it was natural for great clans to have more soulgrounds than average, and from what Bai Xiaochun could remember, the Bai Clan had possessed something like seven or eight. They were all protected by spell formations and guarded by soul cultivators. In fact, they usually contained something called soul sentries, which were special souls that had been transformed into guards. Because of all that, soulgrounds were very difficult places to get into.

Furthermore, even if someone got inside, the vast numbers of souls would usually consume anyone unfamiliar. Besides, stealing souls from soulgrounds would be provoking the three great clans, and no one would ever dare to do something like that.

“They stole my souls, so therefore, I’m going to steal theirs!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth and sent Zhou Yixing away with orders to find a place to hole up and keep his head down. Then he headed out of the city. Because he was a guard at Devil Penitentiary, he was allowed to temporarily leave the city if he wished. If he tried to flee completely, he would be brought back, but as long as he didn’t do that, he had a relative measure of freedom.

It was evening by the time he was outside the city, whereupon he carefully headed toward the Chen Clan. Upon arrival, he was able to spot their soulgrounds near the clan itself. However, the area was so rife with souls that he realized that the risk of being spotted was too high. After some thought, he decided it was too dangerous.

“I’ll go check out the other two clans....” Taking advantage of the darkness of night, he headed to the Bai Clan. However, an inspection of their soulgrounds revealed the sad truth that the Bai Clan actually didn’t have many souls stored up.

“If I rob them, they would realize it almost instantly. Besides, I want a lot of souls!” With that, he headed toward the Cai Clan.

It was deep into the night by the time he arrived near the Cai Clan’s soulgrounds. There, his eyes began to shine brightly.

The Cai Clan’s soulgrounds were different than the Chen Clan’s. Instead of being set up near the ancestral mansions, they were scattered around rather haphazardly. Some of them were very close to the residences, but others were many kilometers away. Bai Xiaochun even found two that were fully twenty kilometers away from any of the other buildings.

The two soulgrounds were both under the protection of a single

spell formation, which glowed with bright light despite the darkness of the night. Based on the fluctuations of the spell formation, even a Nascent Soul cultivator would have a hard time breaking through it.

Furthermore, disturbing the spell formation in any way would alert the Cai Clan.

Inside the spell formation was a building that looked like a huge beehive, covered with countless holes that the souls could fly into and out of. The mere sight of how many souls were present caused Bai Xiaochun to gasp.

Furthermore, some of the souls were at the Nascent Soul level, and there were also some unique and special souls mixed in.... In addition, there were over 10,000 black-armored soul sentries, whose eyes glowed with bright light. The soul sentries were clearly waiting for any unrecognized person to enter the spell formation, whereupon they would attack with deadly force.

Also located within each of the soulgrounds were buildings occupied by Cai Clan soul cultivators. There were only a dozen or so, and they didn't have very high cultivation bases, but considering that they had the power of the spell formation at their disposal, if anything happened, all they would have to do would be to hold out for a short time before reinforcements from the clan arrived.

Because these two soulgrounds were so close to each other, all of the clan guards had gathered in one of them.

Because of how everything was set up, the soulgrounds of the three great clans were the type of things that outsiders might be able to look at, but would never dare to mess with. However, Bai Xiaochun was different.... As soon as he was able to study the situation, his eyes began to shine.

“You rob me, I rob you right back! Measly soulgrounds. Other people might think it impossible to do anything to them, but for

me, it's going to be simple.... With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun, will reduce them to ashes....” After making some calculations, he took a step forward and instantly pierced through the air. Completely ignoring the defensive spell formation, and not even attracting its attention, he appeared in the middle of the soulground!

It happened so quickly that the Cai Clan guards didn't have time to react, and as for the patrolling soul sentries, they simply gaped in shock.

The clan guards' eyes went wide, and they stared at Bai Xiaochun for a moment before one of them said, “You--”

However, before anything else could happen, Bai Xiaochun unleashed a fist strike!

A huge boom rang out as an attack blasted into the Cai Clan cultivators, sending them tumbling backward, blood spraying out of their mouths before they simply lapsed into unconsciousness.

By this point, the soul sentries began to react, letting out piercing screams as they shot toward Bai Xiaochun. However, that was when he stamped his foot down onto the ground, causing ripples to spread out like they would on the surface of a pond when a rock hit it. In reaction, the floating, beehive-like building erupted with screaming sounds as a tide of souls surged out.

Bai Xiaochun's heart was already pounding at the sight of so many souls. Excited, he didn't hesitate for a moment to toss out a Soul Convergence Pill.

“I need speed.... A blitzkrieg strategy!”

Rumbling sounds could be heard as he tossed out more Soul Convergence Pills, creating black holes which instantly sucked in the countless screaming souls, then transformed them into soul spheres.

“This is awesome!! What a goldmine!!” In his excitement, he

looked over at the second soulground, and decided that he might as well kill two birds with one stone. After collecting all of his soul spheres, he flashed into motion, appearing in the second soulground, where a similar scene to what had just occurred played out.

Chapter 634: Recognizing Me Wont Do You Any Good!

Not even the soul sentries could escape. In less time than it takes half an incense stick to burn, two soulgrounds were wiped completely clean of all souls....

Bai Xiaochun was extremely pleased with the number of soul spheres he had ended up with, which was enough to keep him going, at least temporarily.

However, in the moment in which he sucked up the last of the souls, he apparently triggered something in the spell formation, which sent a shining pillar of light up into the sky. Obviously, it was something that the Cai Clan would quickly notice!

“Dammit! Does emptying the soulgrounds set off the spell formation?” Bai Xiaochun thought, his face falling. The bright light of the spell formation was instantly noticed by people in the Cai Clan, who began to utter exclamations of shock as they flew up into the air.

“What’s going on!?!?”

“Is that... is that coming from the soulgrounds!?”

“What’s happened? It looks like a soulground spell formation is flaring up. No wait, two soulgrounds!” Even the Cai Clan patriarch flew out and hurried in the direction of the soulgrounds.

Jittery with fear, Bai Xiaochun prepared to leave, but then stopped in place.

“Soul Convergence Pills leave evidence behind. If people look into it too closely, they might guess who I really am.... I need to get rid of the evidence. Even if they see me, it won't matter as long as my true identity isn't revealed.” He quickly pulled out a twelve-colored flame that he had conjured earlier in preparation for another attempt at thirteen-colored flame. Instantly, one of his

clones stepped out, and furthered the conjuring process!

Considering how well-practiced he was, and that his clone was helping, everything went very quickly.

However, conjuring flame wasn't his true goal. Just when the thirteenth color was about to appear, the flame destabilized, thanks to his clone. Then, the fire exploded!

Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as bright red clouds appeared overhead. Then, numerous bolts of thirteen-colored flame appeared and began to fall from the sky....

Incomparably intense heat filled heaven and earth, and the two soulgrounds were instantly incinerated.

In fact, not only was the evidence of the Soul Convergence Pills removed, but the spell formations were also destabilized, and began to collapse. Of course, Bai Xiaochun wasn't the type to kill indiscriminately, so he made sure to throw the unconscious Cai Clan cultivators off to a safe location.

Even as the flames spread, Bai Xiaochun transformed into a beam of light that shot away at high speed, filled with the thrill of having robbed the souls he needed and then destroyed the evidence.

“Who told you to go rob my souls? Hmmmphh!” His heart was pounding with the realization that he had just done something big....

However, now was not the time to ponder the situation. Even as he began to speed away, an enraged roar erupted out.

“How dare you meddle with our Cai Clan soulgrounds? Do you have a death wish?!?!” Eight figures appeared out in the open, and began to move with lightning-like speed. One of them was a young man who appeared to be less than thirty years of age, but who had a full head of silver hair, and radiated the aura of the great circle of Core Formation.

There was even a bit of a Nascent Soul feel to him, as though he

were so close to the Nascent Soul stage that all he had to do was go into secluded meditation and spend a bit of time, and he would succeed!

In terms of speed, he was already similar to a Nascent Soul cultivator, and as he bore down on Bai Xiaochun, a look of fury could be seen in his eyes. As for the seven cultivators behind him, they were all Core Formation experts, and their faces all shone with rage when they saw the burnt, scorched soulgrounds.

“Are you looking to die?!?!” When they saw Bai Xiaochun fleeing off into the distance, their killing intent erupted with full power.

They were just the first wave to appear. Next were the Nascent Soul clan elders.

Bai Xiaochun was startled at how quickly the Cai Clan reacted, and knew that if he got involved in a protracted fight, he would likely end up with serious injuries. Therefore, he fled at top speed.

Considering the speed he was capable of, he was instantly able to put a huge distance between himself and his pursuers. Then, he simply vanished.

When the silver-haired chosen saw that Bai Xiaochun was about to make his escape, his killing intent grew even stronger. Without the slightest hesitation, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a beast hide, which he threw out in front of him. The beast hide instantly ignited, and as it burned up, the air behind the young man rippled as a shadowy beast appeared.

It was an enormous, two-headed vulture, with a wingspan of several hundred meters. As soon as it appeared, it threw its head back and let loose a piercing cry before flapping its wings and taking to flight. At the same time, the Cai Clan chosen leapt onto its back. Shockingly, the young man was using some unknown technique to follow the evidence of Bai Xiaochun's passage and track him down.

Bai Xiaochun staggered out into the open roughly five kilometers away. Not pausing for even a moment, he headed at top speed toward Giant Ghost City.

“Gotta speed up. If anyone from the Cai Clan catches me, I’ll be in great danger....” By now, the high he had felt from snatching all the souls was gone, and he was now starting to feel anxiety and fear.

“They forced me to do it....” he thought, wiping the sweat from his brow. As he rocketed through the air in a beam of light, Giant Ghost City got closer and closer. Within a few breaths of time, he would be there! However, that was when an intense whistling sound filled the air, and a blast of wild wind rose up. It was the type of wind that was capable of exterminating the life of anything it touched, and it instantly pierced Bai Xiaochun to the core.

Shivering, he looked over his shoulder, whereupon his eyes went wide at the sight of the enormous two-headed vulture shooting toward him.

On the vulture's back was the young man, his face a mask of fury, and a long, black spear held in his right hand.

“Impertinent thief! How dare you meddle with our Cai Clan soulgrounds! I'm going to kill you in body and soul!!” Then the vulture accelerated as the young man drew on the full power of his cultivation base to shoot toward Bai Xiaochun, spear outstretched.

Bai Xiaochun simply couldn't react to the incredible speed of the vulture. In the blink of an eye, it was right on top of him, and the black spear in the hand of the Cai Clan chosen was stabbing toward him!

Bai Xiaochun's face fell as he let out a shout and threw his hands out to defend himself.

BAAAAAAAANG!

Bai Xiaochun flew backward by several hundred meters. When

he came to a stop, he examined himself, and then murmured, "I'm not hurt?"

The young man's attack moments ago had seemed incredible, and Bai Xiaochun had assumed that he would be badly hurt. However, to his surprise, he was completely unscathed.

"Fudge!" he exclaimed in delight. "That vulture is super powerful, but compared to me, it's totally weak.... I guess it was just its speed that caught me unprepared."

The young man on the vulture gasped in shock as he looked at Bai Xiaochun. His vulture was capable of speed rivaling the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. Plus, he had been powering his spear with his cultivation base, which meant that he should have been able to seriously injure even someone in the Nascent Soul stage. But this thief ended up unharmed.... Completely shaken, the young man looked more closely at Bai Xiaochun's face, which caused his eyes to widen.

"You're... you're Bai Hao!!"

Because of how he had rebelled against the Bai Clan, Bai Hao's face was very well known in the area. Although not everyone would recognize him, not even many of the silkpants cultivators of the three great clans, the elite chosen had all seen his picture. Because of the urgency of the situation earlier, this young man hadn't paid any attention to the person he was dealing with, but now that he took a closer look, he recognized him easily.

Instantly, nervousness gripped his heart; he knew that Bai Hao was a vicious fiend who had captured the chief of the Bai Clan, who was a mid Nascent Soul stage expert. He had even provoked the Bai Clan's deva patriarch into action. Obviously, he was not the type of person to go around offending.

"Recognize me?" Bai Xiaochun shouted. "Well recognizing me won't do you any good!"

Shoving his hand out, he sent a blast of wind toward the Cai Clan chosen.

Chapter 635: How Do You Deal With Me?

Bai Xiaochun's true self and his four clones unleashed a storm of magical techniques that covered everything in the area. A tempest of five parts raged around the Cai Clan chosen, converging upon him with deadly power.

The young chosen's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. His aura teetered unstably, and he already regretted how impulsive he had been in giving chase. However, there was no time for thought or planning at the moment. All he could do was turn his vulture around and try to get away as quickly as possible.

Thankfully for him, the vulture was incredibly quick. By the time the storm of magical techniques reached the spot that he had just occupied, he was several hundred meters away. Despite having made it to safety, his heart was still pounding with shock.

Trying to buy time for others from his clan to arrive, he shouted, "The Cai Clan didn't do anything to provoke you, Bai Hao! Why did you have to go and destroy our soulgrounds!?"

Bai Xiaochun frowned. He could tell that this vulture had been conjured by some magical technique, and that it would soon vanish. However, time was something he was very short on right now.

"You Cai Clan people intimidated me and stole my souls!" he shouted. "Hmph! It's only natural that I would rob you right back!" Aware that now wasn't the time to worry about one insignificant opponent, Bai Xiaochun turned and shot away at top speed.

The chosen gritted his teeth, then sent his vulture in pursuit. At the moment, he was operating under the assumption that as long as he didn't get too close, he should be safe. Plus, he would be able to keep eyes on the target and make it easier for the Cai Clan patriarch to track him down.

They both sped along as fast as lightning. Bai Xiaochun felt a bit nervous at being followed, but he knew that the vulture was simply too fast. If he turned and tried to fight, his opponent could simply flee, and then he would end up getting involved in a pointless, time-wasting chase.

“I hate bastards like this who rely on speed to get the upper hand. Hmmmphh! Does he really think he can use that bird to keep up with me?” His eyes flashed with cold light, but his face remained expressionless. Continuing to head straight toward Giant Ghost City, he sent out the aura of a Frigid Paragon, although he did it very carefully, so that it wasn’t obvious.

When the intense cold reached the vulture, the Cai Clan chosen shivered. A moment later, his face fell as he realized he should fall back. However, by that point there wasn’t enough time. Bai Xiaochun spun around and said, “Too late!”

With his Frigid Paragon aura spread out in a frigid domain, Bai Xiaochun could teleport as easily as a Nascent Soul cultivator.

Even as his voice echoed out, he vanished, reappearing right on top of the vulture, in front of the Cai Clan chosen. There, he unleashed the Mountain Shaking Bash, launching himself toward the young chosen with terrifying power.

“You--” Having no time to evade, the young man braced himself for impact. His cultivation base was on the very cusp of reaching the Nascent Soul stage, and yet, compared to Bai Xiaochun, he was weak.

A boom rang out as Bai Xiaochun slammed into the young man’s chest, causing blood to erupt out of his mouth. His bones shattered, and he began to slip into death, but it was at that point that a dark yellow light sprang up from a pendant that hung at his neck. Within that light was the power of a deva, which fought back against the attack.

The young chosen coughed up a mouthful of blood as he tumbled

backward through the air like a kite with its string cut. The yellow light around him was more than half gone, and his pendant was now covered with cracks.

Clearly, the deva pendant had saved his life. However, if he sustained another such attack, he would not be so lucky. Face ashen and filled with terror, he thought, “Without that life-saving magic the patriarch gave me... I would have been killed just now!! This Bai Hao, he... he almost killed me!!”

The young man was shaking physically, and his courage was gone. Without the slightest hesitation, he fled, completely bereft of any desire to give chase. He now realized that chasing this target was no simple matter; it was risking his life....

“The people from these great clans really have a lot of ways to save their own skins,” Bai Xiaochun thought with a frown. Seeing the young chosen fleeing, he snorted and considered chasing after him. But then, his expression flickered, and he spun and took a step, piercing into the air and vanishing.

Only a few breaths of time later, three beams of light could be seen approaching from behind the terrified Cai Clan chosen. Rumbling sounds could be heard as three old men appeared in the area where Bai Xiaochun had just disappeared.

As soon as the young chosen saw the old men, his face lit up with excitement, and he shouted, “Elders, the thief is Bai Hao! The traitor of the Bai Clan!!”

These three old men were clan elders, with one of them being a grand elder in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. All of them had very grim expressions as they heard the news from the chosen. Afterward, they nodded and continued to give chase.

Meanwhile, a rift appeared at a location near Giant Ghost City, and Bai Xiaochun stepped out into the open. His aura was in chaos because of the anxiety he was feeling, but it was without hesitation that he shot toward Giant Ghost City.

“Dammit, those Cai Clan people are fast. I just finished beating the kid, and the grownups showed up almost in the same instant. If they were really good though, they’d fight me one on one!”

Just as he was about to enter the city, the three elders from the Cai Clan appeared behind him, moving so quickly that the clouds swirled up above in the sky, and thunderous rumblings filled the air.

When they realized that Bai Xiaochun was about to enter the city, they pushed forward with greater speed, the killing intent in their eyes shining brightly.

“Bai Hao!” one of them shouted. “I don’t care that you have an official position in Giant Ghost City! For robbing our Cai Clan soulgrounds, I’m going to put you to death!!”

His cultivation base was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, causing his words to roll out like a shockwave, a powerful attack that instantly pierced into Bai Xiaochun’s ears.

Too frightened to even look over his shoulder, Bai Xiaochun raced toward the city. The stunned city guards were about to step forward to block his path when he pulled out his Devil Penitentiary command medallion and then roared, “I’m a guard at Devil Penitentiary! The Cai Clan is planning a rebellion! Stop them!!”

As his words echoed out into Giant Ghost City, the expressions on the faces of the city guards flickered dramatically.

Furthermore, as soon as they saw Bai Xiaochun’s command medallion, and the fact that he was being chased by people from the Cai Clan, they were even more stirred into action. As for the three elders, their expressions also flickered.

“That’s complete bullcrap!!”

“The Cai Clan has always served the giant ghost king with complete loyalty. Don’t even think of trying to slander us!!”

Bai Xiaochun was elated to see that his tactic was working.

Roaring, he pushed forward into the city. The three clan elders tried to chase after him, but the city guards interfered, and soon, more patrolling guards showed up. Were it not for Bai Xiaochun's slanderous comments earlier, the elders might have tried to kill him anyway. But if they did that now, it could lead to further complications, the mere thought of which left them terrified.

The three elders were forced to swallow their frustration and anger and try to explain things to the city guards. Because of that delay, Bai Xiaochun managed to reach the moat, then used his command medallion to dive down into the waters.

"I betrayed the entire Bai Clan, and yet, they didn't dare to try to make a move on me once I was in Devil Penitentiary. As for this Cai Clan... all I did was loot two of their soulgrounds. There's no way they'll dare to come after me!" Feeling very pleased with himself, he headed toward the stone turtle at the bottom of the moat and beyond it, Devil Penitentiary.

The truth was that his supposition was absolutely correct. After clearing matters up with the city guards, the three elders from the Cai Clan had no choice but to stand at the edge of the moat and look furiously into the waters. Devil Penitentiary... was a place none of them dared to try to enter uninvited.

After a long moment passed, all they could do was stalk away with grim expressions on their faces.

Although matters seemed to have come to an end, the events which had just played out ended up being just as shocking news in the city as Bai Xiaochun's betrayal of the Bai Clan. Soon, all of the soul cultivators had heard about what happened, and were talking about Bai Hao and the Cai Clan....

"Did you hear? That Bai Hao caused a big scene. He robbed some of the Cai Clan's soulgrounds, and even burned two of them to the ground!"

"He really knows how to cause trouble. Not only did he turn

traitor against the Bai Clan, he also went and provoked the Cai Clan....”

“I heard that some silkpants from the Cai Clan got into an argument with him over some souls, and ended up outbidding him. He got pissed off, and that’s what led to the situation....”

“I can’t believe he went to such lengths over such a small matter.... Not only is Bai Hao completely vicious and cruel, but he seeks revenge over the smallest grievance. I heard he has some amazing divine ability that calls down fire from the heavens....”

Because of all the talk that was spreading, Bai Hao’s reputation grew, and everyone came to learn about his heavenly fire, and his vicious methods.

Chapter 636: Fourteen-Colored Flame: Success!

Now that Bai Xiaochun was back in Devil Penitentiary, it didn't matter what was happening outside. He quickly returned to his quarters, and after waiting a few days to make sure there were no repercussions from the recent events, he finally breathed a sigh of relief.

“Turns out being a prison guard is very useful. Although the best thing for now would be to avoid any attention. I won't go out unless absolutely necessary.” Patting his bag of holding excitedly, he couldn't help but muse that his plan had been very brilliantly executed. “The three great clans rob me, I rob them back! As the old saying goes, proper behavior is based on reciprocity! It's a basic principle of heaven and earth!”

In the days which followed, he went on patrol with Squad 9 and continued to work on the formula for fourteen-colored flame. Time passed. One day, he finally went back into the cellblock alone.

Cellblock D was usually a loud and busy place. Whenever the guards weren't present, the gray-robed prisoners and the prisoners in the skulls alike would both do whatever they felt like doing.

Even when the guards were present, most of the prisoners ignored them. However, the instant Bai Xiaochun entered the cellblock, everything quieted down.

As soon as he appeared, he clasped his hands behind his back and grandly announced, “I'm on duty today, so you'd all best behave.”

His words caused the gray-robed prisoners to tremble in terror. Many of the prisoners in the skull cells raised their eyebrows in fear.

“Dark inquisitor!!”

“It’s that damned Dark Inquisitor Bai!”

“This guy is vicious and merciless. I’ll never forget the tragic day he interrogated Old Devil Zhou....”

As for the prisoners who had actually been interrogated by Bai Xiaochun at some point in the past, they trembled visibly, and their eyes shone with terror.

All of Cellblock D went silent, and as Bai Xiaochun passed by, not a single person made the slightest sound. After all, he had become very famous recently. Not a single one of the long-time prisoners in Cellblock D had escaped interrogation at his hands.

Most terrifying of all was how mysterious his interrogation methods were. Because of the smoke he used, no one could see clearly what went on. However, people could most definitely hear the terrified screams that emanated out from the smoke, and would never be able to forget them.

Now that Bai Xiaochun was back, the prisoners were all acting very cautiously. None of them wanted to offend him and thus cause problems for themselves. Therefore, they all smiled ingratiatingly, and a crowd of gray-robed prisoners clustered around him to accompany him.

Bai Xiaochun lifted his chin up a bit and enjoyed the awed gazes that were focused on him, musing about how no matter where he went, he always soared to the highest heights.

“I’m just too remarkable,” he thought. “Well, it’s not like that was my goal. I should really be keeping a low profile.” After a while, he waved his hand to dismiss the gray-robed prisoners, then strolled about for a while on his own. Eventually, he found himself in the remote location where he had worked on his flame conjuring before, where he sat down cross-legged.

“This place is perfect. Plenty of room to conjure flame.” Nodding in satisfaction, he set up some restrictive spells, then waved his

hand to send out a cloud of smoke. Then, he closed his eyes to meditate.

After reviewing everything he knew about fourteen-colored flame, he opened his eyes and smacked his bag of holding to summon his soulhoarding pagoda. Then, a very serious expression overtook his face as he began to work on conjuring fourteen-colored flame.

As the souls poured out into the open, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then waved his fingers. Immediately, the souls began to shoot toward his palm, where they formed a flame. It started with one color, to which he rapidly added more colors. Before long, he had a thirteen-colored flame, and was moving on to the fourteenth color.

“I’m feeling very confident in being able to succeed with fourteen-colored flame. All I need to do is make a few adjustments to handle some random issues.... I’d say I should be able to get it to work within five tries!”

Immediately, souls began to stream toward his hand, pouring into the fire.

Within moments, another color appeared, the fourteenth. But then, Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered as the flame suddenly winked out.

Frowning, he looked at his hand, and then produced another batch of vengeful souls to make another try. Nine days passed in quick succession.

During those nine days, he made four attempts, all of which were failures. However, he didn’t let that disappoint him. He had plenty of souls to work with, and each failure led him to deeper understanding. It was on his tenth day inside the cellblock that he sat there cross-legged, his eyes bloodshot and his hair in disarray, but his expression that of excitement.

“I've resolved all of the issues. This time, I should succeed at making fourteen-colored flame!

“That will put me at the peak of the terrestrial necromancer rank! If I can make fifteen-colored flame, then I'll be... a celestial necromancer!” His heart swelled with anticipation; he had been in the Wildlands for quite some time now, and understood quite a bit about necromancers. Obviously, even the great clans viewed celestial necromancers as extremely powerful and important.

Beyond that was the earthly rank, which was even more rare. They had incredibly high positions; perhaps not as high as the heavenly kings, but definitely beyond devas.

Eyes sparkling, he took a deep breath and calmed himself. Everything went very smoothly; he started with one-colored flame and worked all the way up to thirteen colors without stopping. Then, he flicked his sleeve, causing a huge group of vengeful souls to fly out. Finally, he let out a shout, and sent the thirteen-colored flame spreading out into a sea of fire.

The souls began to pour into the thirteen-colored fire, a process which took less time than it takes half an incense stick to burn. It was at that point that a fourteenth color appeared!

His heart pounded with excitement, but his hand remained very stable as he sent his divine sense out to control matters. The fourteen-colored fire slowly began to shrink down, during which time his attention was completely focused on the task at hand.

An hour later, he carefully closed his hand into a fist, causing the sea of fire to disappear inside!

Heart leaping inside of him, he slowly opened up his hand, revealing a scintillating, fourteen-colored tongue of flame!

A light shone out that seemed to surpass everything around it, accompanied by terrifying heat.

Although fourteen-colored flame wouldn't be enough to threaten

a deva, it was powerful enough to destroy most types of Nascent Soul cultivators!

“It worked! I finally did it!” He laughed out loud with joy. “Next up is fifteen-colored flame. That’s definitely going to be very hard. But if I get it to work, then I’ll be a celestial necromancer. Although, fire like that won’t do me much good unless I increase my battle prowess first....” Suppressing his excitement, he put the fourteen-colored flame away, and then counted how many souls he had left.

“If I perform fourteenfold spirit enhancements on all of the things I possess... then even though I’m not at the Nascent Soul level yet, my battle prowess would still be very high.” The mere thought of that got him excited. After all, he had always been very focused on equipping himself to the max.

Without the slightest hesitation, he decided that he should perform a spirit enhancement. However, before he could even pull out his turtle-wok, he suddenly thought of something. “Wait, there are too many eyes here... even with my mist to conceal myself, I should really be as careful as possible. My wok is a true treasure, and I can’t let anyone see it. Low profile. Low profile! I have to be careful out here in the Wildlands. I can’t make a big scene!”

With that, he waved his hand, dispelling the mist and transforming into a beam of light that shot back toward the entrance of the cellblock.

As he was leaving, there happened to be an old man sitting cross-legged in one of the skull cells off some distance away. He had a red birthmark on his face, and appeared to be like the other prisoners in every aspect. However, as Bai Xiaochun left, he looked up, and a mysterious gleam could be seen in his eyes.

“It wasn’t that long ago that he succeeded with thirteen-colored flame,” he murmured to himself, “and now he can actually conjure fourteen-colored flame.... This kid is quite interesting.” Because

Bai Xiaochun had been working in a relatively remote corner, and had set up restrictive spells and his obscuring mist, no one noticed that he had conjured fourteen-colored flame. No one except for this old man.

Moments later, the old man closed his eyes.

Chapter 637: Fully Equipped With Treasures

After leaving Cellblock D, Bai Xiaochun ran into some soul cultivators from Squad 9, and took some time to chat with them. Later, he ended up back in his quarters.

“It'll still be a while before Squad 9 is back on patrol duty. I should take advantage of the time to perform spirit enhancements on everything I can.” Bai Xiaochun could actually visualize the amazing sight of himself, adorned head to toe with items that had fourteenfold spirit enhancements. He would shine like a magical treasure!

He even laughed proudly for a bit before setting up some spell formations and taking other precautions to ensure his privacy. Next he used the vast numbers of vengeful souls in his soulhoarding pagoda to produce more tongues of fourteen-colored flame. Finally, he pulled out his turtle-wok and set to work performing some spirit enhancements.

The first thing he enhanced was the Eternal Parasol. Upon receiving its fourteenth spirit enhancement, it changed appearance again. The ghost face on the surface of the parasol now had an enigmatic expression that seemed to be laughing and crying at the same time. Furthermore, on the ghost face's forehead was a long mark that contained, not a third eye, but another ghost face. The mere sight of it left Bai Xiaochun completely shaken.

“The next step will be a fifteenfold spirit enhancement. That will create a magical item at the deva level.” Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone brightly, and he licked his lips. He knew that once an item received a fifteenfold spirit enhancement, it would emanate a deva-like aura. Items like that were rare even in the Wildlands.

After all, despite how much multi-colored flame existed in the Wildlands, the chances of success when performing spirit enhancements were the same. Because of that, it was more

common to see lower-level items, but not higher-level items.

If Bai Xiaochun actually did completely equip himself with fourteenfold enhanced items, it wouldn't be something completely unheard of in the Wildlands. However, it would still be very shocking.

After enhancing the Eternal Parasol, he looked around to confirm that he hadn't attracted any unwanted attention, then removed his mask and enhanced it before putting it back on. After that, he started working on his other magical items. He enhanced Zhou Yixing's bow, as well as the powerful arrows he had collected. He also enhanced his flying swords, and some of the other important magical items he had.

At some point, he thought back to how the silkpants from the great clans had been wearing treasured clothing. Not willing to be outdone, he went to the outrageous length of performing fourteenfold spirit enhancements on some of the clothing in his bag of holding....

That was a level of luxury that, if word spread about it, would cause people to go crazy. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun found that he had run out of things to perform spirit enhancements on. He was now at the point that people would definitely go mad if they could see everything he had performed enhancements on. He was now completely equipped with fourteenfold enhanced items.... At this point, he could definitely be described as being armed to the teeth.

“If I ran into that Bai Clan deva patriarch now, I could probably kill him if I really wanted to!” Laughed heartily, he examined his souls, and found that he had only gone through a bit more than half of his supply.

“Although I can't increase my cultivation base right now, my battle prowess is much higher than before. If I could only conjure fifteen-colored flame, and be equipped with fifteenfold spirit enhanced items... then any deva who ran into me would be

flabbergasted! Yeah, that would be the best. Shock them to death! Then I wouldn't have to fight. Hahahahaha...." Although he was extremely pleased, he also knew that flaunting one's wealth was a good way to get into trouble. His mask could keep his general power level a secret, but he still took the time to cover up the golden designs on all of his items.

With that, he sat down cross-legged and used Bai Hao's research notes to start contemplating the formula for fifteen-colored flame.

Soon, seven days passed, during which time he was completely focused on fifteen-colored flame.

To any necromancer clan, being able to conjure fifteen-colored flame was extremely important. Although Bai Hao's notes contained information about fifteen-colored flame, that information wasn't complete. Fifteen-colored flame was extremely difficult, so much so that during his seven days of research and contemplation, Bai Xiaochun was left stunned.

If one were to use numbers to describe the difference in difficulty between fourteen-colored flame and fifteen-colored flame, the former would have a difficulty level of ten, and the latter, one hundred!

Considering that fifteen-colored flame was ten times as difficult, that meant that the two types of flame were as vastly separated as heaven and earth. In fact, fifteen-colored flame was like an obstacle to virtually all terrestrial necromancers in the Wildlands.

Success with it would make someone a celestial necromancer, of which there were only a few dozen in all of the Wildlands. From that alone it could be seen how difficult fifteen-colored flame was to conjure.

Unfortunately, there was nothing Bai Xiaochun could do about that other than to focus on his research and augury. Eventually, he reached the point of being confident enough to perform some initial tests. But after another three days passed, he ended up

tugging at his hair in frustration. He had now spent ten days of research and augury on fifteen-colored flame, and was left with nothing to show for it but a frown.

It was at that point that he heard the captain of Squad 9 talking outside, and he seemed to be bursting with joy.

“Get out here, Bai Hao. Something big is going down!”

Frowning, Bai Xiaochun walked outside to find the captain standing there looking very happy.

“What’s going on, Captain?” Bai Xiaochun said, stifling a yawn. “Is there a new prisoner or something?”

“Exactly, it's a new prisoner. However, he’s not being sent to Cellblock D. Furthermore, the person requesting your presence regarding this new prisoner is the warden himself!” With that, he grabbed Bai Xiaochun and began to drag him away.

“The warden?” Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped as he thought back to Li Xu, who he had met outside the moat back when he had first arrived. “Could it be that since the giant ghost king isn't paying much attention to me, the Cai Clan or the Bai Clan is trying to cause trouble?” he thought. However, considering how happy the captain seemed, that didn’t seem likely.

Stopping in place, he asked, “Captain, what exactly is going on?”

“Something great! Something wonderful!” The captain laughed heartily, but could also see that Bai Xiaochun was feeling a bit nervous. Pulling him back into motion, he started into a detailed explanation.

Soon, everything became clear to Bai Xiaochun....

According to the captain, a new prisoner had arrived recently in Cellblock A. Apparently, this prisoner was very, very important, and getting him to talk was such a vital matter that the warden himself had taken an interest in the matter.

This new prisoner was very tight-lipped, so much so that not even the dark inquisitors from the four cellblocks had been able to get him to utter a single word. Because he was a Nascent Soul cultivator, performing a soulsearch on him wouldn't be very effective, and would likely end up killing him. Therefore, this new prisoner had become a thorn in the side of Devil Penitentiary as a whole.

The warden was under a lot pressure because of the situation, and had flown into a rage a few times because of it. Unfortunately, despite using all the methods at their disposal, the four dark inquisitors had come up with nothing.

Having hit a dead end, the deputy warden of Cellblock D, Sun Peng, had pointed out that Bai Hao was very skilled at performing interrogations. He even explained how he had forced all the long-time prisoners in Cellblock D to give up their information.

Normally, a matter this important wouldn't end up being revealed to Bai Xiaochun. However, Li Xu was out of options, and when Sun Peng mentioned Bai Hao, he remembered that he was somewhat important. Being desperate, he decided that he might as well give this Bai Hao a shot.

“Bai, my boy, this is a good opportunity!” the captain said excitedly. “If you can get this prisoner to talk, you'll become the number one dark inquisitor in Devil Penitentiary!” The captain had complete confidence in Bai Xiaochun, and was sure that nobody in the world could remain tight-lipped in his presence.

“Although being the number one dark inquisitor doesn't come with a formal appointment, according to the rules of Devil Penitentiary, as long as all four cellblocks agree on the matter, then it will be official. The number one dark inquisitor has a standing just beneath the warden, and is just as powerful as the deputy wardens!

“If you succeed, you'll achieve a meteoric rise! In fact, you would

be able to get access to the wealth of the long-time prisoners in the other three cellblocks. When that happens, just don't forget about your old squad in Cellblock D!" Talking excitedly the whole way, the captain dragged Bai Xiaochun toward Cellblock A.

Now that Bai Xiaochun understood everything, he breathed a sigh of relief. As long as the Bai and Cai Clans hadn't come for him, he had nothing to be afraid of. In fact, considering it was merely a matter of an interrogation, he wasn't worried at all.

"Ah, this is nothing. Don't worry, Captain, there are no secrets that I can't uncover." Sticking his chin up proudly, he hurried along with the captain toward Cellblock A.

Cellblock A looked very similar to Cellblock D. However, it was much larger, and also much more sinister. It was filled with a cold, frightening aura, and the guards' quarters were filled with powerful soul fluctuations. Clearly, practicing cultivation here would be very beneficial.

In the square in the middle of Cellblock A, there was a huge skull containing a middle-aged man in tattered clothing. There was someone else in the cage, holding the man up by the neck, and yet, the prisoner still had a look of disdain in his eyes. For some reason, he looked familiar to Bai Xiaochun.

Quite a group of people had gathered outside the cage. There was Sun Peng from Cellblock D, who was flanked by three sinister-looking old men, who were none other than the deputy wardens from the other cellblocks.

There were four other cultivators as well, some of them old, some of them young. However, without exception, they all had cold, sinister auras. It almost seemed like walking into their midst would be like walking into a pit of vipers!

Bai Xiaochun only recognized one among that group of four, him being the dark inquisitor of Cellblock D. Based on that, it seemed obvious that the other three were the number one inquisitors from

the other cellblocks, the dark inquisitors.

In addition to them, a large group of Cellblock A guards were present.

In addition to everyone mentioned so far, there was the person holding the prisoner by the neck. He was none other than... Warden Li Xu!

When Li Xu sensed new arrivals, he loosened his grip on the prisoner and turned to look at Bai Xiaochun.

The look in his eye was as vicious as a wolf's and as sharp as a blade!

Chapter 638: Cai Clan Elder

Li Xu's gaze was so intense that Bai Xiaochun subconsciously shrunk back. Although Li Xu wasn't a deva, he was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, and coupled with the fact that he was the warden of Devil Penitentiary, it made him seem like the sinister type of individual who could erupt with incredible power at any moment.

“Bai Hao, if you can get this prisoner to talk, you'll be named the number one dark inquisitor in Devil Penitentiary! And if you can't, then you can get your ass out of here and figure out how to handle your own problems without our help!” Li Xu's patience had clearly been worn thin in recent days. Furthermore, he only had two more days to get the information he needed out of this prisoner, otherwise he would be in big trouble.

That only served to increase his irritation. Furthermore, he had to be careful not to kill this particular prisoner. After all, some discreet inquiries had confirmed that it was the giant ghost king himself who had issued orders for the prisoner to be sent here for interrogation.

When the captain of Squad 9 heard the warden's demand, his face fell. Sun Peng was also taken aback. After all, Sun Peng had recommended Bai Hao, and yet, Li Xu seemed to be turning what was supposed to be a good situation into the opposite.

Bai Xiaochun stopped in place, his brow furrowed as he looked over at Li Xu.

The other three deputy wardens and the dark inquisitors all looked on with expressionless faces. However, inside, most of them were chuckling coldly, especially the dark inquisitors from the other three cellblocks. They were all proud people, and considering that they had already failed with their own interrogations, they were convinced that calling on this young

punk was a complete waste of time.

“Can you get him to talk?! If not, then you can just get the hell out of Devil Penitentiary this instant!” Li Xu’s voice was cold and tyrannical, and was met with complete silence by everyone else in the room. Sun Peng sighed inwardly, and the captain of Squad 9 was trembling, and didn’t dare to speak.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t very pleased by the situation. He knew that Li Xu didn’t like him very much, but it wasn’t as though he had asked to come here. He had been called!

“Venting his anger on me, huh?” he thought. “Is he trying to use this situation as an excuse to kick me out of Devil Penitentiary?”

It was a problematic situation. After all, if he got kicked out of Devil Penitentiary, he would have the Cai and Bai Clans to deal with. Considering the difficulties that would be involved in that situation, he decided that he would be best served by enduring his current lot.

Therefore, he slowly walked forward toward the skull cell, where he looked a bit more closely at the man inside. He had seemed familiar earlier, and now, after examining him up close, he realized that he was one of the three Cai Clan elders who had chased him here to begin with.

The elder recognized Bai Xiaochun, and despite having disheveled hair and blood oozing out of the corners of his mouth, he still looked at him with the same expression of disdain as before. Despite how he had clearly been bruised and beaten, the killing intent in his eyes was clear. He even went so far as to hawk up a mouthful of bloody spittle and spit it onto Bai Xiaochun’s robe.

Bai Xiaochun waved his robe to remove the spittle from it, then looked at Li Xu and said, “Who exactly is this, Warden?”

When Li Xu saw how calmly Bai Xiaochun was acting, he snorted

coldly and said, “You don’t qualify to know who he is! I just need answers. Can you get him to talk? If not, then just screw off!”

The truth was that he really was using this situation as an excuse to kick Bai Xiaochun, who he had never liked from the very beginning, out of Devil Penitentiary.

Considering that there were so many people around, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t maintain his cool any longer. Anger flaring, he looked at Li Xu and said, “Warden, if you want me gone, just say the word. There’s no need to do it this way. You want me to get him to talk? How exactly? You won’t even tell me who he is, and yet expect me to conduct a thorough interrogation? Screw this! If you don’t want me around, then I’ll just leave!” He flicked his sleeve. “However, know this: other than Bai Hao, nobody in Devil Penitentiary will be able to get this guy to talk!”

Chuckling coldly, he turned to leave.

Bai Xiaochun was fully aware that his words would be insulting to the other dark inquisitors. However, considering that Li Xu had caused trouble for him for no reason at all, he felt he had no choice. Even worse, Li Xu was trying to use this situation as an excuse to kick him out of Devil Penitentiary! Therefore, if he wanted to fight back, he needed to act wildly self-confident.

“If Li Xu is really that anxious about this matter, he’ll definitely keep me around. If not, then I guess I screwed myself. Did you really set this whole thing up to kick me out, you bastard?” Even as he began to walk away, a cold voice rang out behind him.

“He’s one of the elders from the Cai Clan. I want to know what types of souls they have used in their clan for cultivation and flame conjuring purposes in recent years, and also how many!” Although Li Xu’s voice was still ice cold, his wording was slightly more polite than before.

Bai Xiaochun stopped in place. Based on what Li Xu had just said, it seemed he really did want the answers to those questions, and

wasn't just using the situation to target Bai Xiaochun.

“An elder from the Cai Clan,” he thought, “captured and brought to Devil Penitentiary....” He looked at the man in the cage, and suddenly, numerous puzzle pieces clicked together in his mind.

“What types of souls, and how many?” he said out loud. There didn't seem to be any hidden meaning to the question. The difficulty would lie in making sure that the Cai Clan elder didn't withhold any information, or give incorrect information.

Sounding slightly annoyed, Li Xu said, “Metal. Wood. Water. Fire. Earth. Those are the five different properties souls can have. The other four dark inquisitors all asked him this question earlier, and each one came out with a different answer. Therefore, you need to get proof that the answer he gives is true. As for how you prove that, it will depend on your skill.”

Bai Xiaochun walked back to the skull cell and looked at the Cai Clan elder. Obviously, if he had moved any slower when this man and his two fellow elders had been chasing him recently, they would have killed him. Therefore, he didn't feel the slightest bit of compassion for the man.

One thing he had learned in his time here in Devil Penitentiary was that although the three great clans seemed to be allied with each other, that was mostly because of external factors, over which they had little control.

Then he thought back to how the giant ghost king had saved him from the Bai Clan, and suddenly, a new idea formed in his mind.

“The giant ghost king obviously doesn't get along with the three great clans. But what makes the three clans think they can pick a fight with a demigod?! And considering the level of the giant ghost king's cultivation base, why doesn't he just wipe them off the map?” Bai Xiaochun very much wanted to know the answer to this question.

Considering that Li Xu was standing there waiting for an answer, Bai Xiaochun knew he had no choice in the matter. If he wanted to survive in the Wildlands, he needed to pick a side. The giant ghost king? Or the three great clans?

Once he made his choice, he had to stick to it. In the end... he didn't need to spend a lot of time thinking about which option to pick. Eyes flickering with cold light, he opened the door of the cell and stepped inside.

At the same time, he sent black smoke flowing out of his palm, which spread out into the cell and made it impossible to see inside. Not even Li Xu, who was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, could see past the obscuring mist that Bai Xiaochun's mask could create.

Cellblock D's dark inquisitor was familiar with Bai Xiaochun, and stood there silently. As for the other dark inquisitors, they all thought that Bai Xiaochun thought too much of himself, and chuckled even more coldly than before.

Smiling icily, they began to transmit a conversation between themselves.

“He's just being deliberately mystifying. Let's see what supposed skills he has. Does he really think he can get this guy to talk when we couldn't?!”

“There's no need to even ponder the question. Of course he's just putting on an act. He'll definitely just come up with some random answer.”

“Hmph! One of us definitely got the right answer out of him already. There's really no need for the warden to ask again!”

Li Xu frowned, but in his anxiety, all he cared about was Bai Xiaochun getting the right answers. As long as he got the truth out of the Cai Clan elder, Li Xu could accept any situation.

Inside of the cell, Bai Xiaochun looked at the Cai Clan elder and

sighed.

“Just tell me what I want to know,” he said. “After all, when I ask questions, I frighten even myself.”

Eyes burning with killing intent, the clan elder spat on Bai Xiaochun and then said, “If you hadn’t run as fast as you did, you little bastard, then I would have crushed you to death! Now that you’ve provoked the Cai Clan, you’ve guaranteed an early death for yourself!”

“Is it really that fun to go around spitting on people all the time?” Bai Xiaochun said. Irritated at having been spit on twice, he slapped his bag of holding to produce... a handful of Aphrodisiac Pills.

“Tight-lipped? Let’s see if you dare to keep your mouth shut after this!”

Outside of the cell, enough time passed for a bit less than half an incense stick to burn. Then, hoarse screams echoed out that seemed to contain pent-up emotions.

The three dark inquisitors were shocked, and quickly began to transmit another conversation.

“From the nature of the screams, it seems this Bai Hao does have a bit of skill after all. And yet, to get people to howl in pent-up fashion like this is something we could do with our eyes closed.”

Clearly, they were still just as disdainful as before.

As for the captain of Squad 9, as soon as he heard that scream, his eyes brightened. As of this moment, he felt as if all of his confidence was being confirmed.

Li Xu’s expression was still grim, but inside, he was anxiously contemplating the potential for both loss and gain.

Even as different thoughts ran through everyone’s minds, the screams from inside the cell grew more intense, filling up with

indescribable rage.

“You will die in pain, Bai Hao!! I’m going to kill you! If you hadn’t been fast enough last time, I would have ripped you to pieces!”

Apparently, the Cai Clan elder was attempting to use this method of angry cursing to alleviate the indescribable pain and torment he was undergoing.

“Aaaaghhhhhhh....”

The screams intensified over the course of an entire hour. Everyone outside the cell was panting, and as for the three dark inquisitors, they continued to exchange shocked glances. Warden Li Xu’s eyes shone brightly, and there was little need to mention the surrounding guards from Cellblock A. Everyone was completely shocked.

“Just what exactly is Bai Hao doing in there...? How could he provoke such screams of pent-up emotion...?”

“Heavens! Even just the sound of it is bone-chilling....”

“Even more terrifying is that, despite how much time has passed, the screams only continue to grow more bitter, and the victim’s life force is actually growing more abundant.... This... this is unimaginable!”

Chapter 639: Just Kill You?

Another hour flew by, and the screams continued, growing more bitter as the time passed. It was a tragic and brutal scene. The guards outside the cage, despite having served in Devil Penitentiary for many years, and having seen many, many things, were completely and utterly shaken.

By this point, the screaming no longer contained curses at Bai Xiaochun. They were simple cries of misery, the type that came out so freely, and were filled with such madness and intensity, that everyone who heard them felt chilled to the bone.

Because of the black smoke that filled the cage, it was impossible to see exactly what was going on inside, which only served to make the situation even more dramatic. The ordinary guards were shocked, and even the four dark inquisitors were having trouble breathing normally, and their faces were covered with very serious expressions.

Li Xu's eyes shone brightly with both anticipation and nervousness.

As everyone waited outside, Bai Xiaochun was inside the cage, frowning at the trembling Cai Clan elder. The man's eyes were completely bloodshot, and blue veins bulged out on his face and neck as he glared at Bai Xiaochun. Despite the fact that he was screaming miserably, his eyes radiated madness.

"Clever," Bai Xiaochun murmured. "Using the screams to vent the pressure from inside, huh?" He snorted coldly. This Cai Clan elder wasn't the only person to have come up with such a method. During his time interrogating some of the other monsters in Devil Penitentiary, Bai Xiaochun had seen this on a few occasions.

Clasping his hands behind his back, he stuck his chin up and said, "I advise you to simply talk. We both have our orders to follow, and I really don't want to use my method number two! Method

number two isn't completely unparalleled under heaven, but it's close."

"Screw off!!" the Cai Clan elder roared, his expression vicious, as if he wished to eat Bai Xiaochun alive. He even went so far as to spit out another glob of blood-laced spittle.

"Old bastard!" Bai Xiaochun said with a glare. "Fine. Time to show you method number two!" His right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he waved his finger at the elder, causing a sealing mark to settle down onto his mouth.

The instant the elder's mouth was sealed, he was no longer able to emit a single scream! Everything was now stuck inside of him!

This method made it impossible for him to vent through screaming. Instantly the elder began to shake violently. His eyes became even more bloodshot than before, and as he struggled, he felt a sensation like burning fire growing within him. Unfortunately for him, there was no way to release that fire. He began to sweat profusely. It felt like he was both being burned alive and simultaneously trampled by countless ants. The sensation was almost impossible to describe with words.

The sight caused Bai Xiaochun's face to twitch, and his heart to pound. However, this man had tried to chase him down and kill him. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun was working for Giant Ghost King now, and showing mercy in this situation would not only earn the ire of those above him, but it could also get him killed.

"Sometimes in life you just have to make some compromises," he thought.

Sighing, he squatted down in front of the Cai Clan elder and said, "Just talk, alright? If you don't make things hard for me, then of course I won't make things hard for you. That would be better all around!

"All I want to know is how many souls the Cai Clan has used in

the past few years, and what types. It's a simple question.” As Bai Xiaochun spoke, the madness in the Cai Clan elder’s eyes grew more intense. His glare was so brutal that it seemed he would gladly die if it meant being able to take Bai Xiaochun along with him.

Frowning, Bai Xiaochun stood up and stepped back a few paces. Everyone outside the cell continued to observe, surprised that the screaming had stopped, only to be replaced by muffled grunts.

The ordinary guards present weren’t inquisitors, and thus weren’t aware of the serious implications of the silence. Therefore, they were merely surprised. However, the four dark inquisitors’ pupils constricted, and they exchanged serious glances.

“Making prisoners scream is something that ordinary inquisitors do. But preventing them from screaming is another level altogether....”

“Many people understand that general truth, but it's difficult to understand exactly how and when to use such methods....”

“It’s hard to say how this Bai Hao did it, but the previous screaming clearly contained a pent-up pressure that needed to be vented. Now, he’s essentially plugged up the volcano! The next time it erupts, it will be shocking. We underestimated this Bai Hao!”

Li Xu’s eyes were shining brightly. As the warden, he knew a lot about the methods of inquisitors, and therefore, couldn’t help but quiver in anticipation.

The muffled grunts continued for more than two hours before stopping. By that point, the group outside the cell couldn’t help but tremble in uncertainty about what was happening.

Inside the cell, Bai Xiaochun was looking in shock at the Cai Clan elder, who was shaking and twitching, his skin bright red. Despite the madness in his eyes, he was still aware of his surroundings.

Sighing, Bai Xiaochun looked down at the man with utmost sincerity and said, “You’ve lasted longer than anyone I’ve ever seen. Alright, listen. I have a method number three, but I really don’t want to use it. Why don’t you just tell me what you know...?”

The Cai Clan elder looked back at him and nodded.

Bai Xiaochun was surprised, but quickly stepped forward and performed an incantation gesture to remove the seal from the elder’s mouth. The elder instantly coughed up a huge mouthful of blood, which he directed at Bai Xiaochun. Then, he let out a manic howl that was filled with deranged laughter.

“Is that all you’ve got, Bai Hao?! Why don’t you try this on for size? I’ll tell you something you probably don’t know. You know who really killed your mother? It was a daughter of the Cai Clan. That’s right, it was your father’s first wife! Your mother was in the middle of sewing some clothes for you when she died, and let me tell you, it was a horrific death!” The Cai Clan elder let out a string of maniacal laughter.

As for Bai Xiaochun, a tremor ran through him.

“Your mother wasn’t the only one to die, either. Her whole clan was wiped out! Every last one of them. Even the other servant girls who were friends with your mother were executed. The only reason you weren’t killed was because you had Bai Clan blood in you!

“Your mother was a servant girl, a useless nobody. If she never got pregnant, it wouldn’t have mattered, but not only did she get pregnant, she dared to keep living afterward! That’s worthy of the death penalty! The true person responsible for your mother’s death is you! If you hadn’t come along, your mother would still be alive!” More raving laughter spilled out of the Cai Clan elder’s mouth, and his eyes burned with madness. He knew that the words he had just uttered would be profoundly upsetting, but he said

them anyway.

Bai Xiaochun sucked in a breath, and his eyes instantly began to shine with killing intent. Of course, everyone on the outside could hear what had just been said.

Li Xu's face fell, and he shouted, "Bai Hao, you mustn't kill him!"

He was just preparing to step forward into the cell when Bai Xiaochun's voice could be heard. "Trying to upset me so much that I just kill you? You really think I would fall for that?!"

Inside the cage, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered with cold light. Although he wasn't actually Bai Hao, the words the clan elder had just spoken caused his anger to burn. After speaking, he simply stood there and stared at the laughing Cai Clan elder.

The look in his eye shook the clan elder to the core, and he suddenly stopped laughing.

Ignoring the elder, Bai Xiaochun walked out of the cell, where he instantly became the focus of all attention. Li Xu was about to say something, but before he could, Bai Xiaochun waved his sleeve and said,

"I need an instrument of torture, immediately!"

"Don't get impulsive, Bai Hao," Li Xu said sternly. "He mustn't die before confessing...."

"Oh, don't worry, Warden. I wouldn't give him such an easy death." The casual way Bai Xiaochun spoke those words made them like a vile wind that stabbed into the ears of everyone present, filling them with fear.

Li Xu looked long and hard at Bai Xiaochun, then said, "What torture instrument do you want?"

"A big black dog," he replied grimly. "Male. The stronger the better!"

Everyone was surprised by his request. However, Li Xu merely

frowned before giving the orders. Before long, a black dog was brought in, a huge beast that was nearly the size of a young ox.

It was a vicious-looking thing, with sharp yellow teeth and bulging muscles. Saliva dripped down its chin as it looked around with ferocious eyes.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the dog, he nodded and then led it by the leash into the cage. When the Cai Clan elder saw the dog, his expression flickered, and he screamed, “What are you doing, Bai Hao?!?!”

“Oh nothing. You’re refusing to tell me what you know, right? Fine then. I’ll stop asking.” Smiling coldly, he took out an Aphrodisiac Pill and fed it to the black dog. Then, after a moment of thought, he pried open the mouth of the shocked Cai Clan elder and shoved an entire handful of the pills inside.

Earlier, he had been reluctant to do this, but after what the Cai Clan elder had just said, the hatred in Bai Xiaochun’s heart began to burn hotter than ever. “This is method number three, a method which no one can endure. If you can handle it, then when the process is over, we’ll find an even more ferocious animal for you to enjoy.”

Chapter 640: The Confident Giant Ghost King!

The sight of the snarling black dog struck profound fear into the heart of the Cai Clan elder. Furthermore, because of the large quantities of Aphrodisiac Pills which had just been stuffed into his mouth, he could tell that he was about to lose control of himself.

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had not yet released the dog caused the elder's heart to fill with a profound sensation of torment. He already regretted having intentionally upset Bai Xiaochun.

For the first time, a look of hesitation appeared in the elder's eyes....

“Look, let's just talk things over, Bai Hao. I can--”

Before he could say anything else, Bai Hao interrupted, “I don't want to hear it.”

Then he released his grip on the dog's leash. The dog immediately howled and pounced on the Cai Clan elder.

The crowd gathered outside the cell then heard screams the likes of which they had never heard before in their entire lives. The bitterness surpassed any scream they could even imagine.

They were screams that seemed to contain the most ultimate type of pain possible....

The guards of Cellblock A were all gasping and trembling, and each and every one of them was thinking the same thing: don't ever provoke Bai Hao!

The dark inquisitors' faces flickered with various emotions as they looked at the cell. Although they couldn't see what was happening, the things they imagined were happening left them indescribably shaken.

“How brutal....”

“Who can endure pain like that? It’s not just physical, it’s psychological! A majestic Nascent Soul cultivator and proud elite member of the Cai Clan is being broken right in front of us....”

“This Bai Hao really is a vicious person. The fact that he’s using methods like this shows that he’s... he’s really a dark inquisitor! His heart has been consumed by the darkness!”

Li Xu’s eyes were wide, and he felt a chill going up his spine. Only now did he realize that Bai Hao really was as the rumors said: vicious and merciless, willing to go to any lengths to get what he wanted....

The screams of the elder mixed with the howling of the black dog, causing the hair of the guards in Cellblock A to stand on end. Thankfully for them, the process didn't last long, only a few dozen breaths’ worth of time. At that point, the screams of the Cai Clan elder turned into discernible words.

“I’ll talk! I’ll talk.... Wood-type souls! We used almost no wood-type souls! Almost none.... Make it stop! Make it stop....”

Not only did the Cai Clan elder reveal the information Li Xu had asked for, he began to reveal more information of his own accord. In the end, he let out a shriek of despair as he revealed a final important detail. “The three great clans are planning a rebellion....”

By this point, the Cai Clan elder was in so much pain he wished he could die. The torture had pushed him to the breaking point, and he had revealed all the information he knew. And yet, the screams still didn’t stop.

When the group outside the cell heard his last statement, their expressions flickered, and Li Xu’s eyes began to shine with a terrifying light.

“The three great clans are planning a rebellion?!”

“What gives the three great clans the courage to rebel against the

giant ghost king!?!?”

As everyone reeled in shock, Bai Xiaochun walked out of the cell, his expression grim. He didn't say anything; he just looked at Li Xu for a moment, and then left.

There was no need for him to say anything. Everyone had heard the confession, and knew that if what the Cai Clan elder had just said was a fabrication, then getting the truth out of him would be impossible.

Li Xu watched Bai Xiaochun leave. Earlier, he had harbored some ill feelings toward him, but they were gone now, replaced by profound admiration.

“Now that is a real dark inquisitor!” Li Xu was convinced that most of what the Cai Clan elder had just said was true. The fact that he had confessed to a planned rebellion on the part of the three great clans, of which he was a member, was all the proof that was needed.

The four dark inquisitors watched Bai Xiaochun as he left, their eyes shining with reverence. Deep in their hearts, they knew that in terms of interrogation, his skills actually went beyond the dark inquisitor level.

At this point, Li Xu tore his gaze from Bai Xiaochun's retreating form, and looked around the room coldly. “Nobody is allowed to speak a word of what they heard today!”

The deputy wardens immediately realized the gravity of the situation, and began to issue further orders.

Devil Penitentiary operated on a relatively autonomous level, and if they wanted to prevent information from leaving, it was a relatively simple thing.

In order to make sure there were no slipups, Li Xu ordered a full lockdown of the entire prison. No one was permitted in or out without his express permission.

After making all the necessary arrangements, Li Xu left Devil Penitentiary and headed to Duke Deathcrier's grand hall on the giant ghost statue.

As for the Cai Clan elder, he wasn't very important anymore, and had been left sealed in his skull cell....

Bai Xiaochun had already returned to Cellblock D, and was in his quarters, frowning as he thought about the information he had learned from the Cai Clan elder. Not only did he feel more sympathy than ever for Bai Hao's fate, but he was also very curious about the rebellion that had been mentioned.

"What secret weapon do the three great clans have that gives them the courage to plan a rebellion?" Although Bai Xiaochun had never seen a demigod in action, he knew that the difference between devas and demigods was vast!

For example, in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, there were many devas, but only one demigod expert. A demigod could crush devas with impunity. And yet, the three great clans of Giant Ghost City were willing to rebel against a demigod!

Of even greater significance was the fact that this area was home to all of their clans. If they planned to rebel, then they had to kill that demigod if they hoped to survive!

"There are obviously some big secrets that I'm unaware of. Could it be that there's some conspiracy afoot that is causing the giant ghost king to hold back from taking action?" Bai Xiaochun felt as confused about the situation as if he were trying to study flowers in the fog.

"The three great clans must have something that gives them the confidence to succeed. But what?" As Bai Xiaochun was lost in his thoughts, Li Xu was offering a deep bow to Duke Deathcrier in his grand hall on the giant ghost statue.

"Duke Deathcrier, I'm here to report on the matter of how many

souls the Cai Clan--”

Before Li Xu could even finish his sentence, Duke Deathcrier interrupted, “Don't tell me. I'll take you directly to his highness the king!”

Duke Deathcrier immediately sped into motion, heading toward the royal palace located on the head of the huge statue.

Excited, Li Xu followed along. No one stopped the two of them as they hurried on their way, and before long, they were there in the royal palace. At the highest level of the palace, in a towering pagoda, was the tall, sturdily-built giant ghost king.

“Greetings, Your Highness!” the two of them said simultaneously.

The giant ghost king stood there looking down on the sprawling city down below, a strange light glowing in his eyes. It was almost as if he could see through everything to observe all secrets with those eyes. After a moment passed, he said coolly, “Well? What was the result?”

Li Xu couldn't stop himself from trembling. Calming himself, he pulled out a jade slip, which he respectfully offered to the giant ghost king.

It was impossible to say how he did it, but giant ghost king caused the jade slip to fly through the air and land in his hand. After he looked at it for a moment, his eyes glittered, and the jade slip transformed into ash.

The sight caused Li Xu's heart to pound, and he bowed his head nervously. Although he was confident that the information in the jade slip was mostly true, if there were any inaccuracies, he would be the one to take responsibility.

After another moment passed, the giant ghost king said, “The two of you are dismissed.”

Li Xu breathed a sigh of relief, and looked out of the corner of his

eye at Duke Deathcrier. Duke Deathcrier's expression hadn't changed the entire time, but he had also been very nervous during the meeting. Without any hesitation, Li Xu and Duke Deathcrier both left.

After they left, the giant ghost king looked out over the city, glancing at the area where the ten marquises resided, and then in the directions of each of the three great clans. Finally, a smile broke out on his face.

“So, the interrogation revealed the rebellion plan.... Wood-type souls were used the least... just as I had expected.... The three great clans are using the matter of the hell-emperor's successor as an excuse to build up souls. They're definitely holding nothing back.

“Generally speaking, all five types of souls should be used relatively equally. There shouldn't be a situation in which one type of soul is rarely used....

“Based on all this, it seems that those three bastard patriarchs have figured out the details of the technique I cultivate. They know about my decay period....

“During the decay period, my cultivation base will drop rapidly.... Most importantly, during that time, large amounts of wood-type souls could be used to significantly reduce my overall power....

“That would be the only time they would have a chance at succeeding. I know that I can fully trust Duke Deathcrier. However, as for the other four dukes, and the ten marquises, I'm very curious to see which ones harbor evil intentions. This time, we'll find out once and for all.” The giant ghost king smiled broadly, and a touch of scorn could be seen in his eyes. As far as he was concerned, the three great clans, as well as his subordinates, the five dukes and ten marquises, were all like bugs.

“This Bai Hao isn't bad, though. Loves to cause trouble... has incredible talent in flame conjuring....” Smiling, the giant ghost

king continued to contemplate how to use Bai Hao as a pawn in his little game.

Chapter 641: Smells Like Treasure

The fact that an elder from the Cai Clan had gone missing didn't cause a huge commotion. The Cai Clan didn't even seem to have noticed, and also didn't look into the matter very deeply.

It was the same in Giant Ghost City, where life went on like it usually did....

The giant ghost king didn't do anything out of the ordinary either. In fact, to anyone who wasn't aware of the events which had just played out, it would seem as if nothing at all had happened. However, it was very different among the people who were in the know.

To them, it seemed like a storm of disaster was brewing!

The people in Devil Penitentiary who had heard the Cai Clan elder's confession were all very nervous, and didn't dare to discuss the matter. They merely waited to see what would happen next.

"It's been a whole month," Bai Xiaochun thought. "Why hasn't the fighting started yet?" He had been paying very close attention to the situation, and yet, even after an entire month, neither the three great clans nor the giant ghost king had made a move.

"Even if the Cai Clan wasn't originally aware that one of their elders was captured, they would definitely have found out by now. They must know that he's revealed the information about the rebellion....

"But they haven't made a move. And the giant ghost king hasn't said a peep. Could it be that they're still feeling each other out?" He scratched his head in befuddlement, and couldn't help but feel a bit of disdain for the giant ghost king.

"There can't be many demigods this lame. If I were a demigod, I would just go wipe out all three of the great clans. That would take care of the problem.

“And as for the three great clans, either they’re not fully prepared, or they’re hesitating. Well, regardless of which it is, this is a good opportunity for me!” With that, he checked his bag of holding to see how many souls he had left from when he had robbed the Cai Clan’s soulgrounds. After performing fourteenfold spirit enhancements on all of his magical items, he had been left with a bit less than half the original amount. Later, he had done some experimentation with fifteen-colored flame, which left him running very low.

“Out already. Conjuring flame really is a big waste of souls.” He narrowed his eyes in thought for a moment, then nodded his head.

“I have to take some risks sometimes. I’ll just go check the situation out. If the chance presents itself, I’ll take some souls. If not, then I won’t worry about it.” Feeling both nervous and excited, he thought a bit more, then rose to his feet.

Devil Penitentiary was on lockdown, but Bai Xiaochun was now the number one dark inquisitor, and was also the one who had dug up the critical intelligence to begin with. Clearly, he was not on the side of the three great clans, and therefore, Li Xu approved his request to leave the prison.

Before long, Bai Xiaochun was in disguise, and heading through the moat toward the city.

The moat wasn’t very large, but nevertheless, Bai Xiaochun found a place where he could leave it without attracting attention. Soon, he was outside of Giant Ghost City.

“It’s too bad I have to be very careful about revealing my ability to disguise my appearance. It really leaves me no choice other than to use ordinary disguises.” He was currently wearing a wide-brimmed hat, and some extra layers of clothing to make him look bigger. Keeping his head down, he headed away from Giant Ghost City, and in the direction of the Chen Clan.

“I already robbed the Cai Clan, so they’ll definitely be on guard.

The Bai Clan has too few souls to make it worth my time. The Chen Clan is the only option....” Eyes flashing, he flew quickly to the location where the Chen Clan stood. Arrayed in different locations around the clan were eight soulgrounds.

The mere sight of the vast number of vengeful souls flying around the floating, beehive-like structures in the soulgrounds caused Bai Xiaochun to swallow in anticipation.

After sizing the situation up, he murmured, “The Chen Clan really has a lot of souls....”

Unfortunately, the soulgrounds were all very close to the clan itself, and also very tightly guarded. Despite the speed he was capable of, he was fairly sure that as soon as he did the deed, he would be discovered.

“The Chen Clan is really too stingy. They're just some measly soulgrounds, right? What's the point in guarding them so heavily!?” The feeling that came from being able to look at something and not touch it really left him disgruntled.

“They're just some souls, right? I can't believe these super rich clans are so stingy! What bullies!” Sighing, he decided that the opportunity he had been hoping for had not been presented. Depressed, he headed back to Giant Ghost City. Just when he was about to enter the city and head toward Devil Penitentiary, his eyes widened as he saw a figure speed out of the giant ghost statue and head in his general direction.

Despite the great distance involved, considering the level of his cultivation base, Bai Xiaochun was easily able to determine that he was looking at Duke Deathcrier. Furthermore, he appeared to be heading in the direction of the Bai Clan.

Considering that Duke Deathcrier was a deva, and that he wasn't attempting to conceal his actions, it meant that Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one who could see him. Quite a few people noticed, and many of them began to ponder the significance of what they

were seeing.

“What?” Bai Xiaochun said, blinking. “Why would Duke Deathcrier be going to visit the Bai Clan at a sensitive time like this?”

Although Bai Xiaochun was surprised, he didn't put too much thought into it, and continued on his way.

It was getting dark, but the streets in the city were still crowded. At a certain point when he was only about halfway to the moat, a brilliant light suddenly began to shine from the giant ghost statue.

As the light shone out from the royal palace on the head of the statue, a person appeared. He was tall and strong, and wore a violet robe with a serpentine dragon embroidered on it. He had a royal crown on his head, and emanated a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering energy.

Even as he hovered there, he exuded pressure that could stifle everything in heaven and earth. Then he began to stride through the air above the city, almost as if he were going on patrol.

“The giant ghost king!”

“It's his highness the king!”

“Greetings, Your Highness!!”

Quite a racket could be heard as countless soul cultivators dropped to their knees to kowtow. As for the city guards on patrol, they reacted in a similar manner.

The giant ghost king looked completely calm as he strode silently through the air. Thunder rumbled, and the clouds churned. It was even possible to see lightning dancing about.

All of these heavenly portents struck fear into the heart of the people below. Even more shocking was the enormous shadowy figure which walked along behind the giant ghost king, a figure which seemed so powerful that if it fully formed, it could rip

heaven and earth to shreds!

Bai Xiaochun's aura was in chaos; this was his first time seeing the giant ghost king, and the shocking energy that the man emanated left him deeply shaken.

“Did the giant ghost king leave his palace to try to threaten the three great clans?” Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard as he observed the terrifying figure up above. As he did, he heard a voice that he hadn't heard for a long time!

“Fudge, what's that smell? It seems very familiar to Lord Turtle. Smells like treasure!!” Along with the voice, a head popped out of Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding....

It was the little turtle who had been missing for so long. No matter how Bai Xiaochun had ransacked his bag of holding, he had never been able to find him, not even in the hiding place he'd discovered the time he had rendered the little turtle unconscious.

On many occasions, Bai Xiaochun had even come to the conclusion that the sharp-tongued little turtle must have left. Although that thought had left him somewhat relieved, he was also disappointed at the loss of the turtle. Who would have ever imagined that the turtle would suddenly show up at this time?

Jaw dropping, he looked down at the turtle, whose eyes were gleaming as surely as if he had spotted a valuable treasure. In fact, Bai Xiaochun was fairly certain that he was actually drooling.

“Y-you're... you're still here?!?!” Bai Xiaochun was actually delighted. He had long since come to feel very alone out in the Wildlands, so to have the little turtle with him was a great thing.

The little turtle stuck his head up proudly and gave a disdainful glance at Bai Xiaochun. “Lord Turtle was just sleeping for a bit. So what? Did ya miss me, fool? Well, even if you did, it doesn't matter. In fact, don't even talk to me. I'm germaphobic!”

To hear such stinging words immediately took Bai Xiaochun's

delight at meeting an old friend and transformed it into anger.

“Shut up!” he said. Ignoring the little turtle, he looked back up at the giant ghost king for a bit. Then he shoved the little turtle's head back into his bag of holding and flew back into the moat, and beyond it, Devil Penitentiary.

Around that time, the Bai Clan deva patriarch was in a grand hall in the Bai Clan, looking grim-faced at Duke Deathcrier!

Gritting his teeth angrily, the patriarch said, “I'm not even going to mention how many years I've loyally served his highness the king. We've fought side-by-side on the field of battle, and I've never been anything but devoted. Besides, considering the level of my cultivation base, how could I ever fight the king? Do you think I'm crazy or something? Why would I lead the Bai Clan into a rebellion? This is complete nonsense. If you want to falsely accuse me, at least come up with a good excuse!”

Glaring, the patriarch continued, “By the way, regarding what happened with that unfilial bastard of my clan, I respected his highness the king's wishes because of face. That's the only reason I didn't pursue the matter at the time. However, based on some of the rumors that have been floating around about him, I have to ask you, Duke Deathcrier. What is the meaning of the situation?!”

Duke Deathcrier sighed inwardly. Because he was a close follower of the giant ghost king, he was privy to a few secrets that no one else knew. Furthermore, he was able to speculate at what the king was thinking. However, he still couldn't figure out why he had been asked to go to all three of the great clans and directly ask the patriarchs if they were planning a rebellion. In fact, the giant ghost king had even hinted that he should offer concessions to the three great clans to keep the peace.

Duke Deathcrier was very nervous about the whole thing.

Sighing again in his heart, he looked at the Bai Clan patriarch and thought, “Is he trying to trick the enemy into thinking he's

weak, and lure them out of their strongholds? Or has he really reached the decay period...?”

Looking the Bai Clan patriarch in the eye, he said, “Brother Bai, if his highness the king really believed the rumors, he wouldn't send me to you like this. As for the situation with Bai Hao, I understand your frustration.”

“In that case, Brother Deathcrier,” the patriarch growled, “I'd like to make a request. Please tell his highness the king that that unfilial bastard isn't suited to be a guard in Devil Penitentiary!”

The truth was that the patriarch was taking advantage of this situation to see if the giant ghost king really was as clueless as he was acting.

After all, the three great clans weren't quite ready to make their move!

Chapter 642: Decree From The Heavenly King!

No one could possibly guess what the giant ghost king was actually thinking. It really did seem like a situation of putting on a weak front in order to lure the enemies out of their strongholds. However, in other ways, it actually looked like he was trying to reach a compromise....

The more one was privy to the behind-the-scenes information, the more confusing things became. After all, the giant ghost king was a demigod, a fact that put a lot of pressure on the three great clans.

Duke Deathcrier's trip to visit the three deva patriarchs cast suspicion into all of their hearts. However, each and every one of them made various demands, all of which seemed excessive in some way.

They had done so intentionally, of course. In some ways, such demands would make it seem like they weren't interested in rebelling. For example, if the Bai Clan was planning a rebellion, they would intend to win it, and would therefore be confident in being able to take care of Bai Hao on their own. They wouldn't need the giant ghost king to do it for them.

However, not even the Bai Clan patriarch could ever have guessed that his request would be granted within a day! The giant ghost king didn't hesitate at all to send a royal decree directly to Devil Penitentiary.

Bai Hao reviled his own clan, treated his father perniciously, and killed his relatives. He is vicious and malevolent, and as such, his rank of prison guard shall be stripped, and he will be incarcerated as a prisoner in Devil Penitentiary!

Quite a few people in Giant Ghost City were shocked by the news.

After all, Bai Hao had made quite a scene recently, and become very famous. For him to suddenly be imprisoned was a major development.

When Madam Cai heard the news, she was ecstatic. Although she ultimately wanted Bai Hao dead, she knew how brutal the legendary Devil Penitentiary was, and was very happy about the situation.

Bai Xiaochun had no way of knowing what people were saying about him outside. He was sitting in his room meditating when Deputy Warden Sun Peng and the guards of Cellblock D surrounded his quarters with no warning.

Bai Xiaochun was so stunned he didn't know how to react. It felt like his entire world had been turned upside down, to the point where he felt like crying.

“There must be some mistake....” he said in a quavering voice, looking around at all the familiar faces among the guards.

The guards of Cellblock D were all on good terms with Bai Xiaochun, and couldn't help but hesitate a bit. The compassion and other mixed emotions in their eyes was clear. However, they didn't dare to defy a royal decree, and could do nothing but sigh and clasp hands toward Bai Xiaochun.

“We really have no choice in the matter, Brother Bai Hao....”

“Just stick it out, Bai Hao. You never know, his highness the king might cool down after a bit and change his mind.”

Then, the captain of Squad 9 loudly declared, “Don't worry, Bai Hao. You're going to be locked up in Cellblock D, and we're all like a big family. Your title is changing, that's all. We guards will make sure nobody in the cellblock causes any problems for you!”

Clearly, the captain felt very uncomfortable about the situation. The other guards all nodded their heads in agreement. After all, they had all benefited to some extent from the interrogations Bai

Xiaochun had performed recently. Coupled with the fact that Bai Xiaochun treated them all well, it ensured that they all liked him.

They couldn't defy a royal decree, but could use their authority in Cellblock D to make sure that Bai Xiaochun had it easy.

Deputy Warden Sun Peng cleared his throat and said, "It's just a change of clothing, Bai Hao. We'll take care of all your daily needs, so there won't be much change in that. In fact, any time you want to come out and take a walk, just let us know!"

Bai Xiaochun could see that there was no way out of his situation. He was depressed, but everyone was treating him so well that it warmed his heart. Heaving sighs, he walked along with everyone into the cellblock itself.

Soon, the gray-robed prisoners in the cellblock learned of the matter, and all of them were stunned. As for the important prisoners who Bai Xiaochun had interrogated in the past, many of them were very excited, and were clearly happy to see Bai Hao get his comeuppance....

However, their joy didn't last for long. The ten captains of Cellblock D gave harshly-worded warnings to all the prisoners that they weren't to disturb Bai Hao. Then Deputy Warden Sun Peng pointed out that although Bai Hao wasn't an official guard any longer, he was still an inquisitor. At that point, the prisoners abandoned any thoughts of getting revenge.

As far as most of them were concerned, it would actually have been better for him to remain as a guard. Back then, he only came into the cellblock when on patrol. But now... he would be in there with them all the time. The thought of what that meant if they ended up offending him was terrifying.

Most outrageous of all was that... the guards didn't seal his cultivation base!

That caused each and every one of the prisoners to be filled with

incredible anxiety. After a bit of time, the guards said their farewells and left.

Crestfallen, Bai Xiaochun found an empty skull cell, walked in, and sat down cross-legged.

“It all happened so fast,” he thought with a long sigh. “I was a guard, an inquisitor, and even the number one dark inquisitor.... Now I’m just a prisoner.

“Is it some kind of prank...? King Giant Ghost, you bastard, you were the one who saved me to begin with. Why are you causing problems for me now...?”

“You’re a demigod expert! The three great clans are planning a rebellion, so why don’t you just go wipe them out? What are you picking on me for, you loser!?” From what he could tell, he was simply being used as a pawn in whatever game the giant ghost king and the three great clans were playing.

“What secret weapon do the three great clans have? Dammit! This is between the clans and the king! It doesn’t have anything to do with me!” Clenching his hands into fists, he looked around and gave a depressed sigh.

“Thankfully, my bros didn’t seal my cultivation base. Otherwise, life would have been really bad.” Feeling a bit better because of that fact, he looked over at the cell next to him.

In it sat an old man with an expressionless face that featured a prominent red birthmark. Bai Xiaochun remembered this old man from back when the captain had first showed him around. Apparently, he had offended the giant ghost king and then ended up being locked away for more than two hundred years.

Hoping to commiserate with a fellow victim, Bai Xiaochun suddenly said, “Hey there, Fellow Daoist. I heard you offended the giant ghost king. Ai. I guess you and I are in the same boat.”

The old man didn’t react at all. Either he hadn’t heard, or was

pretending not to.

“Your cultivation base is sealed, so why are you sitting around meditating all the time? What’s the point? Come, come, let’s chat a bit about that damned giant ghost king. He’s a completely worthless nobody!” Bai Xiaochun was actually getting worked up by this point, and had raised his voice quite a bit.

Despite that, the old man continued to remain motionless in meditation. Irritated, Bai Xiaochun said, “Fine, just pretend you didn’t hear me. What’s so amazing about that? It’s not like I ever did anything to offend you!”

Bai Xiaochun had been a bit depressed to begin with, and having this old man completely ignore him didn’t help. Snorting coldly, he leaned back up against the cell wall and began to ponder his misery. Sighing, he thought back to how glorious his life had been as a major general on the Great Wall, and how amazing things had been in the River-Defying Sect.

“Oh Junwan, I miss you so much. And you too, Xiaomei....” For some reason, he then thought of Mistress Red-Dust, and after that, Chen Hetian, and his anger surged.

However, sitting around moping wouldn’t do any good, so after a bit of time passed, he sat up cross-legged and started thinking about what to do next. Unfortunately, no matter how he pondered the situation, he couldn’t come up with any ideas. He had long since tested out his Undying Hex, and found that it was as useless inside Devil Penitentiary as it had been in the labyrinth near the Great Wall.

Now that he was a prisoner, it felt like he was completely and utterly bereft of hope.

“Damn that giant ghost king!” he said through gritted teeth. “And the Bai Clan too. They’re all worthless nobodies! If the three great clans rebel and win, then they’ll definitely come and kill me. If they try, then I’ll just use my demigod soul to fight my way

free!” A fierce gleam appeared in his eyes. “If the giant ghost king wins, then maybe I’ll have a chance of getting out of here. The captain and Deputy Warden Sun might be able to speak up for me, and maybe even Warden Li....”

Bai Xiaochun massaged the bridge of his nose as he contemplated the two possible outcomes. The latter would be the preferred option, whereas the former.... would make it difficult to avoid death. The idea of dying in a fight got Bai Xiaochun so worked up that he started trembling.

“You people are forcing my hand!” Taking a deep breath, he closed his eyes to meditate. After all, the best thing to do in this situation was keep himself in top condition, that way he would be ready to make a move at a moment’s notice.

Time passed. Before long, half a month had gone by. Although Bai Xiaochun remained on alert at all times, nothing much happened. None of the prisoners caused any problems, and the guards would come over on a daily basis to chat and even deliver alcohol and food. Overall, they took good care of him.

From Bai Xiaochun’s perspective, it really was as if he had just changed accommodations and clothing. The guards would even let him out of the cellblock to take a walk whenever he wanted. Generally speaking, his mood was good.

Occasionally, the guards would even ask for his help doing some interrogations. After all, he was still the number one dark inquisitor of Devil Penitentiary.

Chapter 643: Powerful Lu Shiyou

During the half a month that passed after Bai Xiaochun went from being a guard to a prisoner, Giant Ghost City changed. No longer was there a brooding pressure weighing down on the city. Instead, it once again became a hustling, bustling place. As far as most people were concerned, all of the rumors that had been spreading were just that: rumors.

The three great clans continued to buy up all of the souls in Giant Ghost City, just like they had been before. Just about everything went back to normal. The only slight difference was that the ten great marquises of Giant Ghost City, who normally didn't make very many public appearances, were now more commonly seen out in the city.

From all outward appearances, there wasn't anything happening in the city that was particularly noteworthy. As for the three great clans, their deva patriarchs all remained in secluded meditation, or at least, that was what the clans stated publicly.

In secret, the three deva patriarchs were constantly looking up into the sky, as if... they were waiting for something.

Another seven days went by, during which time the people of Giant Ghost City were as busy with their lives as ever. Meanwhile, beneath the moat, in Devil Penitentiary, Bai Xiaochun's life was wonderful. Although he was technically a prisoner, he got special treatment in Cellblock D, to the point where things were almost exactly the same for him as when he had been a guard.

Furthermore, because he was still the number one dark inquisitor, he continued to get interrogation requests from the other three cellblocks. And because he never failed to get information in an interrogation, his fame grew.

Currently, the deputy warden and ten captains from Cellblock B were clustered around him, leading him in the direction of their

cellblock.

“Brother Bai Hao, you’re really doing us a favor here. That Lu Shiyou is a treacherous villain, and no matter what methods we use, we simply can’t get him to tell us where his loot is stashed.”

“That’s right, Brother Bai Hao. If you can get him to talk, we’ll give you thirty percent as your reward.” As the group chattered, they cast smiling glances at Bai Xiaochun. By this point, he was extremely famous, and all of the guards knew that getting on his good side was the path to riches and fortune.

Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily and said, “Ah, no problem at all, my brothers. All Cellblock B has to do is make the request, and I would do everything in my power to help, reward or not.”

His way with words left the group from Cellblock B feeling very pleased. Of course, the traditions of Devil Penitentiary had to be maintained. Whether it was for tradition or to maintain a good relationship, they would give definitely give him a share no matter how polite he was up front.

Before long, they were out of Cellblock D. Along the way, any guards they happened across would smile and call out a greeting to Bai Xiaochun. And of course, he would always return their greetings. That was simply how Bai Xiaochun did things. When people treated him well, he did the same in return, which always led to people feeling more and more pleased with him.

Soon they were in Cellblock B, which wasn’t as big as Cellblock A, but was larger by far than Cellblock D. The cells there were also more impressive, and the prisoners inside them were far more brutal than the prisoners in Cellblock D.

Before long, they came to a stop in front of one particular skull cell, whereupon the deputy warden politely said, “Well, here we are. Now it’s all up to you, Brother Bai Hao.”

Nodding, Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back and

looked at the cell, within which was a middle-aged soul cultivator who was none other than Lu Shiyou. Although the man seemed completely at ease, his eyes widened a bit when he saw Bai Xiaochun; after all, he had heard the rumors about the number one dark inquisitor.

Lu Shiyou smiled, and then spoke in a soft voice, “You don’t need to waste your time with me. I’m not the tight-lipped kind. However, my cultivation base is ruined, and I’m dying. In fact, I won’t last for more than ten years. Therefore, I only have one demand that I’m sure Devil Penitentiary can meet, considering how powerful you people are. I want a hundred beautiful female cultivators per day to keep me comfortable. Ten years from now, when I’m on my deathbed, I’ll tell you all the details about my stash of loot.”

Bai Xiaochun completely ignored his words. After having one of the guards open the cell door, he entered, and black smoke spread out in all directions.

The guards of Cellblock B immediately got excited, whereas Lu Shiyou began to pant. Staring at Bai Xiaochun, he said, “What are you doing!? Just wait ten years! It’s not like I’m afraid of dying or something. If you don’t give me what I want, then I won’t say a word!”

Clearing his throat, Bai Xiaochun said, “Look, let’s talk things over. You’ve heard of me, right? When I ask questions, I frighten even myself! What’s the point of trying to hold out?”

Based on what the guards had told him on the way over, this Lu Shiyou had been a city guard before being locked up.

In terms of why he had been incarcerated, he had no one to blame for the matter but himself. He was the type of person who would seek revenge over the smallest grievance, and would do everything in his power to kill people he didn’t like, then wipe out their entire family. He had also used his authority as a city guard to

raid the headquarters of numerous small clans within the city and take away all their wealth. Over the years, he had built up quite an accumulation of fortune.

If that were all there were to his vices, he might have been able to get away with it all. After all, his status as a city guard made him difficult to deal with. However, he was also a lecherous fellow, and had taken advantage of numerous women during his so-called 'raids'. A few days before, he had forced himself on a female cultivator who happened to be connected to one of the marquises of Giant Ghost City. That was what ultimately led to his downfall. The enraged marquis had his cultivation base crippled, and instead of killing him, had sent him to be locked up in Devil Penitentiary.

In Devil Penitentiary, a goldmine like him was the type that the guards would never let off the hook. However, because he knew he only had a short time to live, he kept making all sorts of demands in exchange for talking. Not only was Cellblock B unable to meet all of his demands, but they didn't want to wait ten years, and thus, had asked for help from Bai Xiaochun.

Backing up a few steps, Lu Shiyou loudly said, "There's no need to talk anything over!"

Bai Xiaochun sighed. So far, he hadn't run into a single prisoner in Devil Penitentiary who had been willing to cooperate. Shaking his head, he patted his bag of holding in very practiced fashion to produce an Aphrodisiac Pill. After crushing it, he sent the resulting powder flying over to Lu Shiyou, who couldn't prevent it from entering his mouth and nose.

Clasped his hands behind his back, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and proudly said, "The people I interrogate always start out refusing to talk, but after a few hours, they won't shut up."

Even as the words left Bai Xiaochun's mouth, Lu Shiyou eyes flickered angrily, and yet, that didn't match the odd expression that appeared on his face at all.

This was a completely different reaction than the prisoners usually gave when Bai Xiaochun performed interrogations. Not only did Lu Shiyou not seem to be in pain at all, but the odd look on his face only lasted for about ten breaths of time before he looked as normal as he had moments before. His skin was covered with a sheen of sweat, and his eyes were shining as he looked at Bai Xiaochun and said, “What happened? Do you have more?”

He actually seemed a bit anxious, like someone might be when they were interrupted right in the middle of something vitally important.

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun blurted, shocked. This was his first time encountering a situation like this. Looking down at some of the residual medicinal powder in his hand, he briefly wondered if he had grabbed the wrong pill. However, after confirming that it was an Aphrodisiac Pill, he looked back up in at Lu Shiyou in disbelief.

Eyeing the medicinal power in Bai Xiaochun’s hand, Lu Shiyou said, “Give me some more! Hurry up, give me more....”

Beads of sweat popped out on Bai Xiaochun’s forehead at the oddness of the situation. Waving his hand, he sent the residual powder over to Lu Shiyou.

Excited, Lu Shiyou leaped to his feet and swallowed the powder. A tremor then ran through him, and he leaned back against the cell wall, closing his eyes as if in intoxication. By this point, Bai Xiaochun’s scalp was tingling in shock, and he subconsciously stepped back a few paces, looking at Lu Shiyou as if he were a ghost.

“What’s... what’s going on? It’s not working? He... he actually likes it?” Bai Xiaochun felt like his world was crumbling around him. Never could he possibly have imagined that someone would actually enjoy the effects of the Aphrodisiac Pill....

“He’s... a complete pervert!”

Before Bai Xiaochun could recover from his shock, Lu Shiyou shivered. Other than being soaked with sweat, he had now gone completely back to his normal state. Opening his eyes, he shouted, “Do you have more? Give me more!”

Bai Xiaochun was so shocked by Lu Shiyou’s behavior that he was panting. However, his curiosity was also piqued, so he produced another Aphrodisiac Pill and threw it over.

Lu Shiyou grabbed it excitedly and stuffed it into his mouth. Enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, after which he madly yelled, “Give me another! No, give me three!!”

A strange expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun’s face as he produced another pill. If Lu Shiyou’s cultivation base hadn’t been crippled, then he would have attacked Bai Xiaochun to try to take it. At that point, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and awkwardly said, “Um... tell me where your loot is stashed, then I’ll give you another one.”

Chapter 644: A Secret!

“You!!” Lu Shiyou said through gritted teeth. He wanted to refuse, but at the moment, the torment he was feeling actually surpassed the torment normally felt by prisoners who ate the pill....

Other prisoners felt the pain of being unable to release the pent-up pressure, but because of Lu Shiyou’s unique nature, the pain caused by not being able to consume one of the pills was almost impossible to bear.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit embarrassed; even he felt that what he was doing was a bit shameless.... This was a case of taking advantage of someone against their will, of blackmailing them in a key moment.

Blinking a few times, he said, “Just talk, alright? Tell me what you know, and I’ll give you another....”

Lu Shiyou’s eyes seemed to contain all of the passion burning in his body, all of the fire that normally pulsed in his qi passageways. In fact, he only managed to hold out for a few breaths of time before telling Bai Xiaochun everything he knew.

In turn, Bai Xiaochun didn’t go back on his word. After getting the answers to his questions, he gave Lu Shiyou the Aphrodisiac Pill. After consuming it, his skin flushed bright red, causing Bai Xiaochun to sigh as a strange expression appeared on his face.

“This is the first time I’ve ever seen anything like this. It seems that I need to change my Aphrodisiac Pill formula a bit.” After observing Lu Shiyou for a bit longer, he turned to leave.

However, just when he was about to walk out of the cell, Lu Shiyou shouted madly, “Fellow Daoist Bai, wait! I... I want another one of those medicinal pills!! I’m... I’m almost there! Almost! Just give me another one, alright...?”

Lu Shiyou was shaking visibly, and his eyes shone with an unprecedented level of desire.

The sight left Bai Xiaochun completely shaken.

“You already took three pills!! Are you trying to get yourself killed? Eating too many of the things isn’t good for you!”

“Just give me three more.... Fellow Daoist Bai, I beg of you, please just give me three more!!” Lu Shiyou would never have been able to guess that Bai Xiaochun’s medicinal pills would have such a profound effect on him. It had started a fire within him that somehow caused signs of recovery to appear within his crippled cultivation base. Ever since his cultivation base had been destroyed, his life had been one of despair, with nothing but death ahead of him. But suddenly, he had hope!

How could Bai Xiaochun possibly agree to his request? After all, he was in the Wildlands, with no way to concoct more medicine, and no way to replenish his stock. Once he ran out of medicinal pills, it would be difficult to maintain his reputation as a dark inquisitor.

“No way, giving you so many would be a waste.”

“Fellow Daoist Bai, I... I know a secret. If you give me three of those pills, I’ll tell it to you!”

“I’m not interested!” Bai Xiaochun replied, not even looking back over his shoulder.

With that, he took another step forward, placing him right at the edge of the black mist. As for Lu Shiyou, his eyes were bloodshot with anxiety as he blurted, “It’s a secret about Giant Ghost City! Once you know it, you’ll be safe from anything in the city under the level of a demigod!”

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, he stopped in place and looked suspiciously back at Lu Shiyou.

When Lu Shiyou saw Bai Xiaochun looking back, his heart

flushed with excitement, and he quickly began to reveal the details of the secret. As Bai Xiaochun listened, his heart began to pound, and his eyes became as wide as saucers.

“What did you just say? Giant Ghost City actually has hundreds of teleportation portals in it? Most of them lead to other random locations within city limits? But one can teleport you tens of thousands of kilometers away from the city?

“And some of them are booby trapped? And there’s even a trap golem in one of them? It can only be summoned once, for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, but is as strong as a deva??”

Bai Xiaochun almost couldn’t believe what he was hearing. His heart was pounding, sending blood coursing at top speed through his veins. As Lu Shiyou continued to explain his secret, Bai Xiaochun learned that one of his ancestors had been a famous grandmaster of spell formations, and had been involved in the construction of Giant Ghost City. He had been the one who actually set up the city’s defensive spell formations.

Of course, he had been forced into the matter by the original giant ghost king, and had been given no choice other than to create the city’s grand spell formation. However, he knew that because of the secrets he had been privy to, he would most likely be put to death at the end of the project. Therefore, he had created a path of escape for himself.

Throughout the construction of Giant Ghost City, he had left all sorts of traps here and there. The grand spell formation itself was riddled with smaller spell formations that not even the original giant ghost king had been aware of.

Unfortunately, despite concealing the matter from the original giant ghost king, he hadn’t been able to escape the fate of death in the end. However, the information about the network of smaller spell formations was passed down from generation to generation among his descendants.

Although it wasn't clear how he had managed to get the information out, it was never discovered by the original giant ghost king, nor by any of the following generations, all the way down to the ninth. Therefore, it was likely that the current ninth generation giant ghost king didn't know about it either.

Lu Shiyou went on to explain that the reason he had fallen into the practice of plundering the wealth of the smaller clans in the city was for the purpose of being able to activate the spell formations in the city. Although those teleportation formations were ancient, and many had fallen into disrepair, there were some that still worked.

However, they needed large amounts of soul medicine to be activated. Unfortunately, Lu Shiyou had never saved up enough soul medicine, which was why he had been unable to escape when the marquis came for him.

Besides, once he activated the spell formations, the giant ghost king would never have let him off the hook.

The news Bai Xiaochun was learning battered his heart with waves of shock. Of course, at the moment, he had no way to confirm whether or not the information Lu Shiyou was giving him was true or not. If it was... then it was of monumental importance to Bai Xiaochun.

“This might be my chance to get away! If the Bai Clan comes after me, then as long as I can get out of Devil Penitentiary itself, I could use those teleportation portals to make a complete getaway!!” Heart trembling with excitement, he settled his thoughts and asked for some more details about the teleportation formations and their locations. According to the list he was given, there were a total of 371 formations. After making a complete record of them, Bai Xiaochun tossed three Aphrodisiac Pills over to the anxious Lu Shiyou.

As soon as Lu Shiyou had them, he tossed them into his mouth.

Moments later, his face turned bright red, and he began to tremble violently as his previously blocked-up qi passageways began to surge on the verge of opening up. At that point, a look of hesitation appeared in Bai Xiaochun's eyes as he considered whether or not to kill the man to keep him quiet.

To kill him would be the safest thing. After all, if the information about the teleportation formations was true, then it would be very important that the information not get out, lest it create a major danger for Bai Xiaochun.

“This guy is vicious and merciless. Definitely a villain. He's also no fool. Considering how important my medicinal pills are to him, and the nature of the things he just told me, there's no way he didn't think about the consequences of his actions....” At this point, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flashed.

“He must be lying! What a treacherous rogue! Hmph. Well, I'm no idiot....” Feeling very superior to Lu Shiyu, he waited a bit until the man let out a howl, and then shook back and forth a few times. He was now panting, and covered with both sweat and filth that had been expelled from within him.

Soon, his eyes regained their focus, and he looked up at Bai Xiaochun. Chuckling, he said, “I never thought I would wake up. I assumed you would kill me after learning my secrets.”

Of course, he had had no other options. Considering how important the medicinal pills were to him, he had decided to gamble a bit. Besides, if Bai Xiaochun did kill him, he had a secret weapon, something that would make anyone who used the teleportation formations regret doing so.

“You didn't kill me because you wanted to give me another chance to talk, isn't that right, Bai Hao? Alright, I'll tell you something else. Among the more than 300 spell formations, there are 27 that require a special sealing mark to use. Without the sealing mark, you'll be stuck on the outside. Furthermore, most of

the teleportation formations only link to other places in the city. There's only one... that leads to a spot 50,000 kilometers outside of the city!

“Bai Hao, I know that you betrayed the Bai Clan, and were also imprisoned by orders from the giant ghost king. You probably want to get out of here just as much as I do. Therefore, when the time comes, just bring me with you. I can open those 27 locked formations, and can also take you to the one leads outside of the city!

“Without me, you won't be fleeing anywhere! And by the way, the formation that leads outside of the city is also one of the ones that needs the sealing mark to enter!” Lu Shiyou's eyes glittered with deceit; by this point, he was absolutely confident that this Bai Hao would agree to his demands. Then, when the time came to make his actual escape, he would simply kill Bai Hao and escape on his own.

“I don't have any other choice,” he thought, his heart bursting with greed. “I need those medicinal pills, and this Bai Hao definitely has more of them in his bag of holding. He's dead one way or another!”

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was no fool. Considering how Lu Shiyou felt about the Aphrodisiac Pills, it seemed obvious that he hoped to get free of the cell and kill Bai Xiaochun for his supply. Before doing anything else, though, Bai Xiaochun decided to confirm what he had just heard. “You can only get into those formations with a special sealing mark?”

“That's right!” Lu Shiyou said with a pleased smile.

A strange look could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face as he proceeded to ask, “Interesting. So without that sealing mark, I would be stuck on the outside. Presumably there would be some danger involved with trying to break inside?”

Looking a bit surprised, Lu Shiyou nodded.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and then cautiously asked, “And uh... all you have to do is get into the teleportation formation to activate it?”

“What’s with all the questions?” Lu Shiyou barked, annoyed. “Cut the bullcrap. The only way to get into the formations is with the special sealing mark. Once you’re inside, of course anyone can activate them!” Lu Shiyou was completely convinced that he had pulled the wool over this Bai Hao’s eyes. They both had the same goal now, and it only made sense for them to cooperate. If he didn’t agree to cooperate, then Lu Shiyou would simply tell his secret to some other people to ruin his plans, assuming he stayed alive long enough.

“Are you sure about all that?” Bai Xiaochun asked, his eyes shining.

“Absolutely sure!” Lu Shiyou replied, frowning. All of a sudden, he felt like something was off about the situation, although he wasn’t sure what.

After getting his confirmation, Bai Xiaochun smiled. As soon as Lu Shiyou saw that smile, his face fell.

Before he could move, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, sending a blast of wind out that pierced into Lu Shiyou’s forehead.

“You--” Lu Shiyou’s eyes went wide with disbelief. Never could he have imagined that, after everything he had just said, Bai Hao would actually kill him.

Chapter 645: Rebellion!

“You should have said so earlier. Scared me half to death.” Bai Xiaochun flicked his sleeve in distaste. Although a special sealing mark was needed to get into those 27 special spell formations, he could simply do so with his Undying Hex....

“If I can get through the Great Wall’s spell formation, then there’s no need to even mention some little teleportation formations.” Sticking his chin up, he looked down at the dead Lu Shiyou and felt very proud of coming out on top in this battle of wits.

“You can only blame your lack of insight into my abilities!” With that, he strutted out of the cell.

Although the death of Lu Shiyou caused some complications, it wasn’t anything the guards of Cellblock B couldn’t take care of. After giving the deputy warden the information regarding the man’s loot stash, the fact that he was dead didn’t really matter.

Of course, the guards weren’t stupid. They realized that Bai Xiaochun must have uncovered some other secret, and had been forced to silence Lu Shiyou. However, when Bai Xiaochun proposed forgetting about the thirty percent cut that was owed to him, the guards felt much better.

After all, the official rules allowed for the possibility of inquisitors coming across secret information. As long as the inquisitor was well-liked by everyone else, it usually wouldn’t cause a problem.

Bai Xiaochun’s way of handling the situation not only forestalled any questions, but also left everyone involved feeling pleased. With a few parting words, Bai Xiaochun left and headed back to Cellblock D, in very high spirits. He even decided to contact Zhou Yixing. Earlier, Li Xu had put Devil Penitentiary on complete lockdown, and any attempts to communicate with the outside had

been fruitless.

But now, his communication went through. Bai Xiaochun quickly relayed a portion of the information about the spell formations, and told Zhou Yixing to go confirm its validity. The next day, he got word back.

Zhou Yixing sounded completely incredulous as he said, “The spell formations were all there, milord!! Each and every location was really strange, and in fact, impossible to see into. Not even divine sense would work. In fact, I couldn’t actually see any evidence of spell formations. If you hadn’t told me of the exact locations, I would never have been able to find them.”

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, he breathed a sigh of relief, and then excitedly clenched his hands into fists.

“So it really is true! Hahaha! With those teleportation formations, I have a much better chance of getting away!

“The three great clans and the giant ghost king are currently at each other’s throats... once the chaos breaks out, I definitely won’t wait around for the Bai Clan to come looking for me. I’ll get out of Devil Penitentiary and then make my way to freedom!”

With that, Bai Xiaochun began to wait patiently. Another half a month went by. Although there were many people in the city who knew that the rebellion was coming, when it actually happened, it still came as a shock!

The first astonishing development occurred, not within the three great clans, but rather... in the form of a huge, illusory axe that appeared in the sky above Giant Ghost City!

It was fully 30,000 meters tall, and radiated shocking energy. The instant it appeared, it sliced down through the air toward the huge giant ghost statue in the middle of the city.

Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth, and at the same time, a roar of rage erupted from the royal palace at the head of the statue.

“How dare you, King Nine Serenities!!” Even as the voice echoed out, the illusory image of a giant ghost appeared in the air, which snarled viciously as it unleashed a fist strike to meet the incoming axe!

As the two bore down on each other, indescribable power rippled out in all directions, casting all creation into chaos and even ripping the air apart!!

“I’m only doing this to repay a debt, King Giant Ghost! You’re on your own now.” Laughter accompanied the axe as it descended, along with intense rumbling sounds. Then, the axe and the giant ghost met....

Booming rumbles filled the air!

A massive sound that surpassed heavenly thunder rippled out with the power to destroy the heavens and crush the earth. A huge shockwave spread out, crushing everything in its path and even ripping rifts open in the sky.

Giant Ghost City was instantly thrown into chaos as countless people looked up to see what was happening. The sight that met their eyes was the shadowy incarnation of a giant ghost being completely destroyed by the huge axe!!

“Th-this... this....”

“Heavens! The giant ghost king... can’t even fight back!!”

“This is impossible!!”

To the utter shock of countless onlookers, the huge axe ripped through the illusory giant ghost, and then proceeded onward toward Giant Ghost City. Thankfully, that was when a shimmering shield of light sprang up, which was none other than the city’s grand spell formation.

Next, an ear-splitting boom spread out, causing cracks to appear all over the spell formation shield. The shield held, and the axe faded away, but then, more laughter rang out.

“So, you really are in your decay period, King Giant Ghost! Well, whether or not you survive this calamity has nothing to do with me. Farewell!” The mad laughter then slowly faded away into nothing.

Everyone who had witnessed this scene was completely shaken, and suddenly realized that... the rebellion was taking place on this very day!

It was at that point that six beams of light suddenly shot into the air above the city. Within those beams of light were the six of the ten heavenly marquises that ruled Giant Ghost City. Those marquises each controlled one of the ten armies stationed in the city. As for the remaining four heavenly marquises, they did nothing.

“Today is the day you meet your end, King Giant Ghost!!”

“Die, King Giant Ghost!!”

Of the six heavenly marquises, none were devas, but some of them were half a step into the Deva Realm. Their combined attack on the royal palace instantly caused Giant Ghost City to tremble, and yet, that was when a roar of rage erupted from one of the statue's hands. Duke Deathcrier appeared, his expression grim as he released a shout as cold as midwinter snow, filled with the power of his deva cultivation base.

“What gall!”

However, even as Duke Deathcrier flew out to intercept the six heavenly marquises, a sigh could be heard from the giant ghost statue's other hand.

“Brother Deathcrier,” said a sad voice, “I know we've been friends for years, but... now we're enemies!” A blurry figure suddenly appeared on the statue's other hand.

It was none other than... one of Giant Ghost City's five dukes... Duke Netherworld!

“You're also betraying his highness the king, Netherworld?!?!”

Killing intent instantly appeared in Duke Deathcrier's eyes as he shifted targets.

It was in this moment that the three great clans burst into action.

Three shocking beams of light rose up into the air, which then shot toward the giant ghost statue. Within those beams of light were the three deva patriarchs of the three clans.

The reason why the three patriarchs hadn't made a move until now was because they were waiting for the exploratory attack made by the nine serenities king. Now that they were convinced that the giant ghost king was weak, they were eager to attack.

The three of them shot through the air at shocking speed, joining the six heavenly marquises to attack the royal palace!

All of this was merely a prelude to the chaos to come. Of the ten marquises, six had turned traitor. Of the five dukes, four were rebelling. It was a situation the likes of which did not occur often in the Wildlands.

In fact, it was an extremely rare development. That was especially true considering... they were fighting against a king! They were... trying to kill a demigod!!

“Your secret is out, King Giant Ghost! The technique you cultivate has a fatal flaw, and although we couldn't calculate the specific date of your decay period, it's now obvious that you're in the middle of it! It's time for you to die!!”

“I've been waiting for this day for a long time, King Giant Ghost! Today, you will be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt!!”

The three deva patriarchs shot like sharp blades through the air, leaving streaks of light behind them as they slammed into the giant ghost statue.

BOOOOOOOOMMM!

The giant ghost statue simply couldn't withstand the force of the

blow. Cracks spread out across its surface, and the royal palace began to collapse. As the rubble and dust spread out, a tall, muscular man appeared, wearing a violet robe embroidered with a serpentine dragon, and a kingly crown.

He appeared to be middle-aged, and was somehow threatening without being angry. He also radiated an aura that was completely shocking. He was none other than... the giant ghost king!

“So, you’ve finally made your move....” he said as he floated up into the air, looking around at the three deva patriarchs and the six heavenly marquises. He didn’t seem nervous at all, and in fact, was even smiling. Furthermore, that smile seemed to contain... a profound level of self-confidence!

“I wasn’t sure exactly who among you would be joining this rebellion, so I was waiting for you to make the first move before wiping you out. Now, the moment has arrived... and unfortunately for you people, I’m not done playing my little game.” From the giant ghost king’s statement, it was obvious how confident he was, and it caused the three deva patriarchs’ faces to flicker.

However, there was no going back now. Gritting their teeth, they began to perform incantation gestures.

“Wood Dimension: Killing Seal!!” they roared in unison. Instantly, a huge vortex sprang into being, filled with countless souls!

All of them were wood-type souls, and as they descended, they began to explode, creating something like a huge sealing mark that covered all of Giant Ghost City and filled it with the power of the element of wood!

As soon as the energy rolling off of the giant ghost king encountered that wood-type power, it melted as quickly as a snowflake fallen into boiling water!

Chapter 646: The Giant Ghost King's Game!

Laughing loudly, the Bai Clan patriarch said, “You can be controlled with wood-type power, King Giant Ghost, and even more so during your decay period. How will you fight back now?!”

With that, he shot toward the giant ghost king, joined by the patriarchs from the Cai and Chen Clans.

The look on the giant ghost king’s face remained as calm as before. His energy and his cultivation base were being rapidly eaten away by the wood dimension, to the point where he was no longer in the Demigod Realm. He was now in the Deva Realm, and in fact, his power was diminishing so rapidly that it would soon be that of the Nascent Soul stage!

And yet, he seemed completely calm, with the same confident smile on his face, as if he were facing nothing more than a group of clowns. Of course, that only made the patriarchs and heavenly marquises even more nervous.

Intense rumbling sounds filled the air as the giant ghost king single-handedly took on three devas and six near-devas!

Even as the shocking scene played out up above, the armed forces of the three clans, as well as the soldiers of the six heavenly marquises’ armies, all began to pour into the city.

The chief of the Bai Clan led the clan elders in a murderous charge toward the moat, joined by many of the Cai Clan elders.

“The heavens are changing, Bai Hao! You won’t escape this tribulation!” The clan chief’s heart was bursting with anticipation; he had been waiting for this day for a long time, and in fact, couldn’t care less about the giant ghost king. His goal was to skin Bai Hao alive!

As chaos spread out down below, the patriarchs of the three clans, as well as the six heavenly marquises, were engaged in fierce

combat with the giant ghost king. Unexpectedly, the fighting already seemed to be on the verge of ending. One boom after another rang out, and blood sprayed out of the giant ghost king's mouth. His cultivation base was already down to the Nascent Soul level, and yet, the same self-confident smile could be seen on his face. In fact, it even seemed to contain a bit of ridicule, as though he were sneering at the fact that no one had seen through to the truth yet!

However, it was also obvious that the truth would be revealed soon. It was at that point that, all of a sudden, the giant ghost king's body suddenly flickered, as though it were not corporeal. His hand turned blurry, and then the Bai Clan patriarch suddenly shouted, "Something's wrong!! He's... he's a clone!!! Dammit! He's a clone! This isn't the giant ghost king's true self! He's an expendable clone!!!"

The other two patriarchs began to tremble as looks of complete disbelief spread out across their faces.

"Impossible! Because of the unique way divine will works among demigod experts, they can't create clones more powerful than the Nascent Soul stage! Demigod Realm clones are an impossibility!!"

"How could he possibly have a clone like this!? And furthermore... how could we have never realized it over all these years!?!?"

The three deva patriarchs weren't the only ones to be shocked. Duke Deathcrier and Duke Netherworld were also profoundly shaken, and both had expressions of utter disbelief on their faces.

The Bai Clan patriarch gritted his teeth bitterly as he looked at the giant ghost king. Finally, he understood why he had been so calm this entire time.... And now, he realized that everything was exactly as the giant ghost king had described: a game. "So... this is your secret weapon. This... is why you were so self-confident...."

It was a game that the giant ghost king had carefully set up, and

was sure he would not lose....

The probing for information, the provocation, the compromises, the placations, pretending to be weak, none of them were real. All of it had been a huge game....

As everyone reeled in shock, the giant ghost king chuckled. By this point, his body had almost completely faded away. And yet, his laughter still contained a type of supreme and ultimate power that echoed out through heaven and earth.

“Now you understand, and yet, it's too late. This has all been nothing more than a game to me.... So what if you know about my decay period? And so what if you know about my weakness to wood-type power?”

“My decay period didn't just start right now. In fact, it's almost over. In three months, I'll be fully recovered.... And that... is when I'll return, and we can all reminisce about old times.” The giant ghost king shook his head as he looked around scornfully. That look of disdain was like a big palm that slapped all of the rebels directly in the face.

“You only have three months. Let's see if you can find my true self during that time.... That is phase two of my little game.” He threw his head back and laughed uproariously as he slowly faded out of existence.

The three deva patriarchs and six heavenly marquises were all having trouble breathing steadily, and couldn't keep the terror out of their eyes. As of this point, they had no choice to believe what the giant ghost king had just told them. And they knew that they only had three months.

If they didn't find the giant ghost king's true self within three months... then they and their clans would be exterminated. They could flee, of course. The Wildlands was a big place. But with the giant ghost king at his peak, they would never be able to escape him!

“Find him!” shouted the Bai Clan patriarch. “Spare nothing! Pour all resources into the search. We must find where the giant ghost king’s true self is! He’s still in his decay period, so if we find him, we’ll live. If we don’t find him, we’re all dead!!

“He said three months, but we can’t trust him. One month! We have to find him in one month!

“Somehow he managed to do the unexpected and create a clone. To control that clone, his true self would have to be somewhere nearby. I’d say there’s an eighty to ninety percent chance that he’s actually in Giant Ghost City!”

The Bai Clan patriarch's heart was already filled with despair. They had been beaten. They had prepared for years and built up power, and yet, had been completely routed. It was almost funny. How could any of them have ever imagined that the giant ghost king would somehow be able to create a demigod clone, which was supposed to be impossible...?

“How could he have a clone like that!?!?” Eyes bloodshot, the Chen Clan patriarch shouted out similar orders, and even started flying around to search personally.

The Cai Clan patriarch, as well as the six heavenly marquises, were all trembling in fear, but similarly began to carry out searches. They held nothing back, searching everywhere in Giant Ghost City to try to find the giant ghost king’s true self.

Duke Netherworld was in no mood to fight Duke Deathcrier any longer, and withdrew from the fight. As for Duke Deathcrier, he was not inclined to continue fighting either, and simply hovered there, laughing at the top of his lungs.

No one bothered to ask him where the giant ghost king’s true self was. Everyone knew that there was no way the giant ghost king would trust information that important to anyone. Time would be better spent searching rather than asking pointless questions.

And they were right. Duke Deathcrier hadn't even been aware that the person he had been dealing with for so long... was only a clone!

As the three great clans and the forces of the six heavenly marquises began to search Giant Ghost City, Bai Xiaochun was sitting in his cell in Cellblock D in Devil Penitentiary, looking around in boredom at one of his fellow inmates, the old man with the red birthmark who had offended the giant ghost king years ago.

Sighing, he said, "Hey old man, I've been in here for a while now, and I've talked to you a whole bunch. Are you ever going to say anything back?"

Originally, he had felt like he and this old man could commiserate with each other as fellow sufferers. However, the man had never even looked at him, much less said anything.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun had decided to just ignore him. However, today, the old man actually opened his eyes, and furthermore, his expression had flickered a few times. Curious, Bai Xiaochun asked him a few more questions, only to be ignored.

"Don't you know who I am, old man?" Bai Xiaochun yelled. "Listen up. I'm the number one dark inquisitor in Devil Penitentiary. It's not going to do you any good to piss me off!"

However, the old man simply sat there, frowning and ignoring Bai Xiaochun.

Glaring at the humiliation, Bai Xiaochun gave a cold snort and was just about to say something else when the entrance to the cellblock opened, and the captain of Squad 9 rushed in, followed by several of the guards who Bai Xiaochun was particularly close to. Alarmed expressions could be seen on their faces as they rushed over.

"Something big is happening, Bai Hao!" the captain said

urgently. “You have to come with us, right away! The three great clans are rebelling, and they’re being joined by six of the heavenly marquises! All of Giant Ghost City is in chaos.... The Bai Clan isn’t going to let you off the hook. You need to get out of here, and that’s just what we’re going to help you do!”

With that, the captain grabbed his arm to drag him away.

Although Bai Xiaochun had long since reckoned that the three great clans would make their move soon, he was still surprised that it was happening so suddenly.

But then the captain explained how the giant ghost king’s cultivation base had dropped because of his decay period.... Except, the giant ghost king everyone had seen was actually a clone, and the three great clans were now searching for his true self. All of this information struck Bai Xiaochun deeply with shock.

Now he finally understood why the giant ghost king hadn’t just wiped out the three great clans. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to, it was that he was in his decay period, and couldn’t....

That decay period was also why the three great clans felt confident enough to launch their rebellion. However... in the end, they fell into the giant ghost king’s game.

“Damn you, King Giant Ghost! If you want to play games, fine, but why did you have to drag me into it!?” Depressed, and yet completely helpless about the situation, Bai Xiaochun knew that he was in a dangerous situation. The enraged Bai Clan would not just let him go, and therefore, he needed to escape as quickly as possible.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he gratefully clasped the captain on the shoulder.

“Brothers,” he said, addressing the captain and the guards, “thank you for the immense kindness you’ve shown. I’ll never forget it. Now’s not the time for talking, though, I need to get out

of here....” However, even as he was about to leave... he suddenly heard the voice of the little turtle in his ear!

“Hey, ya little punk, what are you so anxious to leave for? We have a chance to make some money here, are you in?”

Chapter 647: Clean Him Out!

“Definitely not!” Bai Xiaochun said without the slightest hesitation. He even rolled his eyes; as far as he was concerned, there wasn’t anything that could possibly be more important than his poor little life.

Outside in the city, the three great clans were going crazy searching for the giant ghost king’s true self, which meant that this was a very critical moment for Bai Xiaochun.

The chief of the Bai Clan would definitely take advantage of the chaos to try to kill him....

In a moment like this, Bai Xiaochun was in no mood to think about making money. That was especially true considering it was the little turtle who had suggested it. Over the years, the little turtle had caused one troublesome incident after another, so at the moment, Bai Xiaochun simply ignored him and hurried along with the captain, worried that he might not be able to get out of the prison in time.

Everyone in Devil Penitentiary was completely on edge. Guards and prisoners alike were rushing toward the entrance of the cellblock.

At this point, the little turtle anxiously flew out of Bai Xiaochun’s bag of holding and landed on his shoulder.

“Ai, don’t be like that!” he transmitted. “I’m talking about a lot of money here, the kind of opportunity that only comes around once in a blue moon. It’s right here in front of us! Come on, don’t leave, ya little punk!”

Bai Xiaochun looked over at the little turtle and could see that he seemed really anxious. The turtle glanced behind them and then urgently continued to transmit his voice.

“Alright, listen punk, I know where the giant ghost king’s true

self is!!” Originally, the little turtle had planned to use a different tactic to try to attract Bai Xiaochun’s attention. However, considering that Bai Xiaochun was clearly intent on leaving, he felt he didn’t have any other choice than to tell the truth. Furthermore, he was sure that this new revelation would provoke a response.

And he was right. This time, Bai Xiaochun’s reaction was more in line with what the turtle had expected.

A tremor ran through him, and his eyes went wide as he said, “What!?!?”

This turn of events was too sudden! The three great clans were turning the city upside down to look for the giant ghost king’s true self, and yet the little turtle actually knew where he was?

Despite his shock, though, Bai Xiaochun continued to head toward the entrance of the cellblock.

“What does that have to do with me?” he transmitted back. “You listen here, little turtle, the most important thing right now is my poor little life. You got that?!” As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, getting involved in this matter between the giant ghost king and the three great clans would be far too dangerous.

“What are you doing!?” the little turtle replied anxiously. “Listen to me, ya little punk. Slow down! Ah, fine... listen, Bai Xiaochun. You know the old guy in the cell right across from you, with the red birthmark on his face? That’s the giant ghost king’s true self!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s mind reeled in shock, and he even gasped. A look of complete and utter incredulity appeared on his face.

“He’s... he’s the giant ghost king?!?!?!?” Even his aura was destabilized a bit. This bit of information from the little turtle was completely shocking. All of a sudden, the thought back to what that old man with the red birthmark on his face looked like.

“Furthermore, Lord Turtle can tell that giant ghost king is in the

middle of a decay period. In other words, he's weaker now than ever before. The chance to clean out a demigod expert is the kind of thing that only comes along once in 10,000 years!

“Think about it, punk. A demigod expert! He's the giant ghost king! A demigod king! How much treasure do you think he has!? If we clean him out, we'll be ultra rich! This opportunity... heavens! I've only come across chances like this a couple times in my entire life! Y-y-you... you can't really be planning to just run away?!?!” By this point, the little turtle was so anxious his voice was transmitted in the form of a shout. Fearful of losing the opportunity, he had actually revealed everything he knew.

Sensing that Bai Xiaochun's interest was piqued, the little turtle's excitement began to grow.

“He's the giant ghost king, little punk!” he gushed. “We can clean him out! Clean him out!! Clean him out!!!”

“How is that even possible...?” Bai Xiaochun thought, stopping in place, his heart beginning to race.

The captain and the other guards looked back in shock, various expressions flashing across their faces.

“What's wrong, Bai Hao?” the captain said anxiously. “Hurry up, let's go!”

“Wait just one moment....” Bai Xiaochun said.

Feeling very conflicted, he transmitted a question to the little turtle. “Are you sure?”

The little turtle was trembling with indescribable excitement, and also trying to look as impressive and incredible as possible as he replied, “Of course I'm sure. I've been keeping my eye on the giant ghost king from the first time I saw him. Why do you think I woke up back then anyway? I could tell what was going on as soon as I saw him, and was just waiting until his decay period hit!

“Hahaha! This is the moment I've been waiting for. At the most,

he's at Core Formation right now. Listen, there's nothing to worry about. The giant ghost king is a crafty fellow. Nobody would ever possibly think that he would actually be hiding as a prisoner in this place. It's just too bad that he ran into Lord Turtle!"

Bai Xiaochun thought back to what the little turtle had said back when he woke up... that the giant ghost king smelled like treasure....

"This little turtle...." Bai Xiaochun thought, his heart beginning to race even faster, and his eyes beginning to shine. If he had really found the giant ghost king's true self, and the man was currently weak, then just as the little turtle had said, it would be an incredible opportunity. The benefits of cleaning him out... would be difficult to even describe.

In fact, it could also be a secret weapon to cause some problems for the three great clans.... Of course, whether it was simply robbing him, or using his status in a clever way, both would be very dangerous.

Even when Bai Xiaochun got very excited, he wouldn't lose his sense of reason. Hesitating, he said, "The giant ghost king is a demigod. Even though he's hiding here, he definitely would have some trump cards prepared to defend himself just in case."

"Don't worry, his trump card is none other than the invisible spell formation in the stone turtle that contains Devil Penitentiary. Once that spell formation is activated, it will be almost as strong as the Demigod Realm. Devas would be able to break through it, but not right away!

"Unfortunately for the giant ghost king, he was just unlucky enough to run into Lord Turtle. Hahaha! I wouldn't dare to speak about any other spell formation, but this is a turtle spell formation. Lord Turtle can't control it, but I can nullify its effects, at least temporarily. In fact, I already did! Come on, let's clean him out. We'll definitely succeed!

“He's a demigod, he definitely has a bunch of treasure on him.” The little turtle's eyes were shining with unprecedented excitement, and he was shaking visibly.

“Will he have a deva soul?” Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes bloodshot. The fact that a demigod king was right there waiting to be grabbed caused even him to start to go a bit crazy.

“Of course!” the little turtle screeched. “To you, deva souls are priceless, but demigods can get them without even trying. Hurry up! Let's just grab him and get out of the turtle statue. I can only keep the spell formation suppressed for so long. Once my control slips and the giant ghost king is able to control it again, we'll be in great danger!”

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and looked over at the captain and other guards, who were anxiously waiting for him to speak. Gritting his teeth, he said, “Captain, you go on ahead. But please give me the key to the cells. There's a guy back there who pissed me off, and I want to teach him a lesson before I leave.”

With that, Bai Xiaochun clasped hands and bowed deeply.

At any other time, the captain would never have been able to agree to this request. But considering everyone was completely on edge, he looked at Bai Xiaochun for a moment, and then sighed and said, “Alright, Brother Bai Hao, you're on your own now. We'll take off now.”

Naturally, the captain could tell that Bai Hao had some secret he wasn't willing to divulge. However, that didn't matter. Even if Bai Hao wanted to kill one of the prisoners, it wouldn't matter in the end. The captain tossed a command medallion over to him, then turned and left with the other guards.

Bai Xiaochun grabbed the command medallion that acted as the key to the cells, then adjusted his aura and settled his thoughts. He knew that if he slipped up in the slightest way right now, he could get into a lot of trouble.

But his decision was made. Gritting his teeth, he began to speed toward the cell that contained the old man with the red birthmark on his face. Along the way, he had a short transmitted conversation with the little turtle to confirm that the old man was in the Core Formation stage.

However, he was still feeling nervous. Although the little turtle didn't notice, he looked up in thought for a moment. Then he lowered his voice and said, "No, little turtle, it's too dangerous. He's a demigod! If you're wrong about everything, nothing will happen to you. You could escape any time you wanted. But I would lose my poor little life. You fly over into my hand. That way, if the situation gets dangerous, we can face it together! If we're going to clean out a demigod together, you need to show some good faith!"

Chapter 648: How Exciting....

The little turtle was completely wrapped up in the idea of getting some treasure. On top of that, the giant ghost king's true self was just up ahead. Therefore, in response to Bai Xiaochun's words, he immediately flew out and allowed Bai Xiaochun to grab him.

“Hurry up, hurry up!” the little turtle rebuked anxiously. “What's with all the delays? Fudge! The chance to clean out a demigod is a good thing! Why are you hesitating? Rewards come only with risk! Without taking chances, how can you ever profit?!”

Chuckling inwardly, Bai Xiaochun kept his tone sincere as he said, “I'm just young and don't have any experience in this kind of thing. My apologies, Lord Turtle. Please don't take any offense, sir.”

With that, he headed toward the cell that contained the giant ghost king's true self.

This was the first time the little turtle had ever heard Bai Xiaochun speak so politely to him, and it felt wonderful. Very proud of himself, he decided that he should take some time to educate Bai Xiaochun a bit more in the future, to prove how wise, intelligent, and courageous he himself was.

Even as the little turtle reveled in his own pride, Bai Xiaochun flew closer to the giant ghost king's cell. Inside was the old man with the red birthmark, who slowly looked up, his eyes shining with a sharp light, and a bit of disdain.

It was the type of look that someone might give to a bug.

However, before the old man could say anything, Bai Xiaochun pulled out his command medallion and unlocked the door of the skull cell. Then, before the little turtle could do anything, Bai Xiaochun shouted, “See if you can handle my secret attack, you old bastard!”

At the same time, he took the pleased little turtle... and hurled him with lightning-like speed toward the old man in the cage!

He did everything with incredible smoothness, force, and speed. As soon as the little turtle left his hand, he slammed the cell door shut and then became a series of afterimages that shot backward away from the cave.

He stopped some distance away, looking back at the cage and preparing to flee at a moment's notice.

“Don't blame me, little turtle!” he said, feeling completely in the right. “You're eternally indestructible, but I'm not!”

“Y-y-you, you little punk!!” The little turtle had been completely taken by surprise; never could he have possibly imagined that Bai Xiaochun would be treacherous enough to do this.

“Aaggghh, you little jerk! You're completely shameless! Despicable! Contemptible!!” However, there was nothing the little turtle could do at the moment. Enraged, he turned toward the frowning giant ghost king, and then flew forward at top speed.

“How impudent!!” the giant ghost king yelled, waving his hand out in front of him.

A boom rang out as the little turtle slammed into an invisible barrier roughly three meters in front of him. However, that only seemed to make him angrier. Looking at the giant ghost king, he shouted, “You think nobody would figure out you were hiding here, King Giant Ghost?! You might be able to trick everybody else, but you can't fool Lord Turtle! Hand over your treasures this instant, otherwise Lord Turtle is going to beat you to death!”

With that, he shot forward, again slamming into the invisible barrier, this time causing cracks to spread out in the air.

In response to the little turtle's words, the giant ghost king's expression flickered with shock and disbelief, which went to prove... that he really was the giant ghost king!!

“Who are you?!?!” he asked.

He had been a prisoner in this cell for two hundred years, and was also protected by the stone turtle’s spell formation. Because of that, he had assumed that he was safe, but now, his identity was exposed! How could he not be shocked!?

However, it was only a moment later that his killing intent erupted. As the little turtle closed in, he reached out and waved his right index finger!

“Spell formation: Evaporating Destruction!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, the stone turtle vibrated, and an indescribable power stirred. Apparently, the single wave of a finger on the part of the giant ghost king would unleash an all-destructive divine ability.

Bai Xiaochun was shaken by this development, and yet, before anything else could happen, the little turtle’s eyes widened into a glare. Sticking his head far out from his shell, he roared, “NO destruction!”

Instantly, the air of extermination which had appeared moments ago... faded away into nothing!

The giant ghost king’s eyes bulged with disbelief, and before he could do anything else, the little turtle shot forward and slammed into his chest.

The giant ghost king let out a muffled grunt, his face turning ashen as he staggered backward a few steps, his heart raging with astonishment.

“Impossible! This is impossible! Be destroyed!!” Trembling, he yet again waved his finger at the little turtle. However, the stone turtle’s spell formation didn’t do anything in response. The blood immediately drained from the giant ghost king’s face.

As of this moment, his heart was racing more wildly than it had in countless years. At the same time, a sensation of profound

danger filled him. What was happening right now was vastly more critical and astonishing than the rebellion of the three great clans.

“Destroy what, your ass?!” The little turtle threw his head back and laughed uproariously, then launched himself forward in another attack.

Outside the cell, Bai Xiaochun had been paying close attention to what was happening, and by now, his eyes were shining. Throwing his head back, he laughed loudly at the realization that this really was the giant ghost king. Clearly, his cultivation base really was at the Core Formation level, and furthermore, he couldn't use the spell formation. The fact that he was like a sick tiger with no teeth or claws left Bai Xiaochun feeling very relieved. Laughing, he walked forward, and then entered the cage again.

“The majestic, illustrious giant ghost king is actually dressed up like a prisoner and hiding in this place.... How low of you, King Giant Ghost!” Sticking his chin up, he assumed his best pose and then waved his sleeve proudly.

“With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Hao, reduced the giant ghost king to the point of becoming ashes. Hahaha!” Even as Bai Xiaochun's laughter rang out, the giant ghost king stood there feeling shocked and anxious. However, the look in his eye was cold and sinister. After all, he was a demigod king, and knew how to maintain his dignity.

“Bai Hao,” he began, “you--” However, before he could finish speaking, Bai Hao took a step forward and slapped him across the side of the head.

Instantly, the giant ghost king's cultivation base was sealed. Off to the side, the little turtle let out a whoop of delight.

“Clean him out! Clean him out!” A tremor ran through the giant ghost king, who was now glaring at Bai Xiaochun with intense killing intent.

Despite that killing intent, Bai Xiaochun simply walked forward and began to search him. A moment later, he pulled out a ring of holding. Unfortunately, further searching didn't reveal anything else.

“Only one ring of holding?” he said, less than pleased. “That's it?”

As for the giant ghost king, the humiliation he was enduring had his heart pulsing with rage that simply couldn't be described with words.

As far as he was concerned, this Bai Hao was nothing more than a pawn in his game, something to make the action a bit more interesting. He should be the type of person he could kill with a thought if necessary. Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that this pawn would end up holding his own life in his hands!

This sudden turn of events, and the sudden crisis, was something that the giant ghost king couldn't simply accept. He was a demigod, and he had planned this entire event down to the smallest detail.

However, even as he seemed to sink into a cool calm, the little turtle shouted, “Searching for treasures isn't your forte, ya little punk!”

With that, he flew forward and began searching the giant ghost king's robes and tossing all sorts of items out toward Bai Xiaochun.

There was a long, crimson spear, a blue jade slip, a multi-colored magic bottle, and also... a fist-sized chunk of black rock!

When the giant ghost king saw all of these things flying out, his expression flickered, and soon turned extremely unsightly. Those items had been hidden in various spatial pockets he had created, which no one should ever have been able to find. However, the little turtle... easily found them and emptied them.

“You....” the giant ghost king said anxiously, his eyes bulging. Although there weren’t many items, each one was the type that could shake heaven and earth!

That red spear was how he had earned his name to begin with, and could not be wielded by anyone under the Deva Realm. It had been forged with an object that fell from beyond the heavens, and contained 1,000,000,000 restrictive spells. Even among devas, it could be considered a top-rate item!

Then there was the blue jade slip. It looked ordinary in nature, but contained a legacy Dao of incredible importance. As for the magic bottle, it was called the Primeval Cosmos Bottle, and was similarly something that could not be used by anyone under the level of a deva. It could absorb any and all objects in creation and transform them into high-level medicine. He had paid a huge price to acquire this item, and was relatively certain that it was why the nine serenities king had gotten involved in the rebellion!

Finally, there was the black rock. It was a completely unique item in the world that not even the giant ghost king was sure of the origins of. Supposedly, it had once belonged to the first generation arch-emperor, although no one knew where he had acquired it.

These items were his most valuable treasures, so seeing them being taken away by the little turtle filled the giant ghost king’s heart with uncontrollable anxiety.

Bai Xiaochun was ecstatic to see so many things being pulled out. Although he wasn’t sure how to use any of them, and despite the fact that they all were branded personally to the giant ghost king, he could tell that they were extraordinary.

“Anything the giant ghost king kept hidden on his person should definitely be incredibly precious! Maybe I can’t use them now, but I’ll be able to eventually!”

Bai Xiaochun did his best to hide his pleasure, but as for the little turtle, it was with immense pride that he looked disdainfully at the

giant ghost king and said, “Think you can hide your stuff from Lord Turtle? Dream on!”

The giant ghost king fought to keep himself under control. He knew that at the moment, his rage could do nothing to resolve the situation, and that despite how his heart was dripping with blood... he needed to force himself to remain calm.

“What do you want?!” he said, uttering his words one at a time. Although his cultivation base was currently very weak, and he couldn’t even control his own life or death, he still managed to radiate calmness, and was even somewhat threatening. When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he couldn’t help but shiver a bit; after all, this was a demigod, even though his cultivation base was currently not at that level.

However, the fact that he felt scared also got him angry.

“Trying to frighten me?!” he said. Then he thought about how the giant ghost king had been using him as a pawn in his game, and had even turned him into a prisoner. Influenced a bit by the little turtle, his eyes suddenly shone with disdain, and he smacked the giant ghost king across the side of the head again.

“Close your eyes when you talk to me!” he said angrily. The sight of the giant ghost king so angry that he was physically shaking was actually quite exciting. Licking his lips, he continued,

“I’ve never smacked a demigod! So exciting...” In fact, he couldn’t hold back from delivering another smack.

“Not gonna follow orders huh? Heh heh. I said close your eyes when you talk to me!”

“Do you have a death wish, Bai Hao?!?!?” The giant ghost king raged angrily. If his cultivation base was at its normal level, he would teach Bai Xiaochun a long and hard lesson about the consequences of slapping people!!

Chapter 649: Human Shield

Bai Xiaochun was quite excited by the thrill of the moment, so in response to the giant ghost king's threatening words, he angrily yelled, "Still trying to threaten me? How dare you! Don't push me. I'm the number one dark inquisitor in Devil Penitentiary. When I get pissed off, I frighten even myself!!"

Then he placed his hand onto his bag of holding and considered whether or not to take out an Aphrodisiac Pill.

When the giant ghost king saw the rage in Bai Xiaochun's eyes, he was shocked. Then he remembered hearing that Bai Xiaochun was a dark inquisitor, and soon, hatred began to build up in his heart. He was a majestic demigod expert, the illustrious giant ghost king. The fact that a small fry like this was threatening to torment him caused him to grit his teeth in anger. However, he still managed to calm down.

"What do you want, Bai Hao? Just tell me! Spit it out! Don't tell me that your betrayal of the Bai Clan was some elaborate plot!?!?" The giant ghost king was able to control his anger so well that his voice actually didn't contain anything threatening in it all. As he spoke, he also couldn't help but glance at Bai Xiaochun's palm, and wonder if he was going to get slapped again.

"Plot my ass! You listen up, King Giant Ghost. Lord Bai wants--" However, before he could finish his sentence, Cellblock D suddenly trembled, and then the entrance shook violently, almost as if someone was trying to break it open.

Bai Xiaochun's face fell as he looked over at the entrance. Another huge boom echoed out, and the entrance collapsed, revealing numerous figures who began to fly in.

Then, a shout of rage erupted out, the type of which that contained unsurpassable animosity.

“Bai Hao!! The time has come for you to die!!”

It was none other than the chief of the Bai Clan, flanked by numerous other cultivators from the direct bloodline.

Even as Bai Xiaochun’s face fell, the little turtle transmitted a message.

“Let’s take the loot and run! They showed up sooner than expected, and Lord Turtle can’t fully control the spell formation!!”

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath to restore his calm. His eyes flashed with icy light as he unhesitatingly grabbed the giant ghost king by the neck, then turned to flee.

“Give me the command medallion, little punk,” the little turtle shouted. “Fudge! I can’t believe these people dare to interrupt our holy shakedown! Lord Turtle will open all the cells, that will completely screw them over!”

“No way!” Bai Xiaochun replied. “If you open all the cells and free the prisoners... they won’t just start fighting the Bai Clan, they’ll come after me!” After all, as a dark inquisitor, Bai Xiaochun had interrogated many of the prisoners in the cells, most of whom now hated him with deep passion....

The little turtle was too stunned at Bai Xiaochun’s response to say anything. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun shook his head and began to move forward, keeping the giant ghost king gripped in his hand.

“If I can’t hide, then I might as well fight!!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, and afterimages appeared as he summoned his four clones. At the same time, he pulled out all sorts of magical items, many of which had fourteenfold spirit enhancements. Coupled with the power of his cultivation base, it made his energy surge to a shocking level.

As the rumbling sounds echoed out, the distant members of the Bai Clan saw Bai Xiaochun. The clan chief’s eyes turned bright red, and he bellowed with rage. Flanking him were five clan elders, all

of them in the Nascent Soul stage, as well as a crowd of Core Formation experts.

“Time to die, Bai Hao!!” he shouted, immediately accelerating toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun knew that this was a moment of deadly crisis, and that he couldn't afford to get involved in a protracted fight. Therefore, he pushed forward at top speed, using his frigid qi and Mountain Shaking Bash to achieve shocking speed.

The little turtle also knew that it was a dangerous moment. Whooping with excitement, he tucked his head back into his shell to go along for the ride.

In the blink of an eye, Bai Xiaochun reached the forces from the Bai Clan.

The divine abilities launched by the clan elders were handled by his four clones. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's true self slammed into one of the early Nascent Soul stage elders, sending him tumbling backward several dozen meters. Instead of stopping, Bai Xiaochun continued forward. His four clones attacked another of the nearby clan elders, unleashing all sorts of divine abilities. Meanwhile, he used the Throat Crushing Grasp to crush the neck of one of the incoming cultivators.

In the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, the fiercest of fighting had broken out!

Booms and shockwaves spread out in all directions, casting the entire area into chaos!

Scintillating light shone out from Bai Xiaochun as he pulled out his transformed Eternal Parasol and stabbed it into the chest of a nearby enemy. It was a Bai Clan Core Formation cultivator, but it only took a moment for his muscular frame to be withered away, his life force sucked out of him with shocking speed!

As Bai Xiaochun continued his shocking charge, golden designs

flared up all over him that were impossible to conceal from the surrounding cultivators.

He also threw out a fourteen-colored flame, which transformed into a sea of fire that burned anything it touched. As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun was like a celestial warrior, proceeding forward with shocking momentum!

The fighting had only been going on for a moment, and had been matchlessly bitter. Bai Xiaochun's hair was in disarray, but he didn't slow down in the slightest. A single fist strike sent the clan chief tumbling away, and caused other clan members to scatter. When he and his four clones all fought with full strength, they could crush anything in their path as easily as dried weeds.

Although they seemed to be acting with practiced ease, they were actually in great danger. Two of Bai Xiaochun's clones had already been nearly destroyed by some of the clan elders, and were forced to transform into motes of light that flew back into Bai Xiaochun.

Blood oozed out of the corner of his true self's mouth, and yet, he didn't slow in the slightest as he barreled toward the exit.

It was a shocking sight for all the prisoners to behold, as well as the surrounding Bai Clan cultivators. The power and ferocity on display by Bai Xiaochun was hard to take in. However, even more shocking was the outrageous nature of his equipment

“Heavens! That... that magical item has a fourteenfold spirit enhancement!!”

“This Bai Hao is crazy! Even that leather armor of his has a fourteenfold spirit enhancement!!!”

“He's a genius! A spirit enhancing genius!!”

“You're not getting away!!” raged the clan chief, using a minor teleportation to close the distance between himself and Bai Xiaochun. The clan elders similarly gave chase.

Bai Xiaochun was starting to get anxious. On the one hand, he

was trying to break through the enemy to escape, but on the other hand, he had to make sure that the giant ghost king didn't get killed. As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, the giant ghost king was like a deva soul to him, so he couldn't let him die. However, to do both of those things at the same time was very difficult. In fact, it was actually impossible to shield the giant ghost king from all of the attacks being thrown their way.

And yet, the giant ghost king didn't say a single word the entire time. The truth was that he was actually impressed by Bai Xiaochun's bravery and ferocity. His veins of steel were on full display, to the point where he seemed like a completely different person!

Despite the fact that the giant ghost king wasn't saying anything, Bai Xiaochun found it strange that he was keeping silent. Furthermore, the attacks which found their way to him did nothing more than cause his face to turn a bit pale. He hadn't even coughed up any blood yet, and was clearly not injured in any way.

"This giant ghost king is a demigod expert. Don't tell me he's got some trick up his sleeve?" Bai Xiaochun was stunned, but didn't have time to think about the matter. Four Bai Clan elders had just teleported in range, and were unleashing a divine ability, a black cloud filled with screaming, evil ghosts. Eyes bloodshot, Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped, and he opened up the Eternal Parasol, causing dazzling light to flash out and block the evil ghosts. At that point, the little turtle shot out toward the Bai Clan elders.

However, one of the four elders performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, summoning the image of a palm which shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Without even thinking about it, Bai Xiaochun reflexively shoved the giant ghost king out in front of him to defend himself. Rumbling sounds could be heard as the enormous palm fell to pieces, and Bai Xiaochun staggered backward. As for the giant ghost king, he felt like cursing, but instead, gritted his teeth and

endured the pain.

“Not hurt?” Bai Xiaochun muttered in surprise. The Bai Clan elder was similarly shocked. He had noticed that Bai Xiaochun was dragging an old man with him, but hadn't paid it much attention. But now, he realized that this old man was clearly extraordinary; a Nascent Soul-level attack which would have injured Bai Xiaochun didn't faze the old man at all.... In fact, he didn't even cough up any blood.

Ecstatic, Bai Xiaochun hefted his Eternal Parasol in one hand and the giant ghost king in the other, and then charged forward again. As of this moment, the giant ghost king was a human shield which Bai Xiaochun could use to block any of the divine abilities being sent his way. The cultivators from the Bai Clan were all shocked.

Eventually, the giant ghost king couldn't take it any longer. He was trembling, and his ashen face was now turning livid with rage. He had just sustained ten Nascent Soul-level attacks, all backed with deadly intent. Unable to hold back his humiliation at being treated like a human shield, he began to curse!

Chapter 650: Miserable Giant Ghost King

“Bai Hao, you little bastard, I hope you die a painful death! You... you.... You’ll get your comeuppance one of these days!! If I can’t kill you myself, then my daughter will make mincemeat out of you!!”

Although the giant ghost king was enraged, he was a demigod and a king; he actually wasn’t very proficient in cursing people. Therefore, he could only come up with some basic taunts, which he repeated using different variations.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat proudly and completely ignored the curses. In fact, he even considered looking for a chance to get the little turtle to teach the giant ghost king a thing or two about insults.

Even as that thought crossed his mind, he proceeded forward, not only using the giant ghost king as a shield, but fighting back with him. His actions, coupled with his shocking fourteenfold spirit enhanced treasures, ensured that he was already getting close to the entrance of Cellblock D.

Although everyone in the Bai Clan burned with unquenchable rage, they simply couldn’t kill Bai Xiaochun. Not only was he incredibly tough to begin with, he also had four clones to help him, and tons of eye-catching magical items.

There was his strange parasol which could suck away life force and replenish him, and also the fact that he could move with shocking speed. His fleshly body power was incredible, and he could teleport, making it completely impossible to kill him in any short amount of time.

The old man with the red birthmark on his face was an even deeper mystery to the Bai Clan cultivators. No matter how many times he got hit, even with powerful magical items, he didn’t even cough up a single mouthful of blood.

In turn, Bai Xiaochun was bashing his way closer and closer to the entrance.

The clan elders were starting to get very nervous, and even joined together in an attack that cause intense rumbling sounds to fill the cellblock. Powerful fluctuations rolled out, and multi-colored light spread out in all directions. However, Bai Xiaochun continued to use the giant ghost king, who never stopped cursing the entire time.

“You will die in pain, Bai Hao!! You’ll get what you deserve one of these days!!” The giant ghost king wanted to cry, but no tears would come. His hair was in complete disarray, and his clothes were in tatters. He now possessed none of the dignity of a demigod expert, and it was even possible to see welts and bruises on his skin.

Because this was his true self, and he was a demigod, his body wasn’t necessarily eternally indestructible, but was strong enough to be very difficult to kill in circumstances like this. With the exception of devas, any opponent he faced couldn’t hurt him any more than the bite of a mosquito. Only by wearing him down for a very long time could they possibly kill him.

The rage burning in his heart right now was so hot that not even the waters of the Underworld River could extinguish it. There was also no small amount of grief inside him; despite the many years he had lived, and his overall tenacity, he really felt like crying.

By this point, he felt like he was being struck by eight generations of accumulated bad luck.... It was simply impossible to describe how humiliated he felt to have run into this damnable Bai Hao. Then he thought back to his original plan, and how he was only supposed to remain in Devil Penitentiary for a few more days before emerging like a cicada shedding its carapace, his decay period completely behind him.

Even if the three great clans found him before the process was

complete, with the spell formation of the stone turtle, they would have been incapable of defeating him. Because of all that, he had looked down with contempt on the three great clans the entire time, and had looked forward to watching their terror mount as time passed. From beginning to end, everything was to have been within his control.

His anticipation and confidence were so great, in fact, that he hadn't even mentioned the current situation to his daughter in the imperial city.

It had been many, many years since he had gotten to do anything interesting, and as such, he had truly been looking forward to playing this little game.

However, never could he have possibly imagined that his game would end up like this....

“It shouldn't be happening this way....” he thought miserably. Regret gripped his heart. He had planned everything meticulously, and prepared perfectly. Never could he possibly have guessed that things would happen in this way, that one of the pawns in his game would ruin everything.

He could only watch as he was thrown this way and that to block various divine abilities and magical items. Booms filled his ears, and his heart sank further into lamentation.

“I refuse to accept this!!” he moaned inwardly, his eyes bloodshot. However, there was nothing he could do now. He had secretly tried to make contact with the spell formation, but there had been no reaction, causing his despair to deepen.

As the giant ghost king wallowed in hopelessness, Bai Xiaochun coughed up a huge mouthful of blood. His remaining two clones had been destroyed, and were now speeding back to him in the form of two motes of light. Although his fleshly body was powerful, his injuries were serious. And yet, he still managed to break through everything the Bai Clan was throwing at him.

Then, in a blinding flash, he, the little turtle, and the giant ghost king all burst out through the main door of the cellblock.

Roars of rage echoed out behind him. Obviously, the clan chief and clan elders weren't going to just give up. They wouldn't rest until Bai Xiaochun was dead!

“Maybe you can escape from this place,” the clan chief howled, “but the three great clans control Giant Ghost City now! You won't get out of the city!”

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was speeding toward the exit of Devil Penitentiary.

Moments later, the clan chief and clan elders appeared behind him and gave chase.

Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding, and his aura was in chaos. However, what worried him wasn't his injuries, which were significant, but rather, the fact that he needed to get out of the prison as quickly as possible. If he didn't... then eventually the little turtle would lose control of the spell formation. And when that happened, the first thing the giant ghost king would do would be to kill him!

At the moment, the giant ghost king's eyes were closed, making it obvious that he must be trying to make contact with the stone turtle's spell formation. More nervous than ever, Bai Xiaochun suddenly slapped him again.

“I'm warning you!” he yelled viciously. “You better not force me to tell them who you are!”

The giant ghost king's eyes snapped open and he glared at Bai Xiaochun, panting so hard he felt like his chest was about to explode. However... he had to continue to endure. At the moment, he had no other options available.

Bai Xiaochun whizzed along; thankfully, he was very familiar with Devil Penitentiary, so he quickly made his way through the

various tunnels until he was at the exit. Just before leaving, though, the little turtle's face fell.

“I'm gonna lose control!!” he shouted. A tremor ran through the giant ghost king, and his eyes began to shine with intense light. He could sense that the spell formation was beginning to awaken, and in fact, the entire stone turtle was beginning to vibrate. Further back, the clan chief and clan elders' faces all fell.

As for the giant ghost king, his excitement grew, and he was just preparing to reach out to the spell formation when, all of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun, aware that he couldn't easily slap the man unconscious, suddenly reached into his bag of holding and produced a handful of Aphrodisiac Pills....

Even as joy spread out across the giant ghost king's face, Bai Xiaochun stuffed the pills into his mouth.

“You....” There was nothing the giant ghost king could do to fight back. As soon as the pills entered his mouth, they melted, and the medicinal effect of the pills erupted explosively. At the moment, the giant ghost king's cultivation base was incredibly weak, and he couldn't do anything to control the effect of the pills. Rumbling sounds filled his mind, and he instantly lost contact with the spell formation.

Although he wanted to reestablish contact, the burning heat that spread through his body battered at his mind, making it difficult to even think straight. However, he made a mad effort to control himself, and once again reached out to the spell formation. The stone turtle instantly surged with power, causing pressure to weigh down everywhere, and filling the hearts of the Bai Clan cultivators with sensations of imminent deadly crisis.

However... Bai Xiaochun's Aphrodisiac Pills were simply too devastating, and the giant ghost king had been given too many. Soon his face began to turn bright red, and he started shaking visibly. A moment passed, and... despite the fact that his

connection to the spell formation was tenuous at best, it had not been broken.

But all Bai Xiaochun had needed was a bit of time. Howling, he pushed forward with greater speed, using everything at his disposal to shoot out of the stone turtle's left eye and then into the moat beyond.

In that instant, the giant ghost king called upon his indescribable levels of self-control to suppress the burning fire within him. He gripped tight on his connection to the spell formation, and then tried to activate it. However... as soon as Bai Xiaochun burst out of the turtle's eye, the rising energy of the spell formation faded away.

“No!!!” the giant ghost king howled as he watched hope vanish right in front of him, sending him plummeting into the depths of despair. As soon as the word left his mouth, Bai Xiaochun looked over angrily and slapped him across the side of the head again.

“Shut up!”

“I'm gonna kill you, Bai Hao!” the giant ghost king roared. “Kill you, ya hear? You're dead! Agggghhh!!”

Whack! Bai Xiaochun slapped him again.

“Don't hit me, you--”

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack! Bai Xiaochun proceeded to slap him eight more times, until finally, some blood oozed out of the giant ghost king's mouth. Having no choice but to endure the humiliation, the giant ghost king bit down on his bottom lip and stopped talking.

The current Bai Xiaochun seemed even more terrifying than the Bai Xiaochun who had just fought his way out of the cellblock. As of this moment, he seemed like nothing more than a devilish ghost!

Chapter 651: How Brilliant, Patriarch

“You got what you deserved!” Bai Xiaochun said angrily. “You listen to me, you old bastard: don’t push me! When I get pissed off, I frighten even myself!”

Fear still lingered in his heart from moments earlier. He knew that if he had been even a bit slower, allowing the giant ghost king to gain control of the spell formation, then he would have died.

As he wallowed in that lingering fear, he glared at the giant ghost king with such intense killing intent that it left the man shaken. Furthermore, considering that he was willing to humiliate his own father, was vicious and merciless, and had reviled his own clan, then obviously, provoking him would be a huge mistake.

At the moment, the giant ghost king could only bow his head and vent his anger inwardly. “He definitely wants something from me,” he thought. “Fine. I’ll just endure and refrain from provoking him.”

Even as he lowered his head, the clan chief and other members of the Bai Clan flew out from the stone turtle’s eye. Of course, the Bai Clan had their ways of protecting themselves from the corrosive water of the moat, and immediately began to chase Bai Xiaochun.

Face twitching with fear, and having no more time to deal with the giant ghost king, Bai Xiaochun burst into motion, heading toward the surface of the water as quickly as possible. However, only a moment later, the little turtle suddenly shrieked, “Back up!!”

Without the slightest hesitation, Bai Xiaochun shoved the giant ghost king out in front of him and lurched in the opposite direction. As he did, a sound louder than heavenly thunder caused everything in the area to shake violently.

At the same time, an incredible force descended into the moat

water, causing a massive eruption of water.

Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun was protected behind the giant ghost king, who took the entire force of the blow. Blood sprayed out of the giant ghost king's mouth as his internal organs vibrated on the point of collapsing. Even large portions of his hair fell off of his head; it was as if a full twenty percent of his overall energy had been destroyed!

As for his cultivation base, in the blink of an eye it dropped from Core Formation into Foundation Establishment.... Obviously, that attack wasn't a Nascent Soul divine ability, but rather... a blow from a deva!

As the boom continued to echo out, Bai Xiaochun realized that all the water around him had been destroyed, leaving him hovering in the middle of the air. Furthermore, up above him, with a grim, maddened expression on his face, was the Bai Clan patriarch!!

Bai Xiaochun was so nervous his tongue was stuck to the top of his mouth, and his heart was racing faster than ever. He knew that if the little turtle hadn't warned him, he would have died from that attack. Furthermore, without the giant ghost king there to use as a shield, the little turtle's warning would, at most, have enabled him to escape with serious injuries.

The Bai Clan patriarch had been searching for the giant ghost king, but had obviously received a message from someone in the Bai Clan, causing him to turn his attention to Bai Hao!

However, he could never have guessed that Bai Xiaochun could survive a full-force blow!!

Shocked, the patriarch looked closer, and immediately focused on the tool Bai Xiaochun had used to defend himself... an old man with a red birthmark on his face!!

"That's...." The Bai Clan patriarch shivered, and his aura fluctuated unstably. Then his eyes began to shine with

unprecedented light. He almost seemed hopeful, as though he had just been rescued from an impossible situation.

“This... this....” He couldn’t even speak straight. A moment later, he threw his head back and laughed maniacally, a laughter that filled all of Giant Ghost City, a laughter filled with delight, joy, and complacency.

As for Bai Xiaochun, his heart began to pound, and he looked over at the giant ghost king to see that his eyes were somewhat blank. He didn’t look at all like he had moments ago when arguing with Bai Xiaochun. As of this moment he realized that everything that was happening... was likely just fate.

“The heavens will not destroy the Bai Clan! Hahaha! We're saved!! King Giant Ghost! How could I have ever imagined that you would actually be here!!!”

The patriarch was laughing so hard he was shaking, and his eyes were bright red because of the excitement he felt. During the past few hours, he had felt both indescribable torment and unending regret. However, there was no way to undo what had been done, and the realization that he was simply a pawn in the giant ghost king’s game left him terrified to the extreme. His chances of finding the giant ghost king were virtually nil, and even if he did find him... there was no way the giant ghost king would not be prepared to defend himself.

The patriarch had already begun to sink into complete despair and insanity. Upon encountering Bai Hao, he was so upset that he forgot about his plans to use him as a future incarnation, and immediately unleashed a killing blow. Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that right there, in the middle of his complete despair... a ray of hope would appear, and that he... would find the giant ghost king. Furthermore, the giant ghost king was incredibly weak. The patriarch’s eyes immediately began to burn with fiery passion as he ignored Bai Xiaochun and focused completely... on the giant ghost king!

As soon as the Bai Clan patriarch's words echoed out, the clan chief and the other clan members further back stared in wide-eyed shock. Then they gasped and looked at the old man Bai Xiaochun was holding out in front of him.

“He’s... he’s the giant ghost king!?!?”

“Heavens! The giant ghost king has been hiding here!!”

“I told you there was something weird about that guy to be able to take so many attacks from us and not be hurt!! It turns out he’s actually the giant ghost king!!”

They weren’t the only shocked ones. There were cultivators from the other great clans in the area as well, plus some soldiers from the armies of the six heavenly marquises who had rebelled. There were even spies loyal to other forces and groups. Everyone turned to look at Bai Hao, and the giant ghost king whom he held by the neck, clearly a captive.

Everyone who could see the scene was completely and utterly shocked.

“This... this is impossible! That’s Bai Hao? He... he kidnapped the giant ghost king?!”

“This Bai Hao is completely ferocious! He... he actually kidnapped the giant ghost king!! Everyone’s looking for the giant ghost king’s true self, and now he has him!!”

“Heavens! I actually underestimated this Bai Hao. He’s incredible! So tough! He’s definitely going to become completely famous because of this!!”

Countless gasps rang out, and within moments, people began sending the news back to their superiors. It was easy to imagine how, within mere moments, everyone in Giant Ghost City would know that Bai Hao had kidnapped the giant ghost king!!

Quite a few people immediately recalled how Bai Hao had kidnapped the chief of the Bai Clan, and were even more shocked

than before.

“Bai Hao... is vicious and merciless, and reviled his own clan! How fierce! He didn't just kidnap his own father, he actually also kidnapped the giant ghost king!!”

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun's actions had truly shaken the entire city!!

Of course, that had not been his intention. Currently, he was looking around nervously, his eyes bloodshot, his chest swelling with fear and anxiety.

As for the giant ghost king, he maintained his silence, not uttering a single word. However, his eyes were calm, and the dignity which had previously escaped him returned. He might be about to die, but he would die with honor. There was also a flash of regret in his eyes.

“What a pity,” he murmured to himself. “There's not enough time for the Ghost King Orchid to bloom....”

When he did speak out loud, his voice was cool and collected. “Bai Hao, you can release me now.”

Looking up, Bai Xiaochun saw the Bai Clan deva patriarch reaching out with his right hand.

“What do I do, what do I do...!?” he wailed inwardly.

At that point, a fiery gleam appeared in his eyes, and he said loudly, “Patriarch, you really are brilliant to have anticipated that the traitorous giant ghost king would have a secret plan at work. Well, I've accomplished my mission. I followed your orders, enduring all sorts of humiliation, even betraying the clan, all to earn the trust of this traitor. And now, I'll hand him over to you alive and in one piece!

“Patriarch, I hope that you come to be bathed in the most spectacular honor and glory! Long live the Bai Clan!”

Everyone was stunned by this development. The giant ghost king smiled wryly, and the Bai Clan patriarch stared in shock. It was to the utter astonishment of everyone that Bai Xiaochun proceeded to head toward the patriarch, seemingly excited to hand him the giant ghost king.

The Bai Clan patriarch was so taken aback that he didn't have time to ponder the matter closely. Bai Xiaochun had worded things perfectly, to the point where no one even thought to question his words.

He had even gone so far as to offer all the glory to the patriarch. All the patriarch had to do was confirm that what he had said was true, and it would actually be of great benefit to the patriarch in the subsequent struggle to secure the crown. The patriarch's eyes immediately glittered brightly as he realized all of this.

“This Bai Hao... is very interesting....” A smile broke out on his face as he looked at the charming, nervous Bai Xiaochun. Then, he prepared to respond.

However... that was when something completely unexpected changed everything!!

Chapter 652: Demigod Soul Detonation!

Bai Xiaochun's shocking words caused all sorts of thoughts to go through the minds of the people in the area. If he had said something completely random and meaningless, then it likely wouldn't have resulted in anything to speak of. However, people almost immediately realized the implications of what he was saying. Even the clan chief gasped.

Many of the ordinary soul cultivators in the area were turning to look at the Bai Clan patriarch.

Everyone knew that deva patriarchs were clever and conniving, so it wouldn't be anything surprising to find that what Bai Xiaochun had said was true.

After all... three great clans had put their lives on the line in this rebellion.

Everyone reeled in shock, and the Bai Clan patriarch's mouth began to turn into a smile. Bai Xiaochun, looking very meek and obedient, slowly neared the patriarch, with the Giant Ghost King held out in front of him. He moved quickly, and within moments was a short 30 meters away....

At that point, the Bai Clan patriarch's face fell. After all, he was a deva, connected to heaven and earth, with acute divine sense, and fantastic instincts when it came to danger. In that moment, a profound sense of deadly crisis suddenly rose up in his heart, and he subconsciously began to back up. Although he wasn't sure why... there was something that suddenly seemed extremely dangerous about Bai Xiaochun.

Although it seemed completely unbelievable, the sensation of crisis caused the Bai Clan patriarch to suddenly shout, "Hold it right there!"

Just when he was about to shoot backward, a vicious, maddened

grin suddenly spread out on Bai Xiaochun's face.

“You're dead!!” he shouted, slapping his bag of holding to produce a crystalline soulhoarding pagoda. Then, with all the strength he could muster, he hurled the soulhoarding pagoda at the patriarch!

The soulhoarding pagoda didn't look like anything special, but as it whooshed through the air toward the Bai Clan patriarch, the man's scalp began to tingle so hard it felt like it might explode. The sensation of impending doom was so intense that it filled every inch of his flesh and blood.

“That thing could kill me!! I need to get out of here immediately!!” A tremor ran through the patriarch, and he immediately began to fade away as he resorted to a powerful teleportation!!

Unfortunately for him, everything was happening too quickly. Bai Xiaochun's action of hurling the soulhoarding pagoda had caught him completely unprepared. Most importantly... Bai Xiaochun was simply too close to him!

He had only been about 30 meters away, and had hurled the soulhoarding pagoda with all his strength. Because of that, it only took the briefest of moments... for the soulhoarding pagoda to be a few short meters away!!

In the instant that the patriarch began to fade away, Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and roared, “DETONATE!!”

He pushed hard against the restrictive spell inside of the soulhoarding pagoda, and at the same time, shot backward at full speed!

He used his Undying Hex, and also kept the Giant Ghost King held out in front of him. However, worried that all of that wasn't enough, he took advantage of the fact that everyone was looking at the soulhoarding pagoda to pull out his turtle-wok and place it

between himself and the Giant Ghost King!

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. The instant the restrictive spell inside the soulhoarding pagoda unraveled, the discarnate demigod soul inside awoke, causing an aura of destruction to erupt out!

Brightly colored light flashed in heaven and earth, and the clouds were thrown into chaos. An indescribably powerful pressure instantly filled the entire area!

“Demigod soul!?!?!?” The Bai Clan patriarch’s face fell, and his heart was seized with shock. A sensation of deadly crisis completely overwhelmed him, and a scream escaped his lips as he gave up on the lengthy teleportation process and simply tried to run. Sadly for him, it was too late for that!

The instant the shocking demigod aura appeared, something like a gale force wind sprang up. Cries of astonishment and alarm filled the area.

“Demigod aura!!”

“What’s that!?!?”

“Heavens....”

Then, a heaven-rending, earth-crushing boom rose up in the area, a deafening sound that quickly spreading out to fill all of Giant Ghost City, causing everything to quake violently!

A destructive blast like the crushing blow of a giant rocked the entire city. The sky went dim, and the wind screamed as countless crevices opened up in the lands surrounding the city!

The Bai Clan patriarch took the brunt of the attack, and managed to let out a short frenzied scream that was soon overwhelmed by the destructive force!

The nearby buildings, as well as many nearby cultivators who

had been too slow to flee, were also swept up in the powerful force of the attack.

BOOM! RUMBLE! CRAAAAAASH!!

Many of the nearby cultivators had no time to even scream before they were destroyed in body and soul. That included many of the Bai Clan elders, who were completely incapable of defending themselves, and were transformed into ash....

The clan chief had been leading the way in the chase after Bai Xiaochun, but happened to have a life-saving magical item. With the help of that item, he survived, but was still severely injured, his legs shredded into nothing, his arms ripped off, his chest caved in, his hair burned off, and his cultivation base shattered.

“No... this can't be real!! Bai Hao! Bai Hao!!!” Lingering hatred and despair could be seen in his eyes as he tumbled away, screaming in terror.

A huge crater was being opened up... and the destructive aura could even be sensed by people some distance away.

Amidst the cacophony of sound, the Giant Ghost King's voice could be heard, letting out a shriek of despair. Blood sprayed out of his mouth as he was shoved backward. As for Bai Xiaochun, he remained behind his turtle-wok, but still felt some of the force of the blow, and coughed up an enormous mouthful of blood. He felt like his body was going to collapse, and even his internal organs were destabilized. And yet, he still managed to escape with his life.

Even the Giant Ghost King was completely shaken by what was happening. Never could he possibly have imagined that something like this would happen, or that the person to orchestrate it all would be... Bai Hao!!

When it was all over, Bai Xiaochun looked at the crater, heart pounding with residual fear.

“The force unleashed by the detonation of a demigod soul is

mind-boggling.... Even I almost got wiped out.” Thankfully, he had been prepared all along for what was going to happen. He had picked the right place and time, and had retreated with incredible speed. Therefore, he was minimally affected. After adding in the protection of the Giant Ghost King and his turtle-wok, he managed to escape with his life.

In fact, that was another reason why he had taken the initiative to approach the Bai Clan patriarch, instead of allowing the man to get close to him. That had given him room to back up.... If it had been a normal fight, and he had casually attempted to use the demigod soul as a weapon, he would likely have blown himself up....

Of everyone else present, the Bai Clan patriarch had been the closest to the soulhoarding pagoda. Now that the force of the blow was fading away, he could be seen floating there in the air, most of his hair burned off, the rest of his body in horrific condition. In fact, this was the worst shape he had ever been in throughout his entire life.

Even more shocking to him was the fact that he was obviously in no place to try to fight Bai Xiaochun. If he did, he would surely be defeated and killed!

Trembling, he uncontrollably coughed up another massive mouthful of blood, then looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a mixture of unparalleled fear and incredible killing intent. However, he also didn't hesitate to turn and flee, using every ounce of speed he could muster to get as far away as possible.

“He survived?!?!” Bai Xiaochun thought, shocked. At the moment, he didn't dare to chase him, though.

Aware that he wasn't out of danger yet, he looked up in thought for the briefest moment and then shouted, “I, Bai Hao, am the type who doesn't attack unless I am attacked first. Listen up, everyone. That divine ability I used just now, I can use it another hundred

times! When I attack, I frighten even myself! So don't even think about provoking me!"

With that, he turned and fled, keeping a firm grip on the Giant Ghost King, who was still coughing up blood.

Chapter 653: This Guys Crazy!

“Well played, Bai Hao. Vile and sinister, vicious and merciless, reviler of the clan....” The Bai Clan patriarch was currently speeding along, coughing up blood and wracked with bitterness. Although the detonation of the soulhoarding pagoda hadn’t killed him, it had gravely injured him. At the moment, he was in no condition to be thinking about trying to kill the Giant Ghost King. Right now, he had to fear for his own life!

There could be no better opportunity than this moment for the patriarchs of the Chen and Cai Clans to kill him.... After all, the three clans were cooperating at the moment, but in general, were enemies!

The Bai Clan patriarch was in no mood to bet his own life, and therefore drew on every scrap of energy he had left to flee back to the Bai Clan, where he could safely go into secluded meditation and start recovering!

He had no attention to spare for what was happening back in Giant Ghost City, or with Bai Hao!

The longer one lives, the more one will fear death. That was the current situation with the Bai Clan patriarch. After all, the fate of his clan rested on his shoulders, and the clan as a whole couldn’t afford for anything to happen to him.

Meanwhile, back in the city, two new deva auras suddenly erupted out into the open. One of them began to speed toward Bai Xiaochun, and the other... went after the Bai Clan patriarch!

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was racing through Giant Ghost City, trying to keep his aura concealed, his heart racing with terror.

“I’m finished. Kaput. Dammit, I was too impulsive. It’s all the fault of this Giant Ghost King. He’s too conspicuous!” Bai Xiaochun felt like crying, but no tears would come. At the moment, he was so

nervous his soul was trembling.

Equally nervous was the Giant Ghost King, who couldn't stop coughing up blood, and whose aura was incredibly weak. The destructive blast just now had far surpassed a deva attack, and had very nearly killed him.

Feeling like he had just survived a deadly calamity, he looked over at his captor in astonishment.

He could tell that this Bai Hao was a crazy daredevil who wouldn't shrink back from any challenge. However, worried that he would say the wrong thing and piss him off, he very carefully chose his words as he said, "If... if you just keep running around randomly like this, you're going to get captured. Listen, let's go back to the stone turtle... I can--"

"Who said you could talk!?" Bai Xiaochun growled angrily, his expression as cold as ice. He even reached over and slapped the Giant Ghost King across the side of the head.

More blood sprayed out of the Giant Ghost King's mouth, and his anger boiled. However, the crazed look in Bai Xiaochun's eyes caused him to shiver and simply suppress his anger.

"This guy is crazy!!" he cursed inwardly. "A complete psycho!!"

By this point, he truly regretted his decision of pulling Bai Hao into his game to spice things up. If he could go back and do things over again, he would absolutely, positively change his decision. After all, if Bai Hao had ended up being killed by the Bai Clan, he wouldn't be anywhere near a situation like this....

"Listen up, you old bastard," Bai Xiaochun said angrily. "All of this is your fault. I almost just got killed trying to save you! If you don't want to thank me, fine, but how dare you try to trick me into going back to that stone turtle. You think I'm an idiot or something? As soon as I went back into that turtle, I'd be dead!"

He was truly feeling very irritated. Then he thought about how it

was the little turtle who had gotten him into this mess. If it weren't for the little turtle, he would have long since made his getaway.

“And then there's you, little turtle!” Gritting his teeth, he looked down at his bag of holding. However, the little turtle was long gone. Clearly... he knew that he had caused some really big problems.

“Well,” Bai Xiaochun thought, “I can't change things now. I guess if I have to I'll just hand over the Giant Ghost King....”

When the Giant Ghost King saw the ominous glint in Bai Xiaochun's eye, he suddenly had a very bad feeling. He also realized that if he wanted to get out of this tribulation alive, everything would come down to this Bai Hao.

“Brother Bai Hao... there's no need to go do anything hasty. What... what exactly do you want? Whatever it is... just tell me, I'm sure I can accommodate you!” The Giant Ghost King's words came a bit haltingly as he tried to keep his tone as neutral as possible.

Inside, he was bemoaning how everything had played out. Originally, everything had been going exactly according to plan. He should have been safe in the stone turtle during his decay period, until his cultivation base was back to normal. At that point, he could have wrapped up his game perfectly. But then everything had gone wrong. He had made the critical error of trying to use a crazy person as a pawn. Too many things had then occurred which he could never have anticipated happening....

Glaring angrily at the Giant Ghost King, Bai Xiaochun said, “I want a deva soul, old man! A metal-type deva soul! If you have one, give it to me right now, and I'll let you go immediately!”

The Giant Ghost King stared back at him in wide-eyed shock. Completely confused, he replied, “You... you kidnapped me because... you want a metal-type deva soul?”

The entire concept seemed completely and utterly absurd. He almost wondered if he was listening to the biggest joke in the world.

Bai Xiaochun was actually starting to get anxious. After all the hardships he had gone through to reach this point, if the Giant Ghost King didn't agree, he would probably cry....

“Yeah, I do,” he yelled. “So what? Not gonna give it to me? Don't push me too far, old man!”

“No, I'll give it to you! I will....” The Giant Ghost King felt like he was about to collapse mentally. Although deva souls were precious, they weren't that important to him in the grand scheme of things. He had assumed that this Bai Hao would be after something far more grand. And yet, it turned out that all he wanted was a deva soul....

“Damn you, Bai Hao!” he moaned inwardly. “Why didn't you say so earlier? Was all of this worth it? You're doing all this for a mere deva soul? You dragged me out of the stone turtle for that....”

“Hand it over!” Bai Xiaochun said impatiently. “Where is it, in that ring of holding?”

With that, he looked around furtively, and then ducked into a nearby alley.

When the Giant Ghost King responded to the question, he tried to word things perfectly. “I... um... I don't actually have it on me right now. There are only random things in that ring of holding. The deva soul is in my secret palace, but with the current level of my cultivation base, I can't open it right now. Listen, I have a suggestion, Brother Bai Hao. Just take a minute to think it over.... Keep me safe for a month. After that, my cultivation base will recover naturally, and I swear that as soon as it does, I'll open my secret palace and give you that deva soul!”

The truth was that he really didn't have any way of producing a

deva soul at the moment.... Furthermore, after what had just occurred with the Bai Clan patriarch, he was also fairly certain that his best chance at staying alive was to stick with Bai Xiaochun. Besides, based on his observations of everything that was happening, he was very worried that Bai Xiaochun might hand him over to the three clans to save his own life.

As soon as the words left the Giant Ghost King's mouth, Bai Xiaochun's eyes blazed with anger. Smacking the Giant Ghost King across the head again, he said, "You think Lord Bai is stupid, you old bastard!? After your cultivation base recovered, the first thing you would do would be to kill me!"

Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth at how foul the Giant Ghost King was to think he was so stupid.

Eyes burning with anger, but heart pounding nervously, he said, "Back when the Bai Clan patriarch was originally trying to kill me, and you saved me, I was very grateful. I helped you interrogate prisoners, and even helped you clean out the Cai Clan's soulgrounds. But what did you go and do? Repay kindness with enmity, that's what! You stripped me of my status as a prison guard and turned me into a prisoner! Outrageous!!"

By this point, Bai Xiaochun realized that he had done something monumentally crazy. He had kidnapped a demigod king.... In the past, he would never have even considered doing such a thing. However, at the moment, he was running out of options. In fact, he was even thinking of trying to work out a deal with the three great clans to trade the Giant Ghost King for a deva soul....

When the Giant Ghost King saw the look in his eyes, his heart started to pound even harder.

"Brother Bai Hao, please, don't do anything rash. You mustn't! Just... just hear me out. Why don't you place a restrictive spell on me? Then you won't have to worry about me causing problems for you even when my cultivation base is back to normal!"

“With my cultivation base?” Bai Xiaochun shot back, feeling angrier than ever. “What kind of restrictive spell could I possibly put on you? You’re really pushing things too far, old man!!” Flicking his sleeve, he was about to continue yelling when the Giant Ghost King cut him off.

“It doesn’t matter if your cultivation base is lower than mine. I’ll teach you a restrictive spell and even help you use it... that should do, right?” The Giant Ghost King really felt like crying. Considering his status in the world, for him to say things like this was unprecedented. It had been a very, very long time since he had pled with anybody in this fashion. Unfortunately, he had no other options....

“You’ll help me put a restrictive spell on yourself?” As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, it seemed like a silly notion. Worried that Bai Xiaochun would fly into a rage again, the Giant Ghost King quickly performed a double-handed incantation gesture, and even spat out a mouthful of blood as he forced out a strand of his life essence divine sense. Then, he combined the blood and the divine sense into a sealing mark, which began to glow with multi-colored light as it rested there in his palms.

“Brother Bai Hao, you... you just need to put a drop of blood here. Then absorb the restrictive spell, and you’ll be set....”

Chapter 654: What A Malicious Restrictive Spell!

Bai Xiaochun looked at the glowing light that was the restrictive spell, and hesitated. He didn't want to make a deal with the three great clans unless it was absolutely necessary. After all, it would be hard to tell how things would work out in the end, and he would definitely be putting himself in a lot of danger.

If he could really control the Giant Ghost King's cultivation base with a restrictive spell, then that would be worth taking the risk. After all, if it didn't work, he could simply toss him aside and flee. But if it worked....

Although the thought was very enticing, his eyes widened with anger.

“Even now you dare to screw with me, old bastard?!?!” Bai Xiaochun raged.

“No! I'm really not! Brother Bai Hao, you have to trust me. I'm... I'm really not trying to trick you!!” The Giant Ghost King was getting very anxious. He really was telling the truth, and had no desire to try to trick Bai Xiaochun. If he did, and it was revealed, then he would be putting his life at risk.

“Bullcrap!” Bai Xiaochun yelled.

“I'm really not lying... I swear it....” Feeling he had no other choice, the Giant Ghost King began to swear an actual oath.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was getting the sense that the Giant Ghost King really was being sincere. However, he still didn't feel comfortable with the situation, so he gave a cold snort and slapped his bag of holding.

“Get out here right now, little turtle!”

However, there was no reaction whatsoever from his bag of

holding....

“Fudge!” Bai Xiaochun yelled angrily. “I’m warning you, little turtle, all of this trouble is because of you, so if you don’t get out here immediately, then you and I are done for. Forever! Got it? Don’t ever come to me for help with anything again!”

A moment later, his bag of holding vibrated, and the little turtle poked his head out into the open. Looking a bit embarrassed, and simultaneously ingratiating, he said, “Don’t get angry, kid. Uh... I didn’t realize things would go this way....”

He even blinked a few times for effect. However, Bai Xiaochun merely reached down and grabbed him, and he didn’t dare to dodge to the side.

“Enough with the jabbering. Look at this restrictive spell and see if there’s anything wrong with it.” With that, he held the little turtle out right in front of the Giant Ghost King’s hands.

The Giant Ghost King glared angrily at the little turtle, well aware that he was the reason Bai Hao had uncovered his identity.

As for the little turtle, he was aware of his role in events as well, and could also see that Bai Xiaochun was very angry. They were all in a dangerous situation, and now was not the time to be careless. Eyes sparkling, he looked closely at the glowing restrictive spell in the Giant Ghost King’s hands.

After a moment, his eyes went wide, and he stuck his neck a bit further out of his shell.

“This restrictive spell is really malicious!” he exclaimed. “Listen, punk, if you cast that spell, and you die, the Giant Ghost King will die. But if he dies... nothing will happen to you.”

The Giant Ghost King’s heart couldn’t have been filled with more bitterness, and yet, he was out of options. He had originally planned to use this restrictive spell on some of the rebels, after the whole situation was resolved. However, in order to get through the

current crisis, he was going to use it on himself.... Furthermore, although the restrictive spell could be unraveled, even with his fully-restored cultivation base, it would take years.

Having heard the little turtle's analysis, Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth and angrily said, "You listen up, old man. I can tell you have a lot of tricks up your sleeve, but considering the fact that I already severely injured a deva patriarch, even if you were more well-prepared, you wouldn't be able to pull the wool over the eyes of my little turtle. You've only seen a tiny fraction of what I'm capable of. In fact, even if your cultivation base was back to normal and you tried to kill me, I still have ways to make sure we went out together!"

After a moment of silence, the Giant Ghost King quietly said, "You don't hurt me, I won't hurt you. Just keep me safe for a month, and I'll get you that deva soul. Then all of this will become a thing of the past. I'm the kind of person who sticks to my word. I don't renege on promises. It doesn't matter what happened before, as long as you can keep me safe for a month, and I get my cultivation base back, then I won't do anything to you, nor will I remove the restrictive spell. You can really rest your heart at ease!"

Bai Xiaochun looked deeply at the Giant Ghost King, then pulled out the long red spear he had taken from him earlier.

"Alright, Giant Ghost King. Since we're going to do things this way, then remove your branding mark from your ring of holding and your other magical items. That will give us a better chance of getting through this alive."

"There are only random personal items in the ring of holding. And as for all those magical devices, even if I removed my branding mark, you couldn't use them unless you were a deva...." He was telling the truth about everything he had just said. However, seeing that Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened with anger at this response, the Giant Ghost King quickly removed the branding marks.

Bai Xiaochun's looked excitedly into the ring of holding to find a large collection of soul medicine.... There were also quite a few treasures. However, none of them were magical in nature, but rather, ordinary treasures that mortals would value.

“Random things?” He pursed his lips as he pondered why the Giant Ghost King would collect things such as this. A moment later, his eyes came to rest on the red spear, within which he could sense a fear-inspiring aura. He quickly tried to brand it with his own mark, but soon found that the Giant Ghost King had been correct, and that he couldn't.

It was the same with everything else. Finally, Bai Xiaochun sighed and put everything away. Then he looked the Giant Ghost King up and down a few times before nodding in agreement to the proposal.

The Giant Ghost King finally breathed a sigh of relief, and immediately suggested again that they head back to the stone turtle. However, Bai Xiaochun was still hesitating, unsure of whether that was a smart thing to do. First of all, the three great clans would definitely have locked the Devil Penitentiary down, which would make it very difficult to get back inside.

Second of all, although they had reached an agreement, it had only just happened, and Bai Xiaochun was as yet not completely comfortable in giving the Giant Ghost King the upper hand.

“I have a lot more experience than you when it comes to running away,” he said proudly. “I don't dare to claim to be an expert in much, but I can tell you that I've done a lot of fleeing in my life.” With that, he grabbed the Giant Ghost King and began to move.

“You--” the Giant Ghost King began in irritation. However, before he could say anything else, Bai Xiaochun smacked him across the side of the head.

“Shut up! Are you keeping me safe, or am I keeping you safe?” At first, it had felt very stimulating to push a demigod expert around.

By now, though, he had gotten used to it.

The Giant Ghost King could only grit his teeth and stew in his frustration.

Bai Xiaochun ignored him. He knew that at the moment, it would be nearly impossible to get out of the city via conventional methods. After all, the three great clans would be searching for him, and others as well.

“I guess I have no other option than to use the teleportation formations that Lu Shiyou told me about.... I hope I can find the one that leads 50,000 kilometers out of the city.... I would feel a lot safer that far away.” Having made his decision, he recalled the information he had acquired regarding the locations of the various spell formations, and then began to head toward the nearest one.

Before long, he and the somewhat sullen-looking Giant Ghost King had arrived at an old abandoned courtyard residence. After going inside, the Giant Ghost King looked around curiously, while Bai Xiaochun examined the place more closely. After confirming that this was the correct location, he stomped his foot down onto the ground.

Some rumbling sounds could be heard, and then some rifts spread out. Bai Xiaochun reached into the rift and unleashed some cultivation base power, whereupon the glow of teleportation rose up.

“This....” The Giant Ghost King’s pupils constricted as the power of teleportation whisked them away. In the next moment, they were gone.

In almost the same moment that they vanished, a dozen or so beams of light shot toward the area. After coming to realize that there was a teleportation portal in the area, the group exchanged dismayed glances.

Meanwhile, in another part of Giant Ghost City, glittering light

could be seen in a certain residential building as Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King materialized.

When Bai Xiaochun looked around, he was a bit frustrated. He knew that there were a lot of teleportation formations, and he wasn't sure which one led to the spot 50,000 kilometers away. That meant that he would have to search through the formations one by one.

On the other hand, the Giant Ghost King gasped in shock. Just when he was about to ask about what was going on, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun and realized that he was about to punch the ground.

Only a moment later, another teleportation formation appeared, and the two of them vanished again....

By this point, Giant Ghost City had descended into complete chaos. The entire city was on lockdown, and there were even soul cultivators outside the city creating a perimeter to prevent entry and exit.

After the city was fully secure, more people began to join in the search. Before long, the Chen Clan's deva patriarch appeared in the location where Bai Xiaochun had initially appeared out in the open. However, after the area had been almost completely destroyed by the detonation of the demigod soul, the auras in the city had been so disrupted that not even the deva's divine sense could spread out very far to find clues.

Otherwise, the search for Bai Xiaochun would have gone much more smoothly for them.

At the moment, the only option they had was to search everything with a fine-toothed comb.

The Cai Clan Patriarch chased the Bai Clan patriarch all the way back to the Bai Clan. Once the Bai Clan patriarch was safe inside, the Cai Clan patriarch looked at the city with glittering eyes for a

moment before heading back toward Giant Ghost City to join in the search.

There were two more deva experts in Giant Ghost City, those being Duke Netherworld and Duke Deathcrier. Although Duke Netherworld was inclined to join the search, in the end, he decided to leave that to everyone else. As far as he was concerned, his main mission was to make sure that Duke Deathcrier didn't find Bai Hao.

If he did, he would also get the Giant Ghost King's true self, which would make it very difficult for anyone else to do anything. Therefore, Duke Netherworld went to make sure that Duke Deathcrier didn't join the search.

Duke Deathcrier knew what he was up to, and decided that he had no other option than to resign himself to the will of the heavens.

And thus it came to be that only two devas were left who could participate in the search for Bai Xiaochun. In addition to them were the armies belonging to the six heavenly marquises, and the forces of the three great clans. All of Giant Ghost City was being scoured from top to bottom.

Chapter 655: Myriad Children Blood Banner

As the search continued in Giant Ghost City, Bai Xiaochun led the Giant Ghost King through one teleportation formation after another.

Not a single one led them 50,000 kilometers outside of the city. Bai Xiaochun had no choice but just keep trying to find that particular formation. As a result, the glow of teleportation could be seen popping up all over the city.

Sometimes such glowing light would rise up in the east, sometimes the west, sometimes the north....

The cultivators of the three great clans and the soldiers of the six heavenly marquises' armies were all aware of what was happening. Although they were shocked to discover that there were so many teleportation formations within the city limits, there was nothing they could do about it. Gritting their teeth, they continued the search, many of them rushing toward the nearest glowing light that indicated a teleportation was underway.

The rumbling of the teleportation formations filled the air as Bai Xiaochun dragged the shocked Giant Ghost King here and there. "That wasn't it.... Not that one either.... Eee? Here's one of the formations! Undying Hex!!"

After entering the most recently discovered formation, they were teleported into a courtyard residence in the east part of the city. Almost as soon as they began to materialize, whistling sounds filled the air around them.

As it just so happened, the chief of the Chen Clan was leading a group of three clan elders, and a large contingent of other cultivators from the clan, to search the area. As soon as the light of teleportation appeared, they raced over to find Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King coming into view.

“It’s Bai Hao!!”

“Notify the patriarch!!”

They attacked immediately, unleashing numerous divine abilities and magical techniques, as well as calling upon the power of sundry magical items. In the blink of an eye, all of that force was bearing down on Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun’s face fell. Having no time to activate the spell formation again to teleport away, he dragged the Giant Ghost King backward.

A resounding boom filled the air as the courtyard residence they had just been in disappeared, replaced by an enormous crater. As other buildings in the area collapsed, Bai Xiaochun became a series of afterimages that shot away at top speed, Giant Ghost King in tow.

However, in almost the same moment that he took to motion, a huge banner suddenly slammed into the ground in front of him. A blood-colored fog immediately spilled out, spreading in all directions to block his path.

Within that fog, it was possible to see thousands upon thousands... of blood-soaked children!

All of them were between four and five years old, and dripped with blood as surely as if they had been skinned alive. Their eyes shone with desolation as they stared at Bai Xiaochun, screaming and weeping bitterly.

“Save us, mister....”

“Mister, help....”

“It hurts! Sir, it hurts so bad....”

The bizarre wails almost instantly became like an attack on the soul!

As Bai Xiaochun reeled in shock, the Giant Ghost King’s pupils

constricted, and he said, “The Myriad Children Blood Banner!! How dare the Chen Clan use a forbidden item like that within Giant Ghost City!!”

At this point, the Giant Ghost King’s eyes began to flicker with fury.

The Myriad Children Blood Banner was created by sacrificing the lives of 100,000 children. It was classified as an evil treasure, something so barbaric that, even in the Wildlands, it was viewed as a violation of natural order. Furthermore, it was formally banned, the type of thing that came with strict punishments if it were used.

And yet, the chief of the Chen Clan had gone so far as to create one, and recently at that. Because he was unfamiliar with its usage, he couldn’t draw upon its full powers, but even still, the blood fog it created was so potent that anyone who breathed it in would be instantly sent into a nightmarish hallucination.

When Bai Xiaochun saw all of the rancorous, blood-soaked children, his heart twinged with pain, and his eyes began to shine with killing intent.

It didn’t matter where this item appeared, it would arouse the wrath of gods and men alike. It didn’t matter that this was the Wildlands; as soon as Bai Xiaochun saw the item, he couldn’t control his wrath.

At this point, a sinister voice echoed out from within the blood fog, “Well met, Giant Ghost King. I hope my blood banner doesn’t bother you too much.”

A tall, slender man walked out into the open. He appeared to a bit over forty years of age, handsome, with the demeanor of a transcendent being. However, his eyes were cold and sinister, revealing the cruel and vicious nature of his personality. He was none other than the chief of the Chen Clan, and even as his words echoed out, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, then waved his finger. Instantly, the blood fog seethed, and

the thousands upon thousands of blood-soaked children screamed and rushed toward Bai Xiaochun.

At the same time, the clan elders and other cultivators from the Chen Clan released their own attacks, causing rumbling sounds to fill the air. Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered as he quickly performed an incantation gesture to summon his Eternal Parasol. As soon as it opened up, he charged toward the clan chief using the Mountain Shaking Bash.

“Back the hell down!” the clan chief said with a cold laugh. Waving his sleeve, he unleashed the power of his Nascent Soul cultivation base, causing three children to appear within the fog who were soaked with so much blood they looked almost violet. Each one of them radiated the power of the Nascent Soul stage as they screamed and charged toward Bai Xiaochun.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as Bai Xiaochun roared in rage, dragging the Giant Ghost King with him as he took a step forward, accelerating with such blinding speed that everything around him slowed down. By the time he finished taking his step, he was only nine meters from the chief of the Chen Clan.

“Die!” he shouted, clenching his right hand into a fist and punching out with all of the power of his fleshly body and cultivation base. At the same time, a mark appeared on his forehead, which was none other than his Heavenspan Dharma Eye.

As everything in the area shook violently, the clan chief's face fell; he had been aware that this Bai Hao was incredible, but had never imagined that he would be capable of speed like this.

“Blood Children Detonation!!” he shouted.

BOOOOOOOOMMM!

The charging blood children screamed in pain as they began to explode, creating a blast of energy that bore down rapidly on Bai Xiaochun. It became like an enormous blood-colored mouth that

opened up as if to consume him.

By now, Bai Xiaochun's veins of steel were on full display. He knew that if he didn't come out on top in this encounter, he would be in extreme danger. Without any hesitation, he snapped open the Eternal Parasol, upon which four golden designs could be seen. Glittering golden light shone out in all directions as the parasol grew in size, covering him as he shot through the huge mouth and closed in on the Chen Clan chief with blinding speed.

"Time to die!" Bai Xiaochun roared, unleashing the Throat Crushing Grasp. Because of the gravitational force that came along with the technique, the shocked clan chief was incapable of dodging or evading. In the blink of an eye, Bai Xiaochun's two fingers were almost onto his throat.

The clan chief's ashen face was covered with a look of profound disbelief and shock. However, it was in that moment that an angry shout could be heard from some distance away.

"Screw off!!" The sound pierced through the air and exploded out into Bai Xiaochun's mind, causing blood to spray out of his mouth. To the delight of the clan chief, Bai Xiaochun's hand trembled, providing him the opportunity to escape.

"Patriarch, help me!" he shouted. However, even as he dodged to the side, Bai Xiaochun's eyes turned more bloodshot than before. Although he had missed the man's neck, he still managed to latch onto his shoulder, whereupon he twisted his hand viciously. Cracking sounds erupted out, accompanied by a bitter scream as Bai Xiaochun ripped the clan chief's right arm off of his body.

Blood sprayed out everywhere as the clan chief's face went completely ashen. However, he still managed to fall back at top speed. At the same time, a figure appeared nearby, speeding toward Bai Xiaochun.

It was an old man with a Deva Realm cultivation base, who was none other than the Chen Clan patriarch!

Gasping for breath, Bai Xiaochun immediately backed up, his eyes flickering with defiance. The Chen Clan chief had forged a blood banner by exterminating countless young lives, something that caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to swell with fury. Therefore, even as he backed up, he slapped his bag of holding, producing a greatbow with a fourteenfold spirit enhancement!

As soon as he pulled back on the bowstring, the area around him became like a black hole, sucking in all of the energy in the area.

At the same time, an arrow appeared on the bow which also had a fourteenfold spirit enhancement. Without any hesitation, Bai Xiaochun aimed the bow at the fleeing clan chief, and then loosed the arrow. When he did, an ear-piercing howl could be heard as the arrow transformed into a black dragon, and shot toward the clan chief.

Then, Bai Xiaochun turned and fled, not bothering to see what happened to the arrow and the chief.

As the clan chief's face drained of blood again, and a sensation of deadly crisis filled his heart, a cold snort could be heard. Then, the deva patriarch appeared directly in front him. Stepping forward, he reached out and grabbed the arrow.

Squeezing his hand down, he completely crushed it!

The deva patriarch's expression was very grim; if he had not stepped in to interfere, he could have reached Bai Xiaochun. However, the brief moment he took to save the chief's life was all the time Bai Xiaochun needed to flee. The killing intent in the patriarch's eyes grew more intense, and yet at the same time, he had his misgivings. He was still unsure of all the techniques at Bai Xiaochun's disposal, who had just seriously injured the Chen Clan chief, and very nearly killed him!

Not wanting to suffer the same fate as the Bai Clan patriarch, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, summoning a large group of ghostly figures, all of them wearing black suits of

armor, and all of them radiating the fluctuations of the Nascent Soul stage. Only then did he give chase.

Chapter 656: A Lot!

Sonic booms erupted out as the Chen Clan deva patriarch led scores of black-armored Nascent Soul-level ghosts after Bai Xiaochun.

Were it not for the fact that he feared the possibility that Bai Xiaochun might have more methods to endanger devas, the patriarch would have simply gone after him alone. However, he wasn't willing to gamble....

The tragic fate of the Bai Clan patriarch had played out right in front of him. If that patriarch had reacted only slightly slower, and had not taken advantage of the heat of the moment to speed back to the safety of his clan, then the Cai Clan patriarch would definitely have caught him. Although the Cai Clan patriarch would not have exterminated the other patriarch and his clan, he would definitely have forced the Bai Clan patriarch to pay a heavy price to stay alive.

Because of all that, the Chen Clan patriarch didn't want to take any risks. Eyes flashing with cold light, he performed an incantation gesture, pushing the black-armored ghosts forward with greater speed.

Bai Xiaochun's scalp was tingling with fear, and his heart was pounding. Looking over his shoulder, he saw the black-armored ghosts, and his nervousness mounted. The Giant Ghost King's face was also flickering with various emotions, and a sense of foreboding had gripped his heart.

In his anxiety, he couldn't hold back from saying, "I told you to go back to the stone turtle, but no. No, you had to--"

"Shut up!" Bai Xiaochun yelled angrily, zigging and zagging to avoid the magical techniques and divine abilities that were being launched at him from behind. Then he pushed forward with another burst of speed, piercing through the air to appear in a

nearby alley.

After glancing around quickly, he unhesitatingly punched a hole in the wall next to him, revealing a courtyard beyond. Obviously, this was a residence belonging to some rich family. As soon as Bai Xiaochun stepped inside, screams rang out as the terrified servants scattered in every direction.

Panting anxiously, Bai Xiaochun hurried to a pond in the corner of the courtyard, upon which he unleashed another punch. Immediately, the glow of teleportation rose up around him.

Not too far away, the black-armored ghosts radiated a murderous air as they rumbled through the air. Then they sent a volley of divine abilities toward that very pond.

The pond was completely leveled, sending water spraying everywhere. However, by that point, Bai Xiaochun was gone!

About 9,000 meters away, in an abandoned building, more teleportation light filled the air as Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King materialized.

“Dammit!” Bai Xiaochun thought. “How come I haven’t found the 50,000-kilometer one yet!?” Just when he was about to activate the formation to teleport away, a growl filled the air as the Chen Clan deva patriarch teleported into the same building. When he realized moments ago that Bai Xiaochun was using his unknown method to teleport away, he split away from the black-armored ghosts to chase after him directly.

He got a very bad feeling when he realized that Bai Xiaochun was using multiple teleportation formations. However, there was no time to ponder the situation at the moment. Murderous aura flaring, he quickly unleashed a palm strike.

A huge illusory hand appeared and shot toward Bai Xiaochun, a powerful strike that instantly destroyed everything around them.

Bai Xiaochun shrieked as the illusory hand closed in, but he had

already activated the teleportation formation. Teleportation light rose up, and by the time the palm landed, reducing everything in the area to ash, Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King were gone.

“Where did these teleportation formations come from!?!?” the Chen Clan patriarch thought, his expression grim. As a deva, he could easily lock the air down to nullify ordinary teleportations. And yet, he was incapable of nullifying these spell formations.

“You’re not getting away!” he growled. Eyes flashing with anger, he waved his hand, causing an illusory screen to appear in front of him, which depicted a birds-eye view of Giant Ghost City.

As he peered at the picture, he noticed one spot where a bright light suddenly appeared. Snorting coldly, he stepped forward into the image.

The spot where the light of teleportation had just risen up was a formerly bustling street. However, because of the current chaos in the city, it was an empty and cheerless place. As the teleportation light began to fade away, Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King appeared in front of one of the shops on the street.

By this point, the Giant Ghost King really couldn’t hold back from asking, “How... how many teleportation formations do you have set up?!”

He simply couldn’t imagine how there could be so many teleportation formations set up in his own city, all without his knowledge.

“A lot,” Bai Xiaochun responded quickly, his heart pounding. He was really starting to get worried. His answer was no exaggeration, and right now, he was relying on blind chance to find one particular formation among all of the hundreds that he knew about. Not daring to waste any time, he smacked the ground.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as the teleportation formation activated, and Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King vanished.

Even as they did, the air rippled, and the Chen Clan patriarch emerged. Waving his hand, he destroyed the spell formation.

However, an unsightly expression could be seen on his face, and the rage in his eyes grew deeper as he realized that he had been a moment too late.

“I really want to see how many times you can teleport before you run out of formations!”

With that, he vanished again. Enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, and booms filled numerous locations in Giant Ghost City. Bai Xiaochun was going all out, carrying the Giant Ghost King through one teleportation formation after another. Every time they vanished, the Chen Clan’s deva patriarch would appear and destroy the formation they had just used.

If Bai Xiaochun went even a little bit slower, he would be in great danger, a fact that was pushing him into madness. At the same time, he did everything he could to be as efficient as possible in his actions.

Despite that, he still had not found the teleportation formation that led 50,000 kilometers outside of the city.

He felt like he was going crazy, but it was the same with the Chen Clan patriarch. As far as the patriarch was concerned, this Bai Hao was like a rat who had countless tunnels dug through the city, through which he scurried in mystifying fashion....

In one moment, he would be in the east, in the following moment, the north. The patriarch’s anxiety mounted along with his anger, and at the same time, he couldn’t stop wondering what his quarry was attempting to accomplish....

“It doesn't actually seem like he wants to escape. More like he's looking for something. Don't tell me that one of the formations is actually capable of long-range teleportation?!” That thought only made him more anxious. He quickly stepped forward, appearing in

the most recent place where Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King had teleported through. He immediately destroyed the formation, then threw his head back and spoke in a voice so loud it filled the city.

“Bai Hao, why are you risking your life for the Giant Ghost King? There’s no great enmity between you and our three great clans! Why are you interfering with us!?”

“Hand over the Giant Ghost King, Bai Hao! Fear not, I will personally guarantee your safety!”

“I can also help resolve your issues with the Bai Clan. We can just wipe the slate clean! Give us the Giant Ghost King, and you can just be on your way!”

“In fact, we’ll even pay you for him!”

As his words echoed through the city, Bai Xiaochun appeared in another teleportation formation.

His hair was in disarray, and he looked quite bedraggled. The patriarch’s words immediately left him quite shaken, and were actually quite enticing.

As for the Giant Ghost King, his eyes widened, and the nervousness in his heart mounted. That was especially true when he realized that Bai Xiaochun seemed to be hesitating.

“Not good!” he thought. “This Bai Hao is vicious and merciless, and cares only about personal profit. If he feels threatened, then the little punk definitely won’t think twice about handing me over....”

As the Giant Ghost King was anxiously trying to come up with an idea about what to do, Bai Xiaochun was licking his lips and thinking that the Chen Clan patriarch’s offer wasn’t that bad. However, he had just made an agreement with the Giant Ghost King. He would definitely feel bad if he backed out now, and furthermore, it would be a big loss of face.

“Seems to me this Chen Clan patriarch is starting to get nervous. All I have to do is find that one spell formation, and I can teleport 50,000 kilometers away. Considering the speed I’m capable of, I should be able to buy the time I need. As long as I hang in there, I’ll profit handsomely....” Eyes glittering, he decided that he would only give in if it was absolutely necessary.

Most important of all was that he realized he couldn’t trust either the three great clans or the Giant Ghost King. However, with the restrictive spell he had, his relationship with the Giant Ghost King was a bit more stable.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he decided that now would actually be the perfect time to win the Giant Ghost King over to his side. Therefore, as he continued to search for the teleportation formation, he put on a righteous demeanor and shouted, “Quit wasting your breath. I, Bai Hao, am a person who keeps his word! Furthermore, I repay all kindnesses shown me. The Giant Ghost King favored me with benevolence, and I promised to keep him safe. How could I possibly go back on my word!?!? As long as I, Bai Hao, have strength left in my arms, I’ll never let you people take the Giant Ghost King away from me!” His words resonated out with the most righteous and noble of auras.

As for the Giant Ghost King, he looked up at Bai Xiaochun with a bitter smile. Being the wily old fox that he was, there was no way he could miss the hidden implications in Bai Xiaochun’s words. At the same time, though, he couldn’t help but feel gratitude rising up in his heart.

Chapter 657: Ninety-Nine Times!

“Are you looking to die?!” the Chen Clan patriarch roared, his face twisting with vicious anger. The next moment, he appeared in the location Bai Xiaochun had just teleported away from, whereupon a thunderous boom could be heard as the entire area was destroyed. Then he vanished as he continued the chase.

By this point, the Cai Clan patriarch was rushing back to the city to join the Chen Clan patriarch. Once he arrived, things would be even more difficult for Bai Xiaochun.

As for the special formations that required special means to enter, although Bai Xiaochun could use the Undying Hex to get into them, that required extra time.

The Chen Clan patriarch was as quick as lightning in his pursuit. It was when Bai Xiaochun had just encountered the second of the unique, locked-down formations that the patriarch appeared up above. Bai Xiaochun hadn't even had a chance to activate the teleportation function.

It was a relatively remote location in the west of the city, surrounded by quite a few ancient buildings and pagodas. In fact, many of them were as old as Giant Ghost City itself.

Not many soul cultivators lived in this area, making it a relatively quiet place. Because of the chaos in the city, the populace was shivering in fear, and at the moment, the only person visible in that entire part of the city was the Chen Clan patriarch.

“You're out of chances now, Bai Hao!” Killing intent raging, the patriarch waved his hand in the direction of Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as a huge hand appeared up above. Everything began to shake wildly, and the buildings below began to collapse into rubble.

Although Bai Xiaochun's face was ashen with fear, his eyes shone with determination. He knew that this was a critical juncture, and that he couldn't escape easily. Furthermore, if the teleportation formation was destroyed, he would have to run and find another one, a process that would be fraught with deadly peril.

With such thoughts on his mind, he lifted the Giant Ghost King over his head to block the incoming palm attack, and then reached his left hand down toward the teleportation formation.

It was a daring plan: use the Giant Ghost King to absorb some of the force of the blow, and then redirect it to activate the spell formation.

The Giant Ghost King was frustrated, but completely helpless. He knew that it was a critical moment, so all he could do was unleash what little of his cultivation base was possible... and bear the brunt of the blow....

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually took place in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. The Chen Clan patriarch's palm slammed into the Giant Ghost King, who grunted and then coughed up a mouthful of blood, along with chunks of some internal organs. Clearly, he had been very seriously injured.

Bai Xiaochun was also injured, and coughed up some blood. However, when his hand made contact with the teleportation formation, bright light shone up.

"Teleport!!" he shouted. Rumbling echoed out... but no teleportation began. Instead, random pieces of wood suddenly began to fly into the air from within the rubble of the surrounding destroyed buildings!!

There were also assorted bits of metal, which whizzed through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped, and even the Giant Ghost King, who

was still coughing up blood, stared in amazement. As for the Chen Clan patriarch, an uneasy feeling rose up in the pit of his chest.

Before any of them could react, cracking sounds filled the air as the pieces of wood and metal began to interlock and fit together almost like machinery. In the blink of an eye... a trap golem had formed right in front of Bai Xiaochun, dozens of meters tall!!

The trap golem had three heads, six arms, and a beast-like body with four legs. The surface of its body was speckled, and radiated an ancient air, as if it had existed since the most ancient of times. Almost as soon as it appeared, it threw its head back and howled.

The sound of the howl seemed to ripple with the fluctuations of a deva, something that caused all powerful experts within Giant Ghost City to start in shock.

The Chen Clan patriarch's eyes went wide with disbelief as he gasped, "A deva-level trap golem!! How is this possible?!?!"

The patriarch wasn't the only one to be stunned; the Giant Ghost King was completely flabbergasted. He had already been surprised at how many teleportation formations Bai Xiaochun had at his disposal, so the fact that a deva-level trap golem was in the city shocked him to the core. Although the trap golem was clearly not completely functional, and would obviously only last for a short time....

It was still a deva-level trap golem!!

The secret magic used to create trap golems was a lost art in the Wildlands, and yet... right here in Giant Ghost City, this Bai Hao had summoned one!

The Giant Ghost King had absolutely no idea what other sorts of divine abilities this Bai Hao had at his disposal. The things he had done in the short half year he had been in Giant Ghost City were shocking, to say the least.

It all seemed completely unbelievable, especially since Giant

Ghost City belonged to the Giant Ghost King, and yet even he had no idea how all of this had been set up. Then he thought about how he had fallen into Bai Hao's hands, and even resorted to giving him his own restrictive spell, and he suddenly realized that both he and everyone else... had completely underestimated Bai Hao. However, a moment later, his eyes glittered as he came to the conclusion that the spell formations must not have been set up by Bai Hao. He was only using them.

Regardless, the fact that he was making use of so many incredible resources made him a profound and accomplished schemer, and a truly consummate chosen!

Shaken, the Giant Ghost King looked over at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes shining and a complicated sense of admiration beginning to grow in his heart.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times in shock at the sight of the astonishing trap golem. Lu Shiyou had not been lying; his ancestor really had left a trap golem behind, hidden in one of the teleportation formations.

Heart pounding, he shouted, "Kill that man!"

The trap golem's eyes began to shine with crimson light, and cracking sounds could be heard as it leaped into the air and shot toward the Chen Clan patriarch.

A boom rang out, and everything in the area trembled as they began to fight. As for Bai Xiaochun, he took a deep breath and then pushed his hand down onto the ground again, whereupon the ripples of a teleportation spread out, and he and the Giant Ghost King vanished.

The Chen Clan patriarch wanted to give chase, but the trap golem wouldn't let him. Enraged, he began to attack with full strength. As for the trap golem, it was an ancient thing, and although it was able to cause problems for the deva patriarch, it wouldn't be long before it simply began to fall apart.

However, even as the patriarch gained the upper hand, the trap golem's eyes suddenly flickered. At the same time, the patriarch's face fell as he remembered the stories he had heard about trap golems, and how they all had a terrifying self-destruct function.

“Not good!” He immediately prepared to back up, but before he could, a hidden spark inside the trap golem suddenly ignited. Within the blink of an eye, the entire trap golem was a mass of billowing flame, exploding out in all directions.

The air twisted and distorted as a shockwave rolled through all of Giant Ghost City. Countless faces fell, and numerous cries of alarm could be heard.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun appeared in another location some distance off in the city. As he did, a wave of heat surged by, blowing his hair up behind him.

“Trap golem self-detonation!” he gasped.

At this point, the Giant Ghost King was still coughing up blood, and his face was slack. However, his eyes burned with fiery passion.

As the flames faded away, a howl of rage could be heard, which came from none other than the Chen Clan patriarch. His hair was in disarray, his robes were in tatters, and he was shaking visibly. Although he wasn't dead, the way he coughed up blood indicated that he had been seriously injured. At the same time, his hatred for Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been any greater.

However, he didn't hesitate to make the same decision as the Bai Clan patriarch. Roaring in rage, he became a bright beam of light that shot toward the Chen Clan. Considering how little he trusted anyone, his main priority now was to heal his own injuries.

When everyone in Giant Ghost City saw that, they gasped, completely shaken and terrified by Bai Hao.

“Heavens, the Bai Clan patriarch tried to kill Bai Hao and got

seriously injured! Now the same thing happened to the Chen Clan patriarch....”

“Just how many tricks does this Bai Hao have up his sleeve? He’s terrifying!!”

“He’s a deva-killer!! A complete animal!”

Whether it was the three great clans, the armies of the six heavenly marquises, or anyone else, nobody could remain unterrified by what they had seen. As for the forces of the heavenly marquises, they did not have any devas on their side, and thus, were incapable of actually chasing after Bai Xiaochun. At the moment though, they were actually glad about that.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun felt more pleased with himself than ever.

“Did you see that?” he shouted loudly. “Don’t provoke me! When I attack, I frighten even myself!! I can use that same divine ability ninety-nine more times if I feel like it!”

Chapter 658: Blood, Sweat And Tears

Everyone in the city who heard his words instantly grew hesitant. He had uttered similar words after injuring the Bai Clan patriarch, and although few people had believed him, it still put them a bit on guard.

But now... the Chen Clan patriarch had suffered a similar fate. Everyone was completely shaken.

As for the Cai Clan patriarch, he had been in the middle of speeding toward Bai Xiaochun as quickly as possible, but was now hesitating.

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had seriously injured the deva patriarchs of the other two clans caused fear to pulse in his heart. However, after a moment, his eyes glittered with cold light.

“There might be some danger involved, but it also means this is an opportunity for the Cai Clan to rise to prominence.... Neither the Bai Clan nor the Chen Clan can do anything at the moment. I'm the only one left who can kill the Giant Ghost King. If I do... who would dare to refuse to bow to me!?”

“The Cai Clan would dominate everyone! We could unite Giant Ghost City, and officially swear fealty to the imperial city! I would be the new Giant Ghost King, and with the resources of a heavenly king at my disposal, I would almost certainly become a demigod!” He couldn't help but pant in anticipation of that day. Chuckling evilly, he shot in the direction Bai Xiaochun's voice had just come from, simultaneously issuing orders to the Cai Clan to converge on the same spot.

Rumbling sounds once again filled Giant Ghost City as Bai Xiaochun began to teleport back and forth. However, the Cai Clan patriarch was actually a bit faster than the Chen Clan patriarch, and before Bai Xiaochun could even escape ten times in a row, he caught up. When he did, he instantly destroyed the spell formation

before Bai Xiaochun could activate it.

Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he turned and began to flee at top speed. As for the Cai Clan patriarch, he chuckled coldly and began to chase after him, joined by numerous other members of the Cai Clan.

The clan chief and clan elders were there, ensuring that numerous beams of light were now converging on Bai Xiaochun.

"I'm finished. Kaput. There's definitely no hope now...." Bai Xiaochun was on the verge of tears as he contemplated how the nearest teleportation formation was at least 3,000 meters away. Considering how close his pursuers were, there was no way he would make it there. That was especially true considering that the Cai Clan patriarch was a deva. In fact, were it not for the fact that the patriarch was leery of approaching too closely and quickly, he would have already attacked Bai Xiaochun directly.

"I'm out of options..." he thought. "Giant Ghost King, you can't blame me for what happens next. The Cai Clan wants you, and although I don't trust them to honor a trade, if I just throw you at them, then I might have a chance to escape." Although he didn't really want to do this, his poor little life was the most important thing, so he sighed and prepared to take action.

However, that was when the voice of the little turtle was transmitted into his ears.

"Calm down, little punk. There's something you don't realize about this Giant Ghost King.... He's a slippery character, I tell you. Lord Turtle was sure before that he was hiding something, and it took me a while to figure out what it was. Hmmmphh. At this point I can see it clearly.

"Listen, punk, the Giant Ghost King was lying. He doesn't need a month for his cultivation base to recover. He's fooled everyone! Lord Turtle's eagle eyes can tell that he only needs five days! Maybe even three! Hmph. This guy really knows how to keep his

secrets!

“If you abandon him to the three clans, he definitely has a way to last for four or five days in the hands of those devas. At that point... well, then things would get ‘interesting’.”

Shaken, Bai Xiaochun stole a glance at the Giant Ghost King. The man’s face was ashen, and he wore a bitter, pained expression. Bai Xiaochun immediately hesitated. The little turtle seemed very confident in what he had just said, and it did all make sense. After all, the Giant Ghost King was a profound schemer....

Finally, Bai Xiaochun chuckled.

“Quite the act you’ve pulled off!” he thought. “Five days, huh? If I give up now, it would really be a big waste.” A month was too long, but it might be possible to last for four or five days. In any case, the possible payoff in the end was worth the gamble.

“I guess I need to smooth things out with him....” After looking up in thought for a moment, he cleared his throat inwardly, then plastered a vicious expression onto his face.

“Giant Ghost King!” he shouted at the top of his lungs, his veins of steel pulsing.

Coughing up another mouthful of blood, the Giant Ghost King looked over at Bai Xiaochun and sighed.

“He’s going to break his promise and hand me over to the three clans, isn’t he...?” However, even as he thought this, Bai Xiaochun’s voice rang out into the air.

“Giant Ghost King, you are a most honorable king, and a demigod as well. I, Bai Hao, am a nameless nobody, with a lowly Core Formation cultivation base.... The gap between the two of us is like the gap between heaven and earth. It’s impossible to even compare the two of us. In fact, were it not for the events playing out right now, the paths of our lives would likely never have crossed.” Bai Xiaochun’s voice contained a mixture of bitterness and profundity

that left the Giant Ghost King feeling a bit stunned.

Even the people from the Cai Clan were now staring at him with serious looks on their faces.

Voice hoarse, Bai Xiaochun began to speak as if he were recalling old times, “In the beginning, I was a pawn, dragged unwillingly into your little game. I am aware that it was not an expression of kindness. However, I do know that it was... the sowing of karma!

“Perhaps I removed you from the stone turtle out of resentment, or greed. It’s hard to determine if that was a mistake or not. However, I do know that it was... the reaping of karma!

“Karma. Karma! A mysterious and indescribable thing.... Let’s forget about all of those things.... Right now, there is one thing that Bai Hao will not do, and that is forget about his promise, or his agreement with you, Giant Ghost King!”

Bai Xiaochun’s words caused the Giant Ghost King to shiver; never could he have guessed that he would say things like this. He had anticipated being thrown over to the three clans.

Instead, Bai Xiaochun went into a description of everything leading up to this point. Furthermore, his words were sincere in many ways. Even an old fox like the Giant Ghost King couldn’t help but be a bit touched. After all, everything this Bai Hao had said was true. Originally speaking, the two of them would likely never have crossed paths.... Furthermore, it was the Giant Ghost King himself who ended up dragging Bai Hao into the whole mess.

“I said that I would keep you safe for a month.... I said that I wouldn’t abandon you.... And now, I say this: what does death count for!? Giant Ghost King, please allow me to address you as old pal! Old pal... if we fail to pass through this tribulation alive, and end up in the Yellow Springs, then I’ll still protect you for an entire month!” Flicking his sleeve, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. It was a laughter filled with both madness and obsession. His expression, his wording, and everything else

immediately caused waves of shock to batter at the Giant Ghost King!

It had been a long time since he felt moved in this way by anyone. Although he could also sense that something about the situation was a bit off, and seemed to go contrary to what he knew about this Bai Hao, in his current state of physical and emotional exhaustion, and after having experienced numerous betrayals and unexpected mishaps, he could do nothing else but accept Bai Xiaochun's sincerity!

“Bai Hao....” he said, his heart trembling and overflowing with emotion. There were actually many factors that had led to the current situation, and normally speaking, the ruthless Giant Ghost King would never allow such warm feelings to erupt inside of him.

It was possible to see that from how he had kept even the loyal Duke Deathcrier in the dark about everything.

In the Giant Ghost King's moment of profound emotion, the Cai Clan's deva patriarch looked over with cold eyes and then growled, “Well, the both of you can just die together then!”

Then he waved his finger through the air.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as an attack shot toward Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King. Bai Xiaochun quickly snapped open his Eternal Parasol to block the attack. However, he still ended up coughing up blood and staggering backward under the force of the blow, seriously injured.

“Bai Hao!!” the Giant Ghost King shouted, stunned at the fact that he hadn't been thrown out in front by Bai Xiaochun to block the attack....

“The reason I used you to defend myself earlier, old pal,” Bai Xiaochun said grandly, “was not because I feared death. No, I simply wanted to save energy to get you out of this situation....” Inwardly, of course, Bai Xiaochun was grumbling about how

thoroughly realistic he was making his act seem....

“Don’t despair, old pal! I still have more tricks up my sleeve!” Eyes flickering with sharp light, he looked back at the Cai Clan cultivators only 300 meters behind him.

Inside, he grumbled, “I’m really shedding some blood, sweat and tears to get this old fox to trust me....”

Gritting his teeth viciously, he waved his right hand, summoning a flying sword from his bag of holding, which glittered with the golden light of an elevenfold spirit enhancement.

However, things weren’t over yet. Even as he threw it out, he continued to extract magical items from his bag of holding. All of them were things he had acquired after arriving in the Wildlands, and although some had elevenfold spirit enhancements, most had only five or sixfold enhancements. However, there were dozens of them.

“DETONATE!!!”

Chapter 659: Extravagantly Wasteful Battle

These were not the spirit enhanced treasures he had personally made the time he went crazy and enhanced everything he owned. They were items he had acquired via interrogations performed as a dark inquisitor.

Therefore, he didn't feel even the slightest twinge of pain in his heart as he threw them out and then detonated them, creating numerous fiery streaks of destruction!

Bai Xiaochun had a bit of experience in detonating spirit enhanced items, and knew that when they exploded, they released a huge amount of the energy of heaven and earth, all in one moment. However, despite what he had experienced in the past... he had never detonated dozens of them simultaneously. The explosive force they released left him completely shocked.

He wasn't the only one. The members of the Cai Clan, from the clan chief and clan elders down to the ordinary cultivators, were all completely stunned by the extravagant wastefulness of it all.

After all, magical items with six or sevenfold spirit enhancements were like cherished treasures to any soul cultivator. As for items with nine or tenfold enhancements, they were even more rare. For example, Zhou Yixing, a member of an aristocratic necromancer clan that was also in the great circle of Core Formation, had only possessed one.

It almost wasn't necessary to mention how people felt about items with eleven and twelvefold enhancements. The explosions they caused released such incredible force that all witnesses to the event were stunned.

The ear-splitting explosion rocked heaven and earth, causing even the Nascent Soul cultivators to back up in fear and do everything in their power to defend themselves.

The massive detonation caused all of the pursuing cultivators of the Cai Clan to tumble backward, many of them coughing up blood.

The Giant Ghost King also trembled as the words Bai Xiaochun had just spoken continued to ring in his ears. Considering everything he was seeing right now, it was obvious that this Bai Hao was really going to put everything on the line.

Bai Xiaochun was panting as he borrowed some of the force of the explosion to shoot in the direction of the nearest spell formation, 3,000 meters away. Each step he took propelled him hundreds of meters, and within moments, he had reached the formation.

However, that was when a cold snort echoed out; the explosion of the spirit enhanced items had stopped the ordinary members of the Cai Clan, but could do nothing to block the path of the patriarch.

Originally, he had been worried about how Bai Xiaochun had injured the patriarchs of the Bai and Chen Clans, and had kept his distance. But now, he didn't have the luxury of worrying so much. He had been prepared to perform a teleportation at any time, so he moved with lightning-like speed, piercing through the air and the force of the explosion to appear only about 30 meters away from Bai Xiaochun. Without any hesitation, he reached out with his right hand and unleashed the power of his Deva Realm cultivation base.

“You're not going anywhere!” he said, his eyes flickering with cold light. Instantly, the air in the area began to solidify, and an energy began to crush down onto Bai Xiaochun with enough force to shatter his bones.

Furthermore, the energy of heaven and earth being released formed together in front of him into the shape of a pitch-black, nine-headed bird. All of the bird's eyes radiated murderous gleams, and the bird itself exuded a pressure of immense proportions!

This nine-headed bird had been summoned by the Cai Clan's deva patriarch, not by means of a magical technique, but rather... as an incarnation of the will of the heavens!

Most other cultivators would have been completely shocked by what they were seeing, and their cultivation bases would have been crushed into a state of complete suppression. But Bai Xiaochun had four clones, and although they had been seriously injured and were currently holed up inside of him, they still gave him a huge boost in terms of both cultivation base and divine sense, pushing him far past the level of an ordinary Core Formation cultivator. Furthermore, his fleshly body was already in the great circle of the Undying Tendons. To top it all off, this was not his first time fighting a deva! He didn't even respect devas very much!

Because of that, he was able to resist the deva pressure weighing down on him, and as the nine-headed bird shrieked and lunged toward him, he let out a powerful roar.

There was no time for thought or planning, nor any time to try to put on an act. He instantly fell back, simultaneously waving his arm, which sent the several sets of leather armor he was wearing shooting toward the nine-headed bird. When he had first performed spirit enhancements on the armor, he had used special techniques to conceal the evidence of spirit enhancement. But the pressure of the deva nullified such effects, and the four golden designs on their surface now shone brightly.

“Detonate!!” he shouted. Instantly, the suits of leather armor all exploded, releasing force that far surpassed the detonation of the dozens of items from moments ago.

The Cai Clan cultivators further back looked on with wide eyes, especially when they noticed the four golden designs on each of the suits of armor. And yet, even as feelings of madness rose up in their hearts, things continued! Bai Xiaochun's outer garment flew out, along with a hat and a few ordinary-looking bracelets.

However, it was to the shock of everyone present that four golden designs now appeared on all of them!

Each one flew out and then exploded, sending waves of intense force to meet the nine-headed bird. The bird was already fading away, but that was when Bai Xiaochun swung his left foot through the air, sending a shoe shooting forward, a shoe that had four golden designs on it! The extravagant wastage on display caused the Cai Clan cultivators to cry out in shock.

“This Bai Hao... he... he even has a fourteenfold spirit enhancement on his shoe?!?!?!”

The Giant Ghost King was being held in Bai Xiaochun’s right hand, so he had a first-hand view of everything, and the shock he felt now was so intense that his face was completely slack.

The Cai Clan patriarch’s eyes went wide with disbelief, and yet, the killing intent within them only grew stronger as he pressed the attack.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he simply continued to speed toward the teleportation portal, which was now only about 300 meters away. As the Cai Clan patriarch closed in, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes lit up with joy, and he threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“I’ve been waiting for you to get close, old man! You finally fell into my trap! Time for you to see my trump card!” Continuing to laugh loudly, he swung his right leg through the air, causing his right shoe to fly out, which also had four golden design on it.

“Detonate!” he roared. The Cai Clan Patriarch’s face fell. He had only just now decided to go all out, and yet, was still filled with apprehension regarding how Bai Xiaochun had seriously injured the other two patriarchs. As soon as he heard Bai Xiaochun’s words, and saw the shoe flying toward him, he backed up, unwilling to take any risks....

When the shoe exploded, it was a shocking sight, but nothing

that could really hurt the Cai Clan patriarch. Face turning very grim, he angrily shouted, “How dare you trick me, Bai Hao!!”

Roaring in rage, he stepped forward once again, but the slight delay which had just occurred had given Bai Xiaochun enough time to get within 30 meters of the teleportation formation. Just as he was about to step into it, the Cai Clan patriarch howled and performed an incantation gesture with his right hand.

Waving his finger at Bai Xiaochun, he caused the nine-headed bird to erupt into flames, and then accelerate rapidly.

Bai Xiaochun’s face fell, and he immediately prepared to defend himself. However, before anything else could happen, an afterimage appeared on the bird, and a second one flew out. One of the nine-headed birds bore down on Bai Xiaochun himself, and the other headed toward the spell formation.

“Not good!” To Bai Xiaochun’s shock, the Cai Clan patriarch was not just attacking him, he was trying to destroy the teleportation formation as well!

Rumbling sounds filled the air as the ruins surrounding the teleportation portal were completely destroyed by the nine-headed bird. Buildings collapsed for thousands of meters in all directions, and even the ground was crushed down by a full meter. Clearly, the patriarch actually didn’t know the specific location of the spell formation, and was just trying to destroy everything in the hopes that the teleportation formation would be destroyed as well.

As for Bai Xiaochun, when the nine-headed bird slammed into him, blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he was sent tumbling backward until he managed to stop in place on the spot he knew to be the location of the teleportation formation.

“Let’s see how you try to get away this time!” the Cai Clan patriarch said, a vicious grin spreading out on his face. However, even as it did, his eyes suddenly flickered with disbelief.

The light of teleportation suddenly began to rise up right beneath Bai Xiaochun's feet. As it turned out, the teleportation formation... hadn't been damaged at all!!

Furthermore, the light that was shining up now was different than the light from before. It was blinding, and the energy of the teleportation was clearly stronger. It only took a moment for anyone familiar with teleportation formations to realize... that this was a long-range teleportation!

This was the very spell formation created by Lu Shiyou's ancestor which led to a spot 50,000 kilometers outside of the city. All of the other spell formations in the city had really been created to serve as distractions, with this formation being the true escape path. Furthermore, there was no way he would have his true escape path be the type that could easily be destroyed! The only thing the deva patriarch's attack had done was make it so that Bai Xiaochun didn't need to use his Undying Hex to enter the spell formation!

Chapter 660: Ghost King's Soul Blood!

Bai Xiaochun was very excited, and yet, within moments, his face turned ashen, and his heart began to pound!

He had never dared to hope that this was the special spell formation that would lead 50,000 kilometers outside of the city. He had assumed it was just an ordinary spell formation that would put him a short distance away.

However, he had come to the conclusion that, unless Lu Shiyu had been lying about that special formation, he would find it soon.

After all, he had tried out quite a few other spell formations up to this point, nearly seventy percent of the total amount. That being the case, his chances of finding the long-range teleportation formation would only increase as time went on.

And yet... this formation he was standing on was definitely the formation he had been looking for! Unfortunately, although it might seem as though this formation was the one that would save his life, Bai Xiaochun now realized that it was also a potentially deadly catastrophe!!

There was no time to ponder the situation. He quickly reached out with his right hand and then pushed it down toward the surface of the portal, causing the light to grow even more intense.

A very serious look filled his eyes, a look that was tinged with madness. He knew that this moment was one of extreme danger; the Cai Clan patriarch had been holding back out of fear, keeping much of his cultivation base power in reserve in case he needed to defend against a deadly trump card. It was only because of that fact that Bai Xiaochun and the Giant Ghost King had made it this far.

But now, with the light of the teleportation formation rising up, the Cai Clan patriarch had no reason not to go all out....

And that was exactly what happened. The anger in the Cai Clan

patriarch's eyes faded, replaced by intense determination. Although he still felt hesitant because of the potential danger, he knew that he had to make a move now. Even if this Bai Hao did have one more trick up his sleeve, the consequences of letting him escape were too severe.

Without the slightest hesitation, the patriarch drew upon the full power of his cultivation base, causing the sky to vibrate and bolts of lightning to appear everywhere. Up above him in the air, a huge face appeared, which resembled his own face in every aspect.

The patriarch took a step forward, and as he planted his foot onto the ground, countless lightning bolts began to fall, making it look like a rain of gold was descending onto the earth.

Bai Xiaochun was wracked with anxiety. Never could he have imagined that he would find the special teleportation formation under these circumstances. His plan had been to put some distance between himself and his enemies when he activated it, which would have given him plenty of time to escape.

But that was not how things were playing out.

"I'm finished," he thought. "Kaput. It's all over.... What do I do, what do I do...? Even if I handed the Giant Ghost King over now, this old patriarch wouldn't let me off the hook!" He wanted to cry, but no tears would come. It wasn't that he didn't consider simply throwing the Giant Ghost King out of the teleportation portal. That might buy him some time, but in the end, the Cai Clan definitely would not let him go free, nor would the Chen or Bai Clans.

Besides, after the Giant Ghost King got his cultivation base back, then Bai Xiaochun knew that the only thing which would await him would be a grisly death.... He had the restrictive spell, and the Giant Ghost King's promise. However, Bai Xiaochun was certain that if he handed the Giant Ghost King over, that would constitute breaking their agreement.

“Fudge. I guess I need to go for broke!!” In the blink of an eye, his eyes went completely bloodshot. He feared dying, but when death loomed, and he was out of options, he would be gripped by madness. During moments like that, he would not waver; he was not the type of person who liked to gamble, but in moments like this, gambling was the only option.

He would gamble on being able to hold out until the teleportation formation was fully activated!

His four clones were all weak and injured, but they appeared in the open now, surging with energy. For the first time, Bai Xiaochun released the Giant Ghost King, setting him down onto the surface of the spell formation. Then he looked up, his eyes shining with madness as he prepared to face the Cai Clan patriarch directly.

“Prepare to die, Bai Hao!!” the patriarch said, his voice rumbling as if it were the will of the heavens. It even seemed to contain magical laws of heaven and earth, and was accompanied by countless bolts of lightning that, as they fell from the sky, formed together into an enormous battle-axe.

As the battle-axe of lightning descended, the Cai Clan patriarch leaped up into the sky and grabbed it, and then... viciously swung it down toward Bai Xiaochun!

Given the speed of his attack, there was no way that he wouldn't land the blow before the teleportation completed!

At this moment, nobody was paying attention to the Giant Ghost King, or the strange gleam in his eye. The truth was that he had been profoundly shaken by Bai Xiaochun's words and actions. He was a wily old fox, a ruthless and ambitious person who didn't trust anyone except his direct relatives. But the words Bai Xiaochun had spoken had caused a bit of warmth to appear in his heart. Of course, that warmth would only last for so long. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun's previous actions, if analyzed

carefully, did not really match up with his words. However... after the long-range teleportation portal appeared, he was doing something that would forever make up for any deficiencies in his previous actions!

No matter what anyone said, as of this moment, Bai Xiaochun really was living up to his word, and was risking his life to keep the Giant Ghost King safe....

Most importantly, Bai Xiaochun had released the Giant Ghost King in order to take action!!

The Giant Ghost King was even more profoundly moved than he had been at the realization that Bai Xiaochun really wasn't planning to throw him over to his enemies.... Although the king was a fundamentally ruthless individual, even he could not help but be shaken by what was happening.

The events which had played out on this day were profound, to say the least. It was in this moment that the Giant Ghost King took a deep breath, and at the same time, a shimmer of determination appeared in his eyes. As the Cai Clan patriarch closed in, the Giant Ghost King reached up and pushed his hand down onto his forehead.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as his forehead opened up, and a golden drop of blood flew out and shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Hao, this is a drop of my soul blood. Absorb it, and you will have access to power equivalent to half a step into the Demigod Realm. Take my crimson spear... and attack with everything you've got!!” He sounded very weak as he spoke the words, and as the soul blood flew out of him, he seemed to age visibly, until he looked like little more than skin and bones. His aura was so weak that he was like a candle flickering in the wind; even his eyes clouded over.

He only had three drops of soul blood in total, each of which was extremely important. Of course, anyone who absorbed one of those

drops of soul blood would experience a huge boost to their cultivation base, except that boost would only last for a short time. However, it would give the recipient enlightenment regarding the natural laws of devas and the magical laws of demigods!

At the moment, it was with complete and utter determination that the Giant Ghost King sent his soul blood flying toward Bai Xiaochun!

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped as the Giant Ghost King's words entered his ears. And then, the drop of soul blood hit his chest and sank inside.

A wave of heat exploded out inside of him, causing blue veins to bulge out on his face and neck. At the same time, a scream of intense pain erupted from his lips.

Cracking sounds could be heard, and his entire body thrummed from the power of the soul blood.

All of a sudden, monumental changes occurred to his cultivation base. His aura surged upward with indescribable speed, pushing him out of the Gold Core stage and into the early Nascent Soul stage. In the blink of an eye, he was in the great circle, and then beyond it. He was a deva, and yet, things weren't over yet! His aura was almost instantly in the great circle of the Deva Realm, only half a step from the Demigod Realm!

He was... half a step into the Demigod Realm!!

He threw his head back and let loose a protracted roar, his hair whipping around him. As of this moment, all of the Giant Ghost King's accumulated knowledge of devas filled his mind, as well as much of his enlightenment regarding the Demigod Realm. Although that enlightenment wasn't complete, to Bai Xiaochun, it was profoundly precious. This was a type of good fortune that could be encountered by chance, but never searched for and found!

It would make his future cultivation advance much more rapidly than before, and would help him avoid many mistakes. In fact, it was highly likely that it would enable him to surpass the Giant Ghost King himself!

Right now... anything and everything was possible!

That was the power of soul blood! It could not truly push someone to new heights permanently, but would still be dramatically helpful in the long run!

As for the Cai Clan patriarch, his face fell, and he blurted, “Soul blood!!”

Never could he have imagined that the selfish and callous Giant Ghost King would actually give out a drop of his soul blood. The patriarch’s killing intent grew more intense, and he began to push his lightning axe down with even greater speed.

The attack he was unleashing contained indescribable energy of heaven and earth, as if nature itself were furious, and intent on punishing all living beings. Lightning filled the sky as the enormous axe bore down on Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 661: Escaping Giant Ghost City!

Bai Xiaochun closed his eyes, almost as if he weren't worried at all about the incoming Cai Clan patriarch. Instead, he sank into the feeling of becoming one with everything around him.

He was heaven, he was earth, he was the will of all creation.

“So, this is what it's like to be a deva.... One with everything....” Right now, he felt like the wave of his hand could draw upon all the power of heaven and earth to crush anything in his path.

It was almost as if heaven and earth were an empty body, and a deva could become the will of that body, controlling it in every aspect.

Of course, there was more than just a single will within that heaven and earth, controlling it. There were other devas who also vied for control. In fact, Bai Xiaochun could sense another such will right there in front of him, drawing upon the incredible energy of heaven and earth to attack him.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes snapped open, and when he did, his entire person thrummed with power!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

His energy surged, and not only did that put him on equal footing with the Cai Clan patriarch, but his four clones were also powering up in exactly the same fashion.

“Return!” Bai Xiaochun said, waving his sleeve. Immediately, his four clones merged back into his body, causing his energy to rise even higher. He had already been half a step into the Demigod Realm, but now that he had merged with his clones... he became even more powerful. Rumbling sounds echoed out as he broke through another level, and an aura appeared which shocked even the Giant Ghost King.

The Giant Ghost King had been teetering on the verge of

unconsciousness. However, he bit his tongue to produce some clarity, which was exactly when that terrifying aura erupted out from Bai Xiaochun. The Giant Ghost King gasped, and his heart became completely filled with incredulity.

“He used only one drop of my soul blood to actually produce a demigod aura.... How is this possible? He’ll only get one attack out of it, but... it still shouldn’t be possible!!”

If the wide-eyed Giant Ghost King had such a reaction, there was little need to mention the Cai Clan patriarch. His mind was reeling, and his scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode.

“You....”

Before he could say anything else, though.... Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone with intense light; his heart was pounding wildly as he felt the fusion between himself and heaven and earth. However, there was something a bit fuzzy, as if.... the previously wide world was now cramped and narrow. It almost felt as if using all the power at his disposal would break beyond this heaven and earth.

“So, this is the difference between a deva and a demigod, huh...?” Bai Xiaochun knew that what he was experiencing was something beyond precious. Extending his right hand, he made a grasping motion, whereupon a red spear emerged from his bag of holding!

The instant that spear appeared, the entire sky filled with thunderous rumbling. At the same time, the sea of lightning up above stopped moving, and even began to distort, as though something were interfering with it.

The wind, the land, the air, everything grew still. Even the Cai Clan patriarch stopped moving, causing his face to fill with a mass of shock and disbelief.

The only thing in the world that could move... was Bai Xiaochun... and the long red spear!

This red spear was how the Giant Ghost King had made a name for himself. Normally speaking, Bai Xiaochun should never have been able to wield it, but now that he held it in his hand, piercing howls could be heard coming from inside of it, almost as if it thirsted to taste blood.

Further, it was now possible to just barely make out nine blood dragons on the surface of the spear, all of them roaring at the Cai Clan patriarch. Those nine dragons were why this spear was named... the Nine Dragons Godslaying Spear!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes gleamed with killing intent, and as everything in the world went still, he gripped the spear and stabbed it toward the Cai Clan patriarch.

That simple stabbing motion became a rapidly spinning black hole that unleashed terrifyingly destructive power of heaven and earth!

In the same way that a canvas painting could be shredded to pieces, the silence was broken, the wind shattered, and the earth quaked. The destructive power was such that the nearby members of the Cai Clan began to cough up massive volumes of blood, and some of them were even shredded into masses of gore, destroyed in body and soul!

Even more shocking, the sea of lightning in the sky was destroyed as easily as if it were made of dried twigs! The black hole completely consumed all of the lightning....

And yet, things weren't over yet. There was no way the Cai Clan patriarch would be able to complete the blow with his lightning axe. Cracking sounds could be heard as the axe began to fall apart, and then, the Cai Clan patriarch... physically exploded!!

A piercing scream could be heard as his body collapsed into a mass of blood. At that point, he flew out in nascent divinity form, his face a mass of shock and terror as he tried to flee.

But the black hole's power was formidable, and no matter what the nascent divinity patriarch did to try to escape, he was sucked backward.

“No... NO!!” he screamed, overwhelmed by fear and terror. Never could he possibly have imagined that one drop of the Giant Ghost King's soul blood could push someone all the way to the demigod level.

It was completely absurd and unbelievable.... In fact, it really was impossible for the Giant Ghost King to do something like that, to the point where the patriarch wondered if the Giant Ghost King's cultivation base was actually beyond the demigod level and had reached... the Mahayana Realm!!

But that was completely impossible!!

Therefore, the only other explanation... was that there was something uniquely special about this Bai Hao!

Regardless of the explanation, the Cai Clan patriarch was now in a deadly situation. His nascent divinity screamed as he was sucked toward the black hole. However, just before he was pulled all the way in... a tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and his demigod cultivation base began to drop. In the blink of an eye, he was all the way back in Core Formation, where he had started.

The sensation of vast power from moments ago was gone. Suddenly being wrenched back into Core Formation was not easy to handle, and he immediately coughed up a massive mouthful of blood. As he staggered backward, the long red spear faded, and the nine howling dragons disappeared.

“What a pity....” he murmured to himself. The feeling of incredible power that he had just experienced had been entrancing, to say the least.

The black hole vanished, and the Cai Clan patriarch in nascent divinity form shivered, feeling like he had just stepped halfway

into the gates of the netherworld. He instantly burst into motion, traveling 3,000 meters away in the blink of an eye. When he turned to look back, he saw the light of teleportation completely washing over Bai Xiaochun.

The patriarch shivered again, fear lingering inside him at the sensation of having nearly been killed. He knew without a doubt that if Bai Xiaochun's aura had lasted even a moment longer, he would have been killed.

As of this moment, his fleshly body was destroyed, but his nascent divinity remained. His life was saved. However, the only thing he felt inside was bitterness, terror, and madness.

“They... made it out of Giant Ghost City.... If we don't find them, then the Giant Ghost King will be back in only a few months.... Demigod.... Demigod.... He can kill devas with the simple swipe of a spear....” Trembling, the patriarch threw his head back and howled. Then, he turned and headed toward the Chen Clan. After all, the tribulation to come would rain down on all three great clans, and therefore, they all needed to work together to resolve the situation.

They needed to come to an agreement that, even if one of them were to be seriously injured, the other two would still make a move. There could be no more infighting between them. Right now... they had to focus all their resources on hunting down the Giant Ghost King and Bai Hao!

Furthermore, the Cai Clan patriarch felt confident that the teleportation formation couldn't have taken them extremely far away. His guess was that, at most, its range was roughly 50,000 kilometers!

As the Cai Clan patriarch left to confer with the patriarchs of the Chen and Bai Clans, countless people within Giant Ghost City were reacting to what had just occurred with Bai Hao. All of the power groups, all of the soul cultivators, came to hear about the matter,

and were struck with indescribable shock.

“He seriously injured the patriarchs of the Bai and Chen Clan, and even destroyed the fleshly body of the Cai Clan patriarch!!”

“This Bai Hao... is so strong!”

“Heavens! This Bai Hao single-handedly dominated all three of the great clans!!”

“The Giant Ghost King escaped.... If he recovers and comes back, the three great clans and the six heavenly marquises will all be crushed like weeds.... And Bai Hao... well, it doesn't matter how he might have offended the Giant Ghost King in the past, after risking his life the way he did, he'll definitely become one of the most important people in all of Giant Ghost City!!”

Chapter 662: Im Only Doing This To Save You, Old Pal

Not even forty hours had passed since the outbreak of rebellion in Giant Ghost City!

During that short period of time, drastic changes had occurred, which the people of the city found outrageous and terrifying.

First the Nine Serenities King had made his probing attack. Then the six marquises revolted. Four devas joined the fray. The Giant Ghost King had not even been able to make a stand, and yet, that was only the beginning. When it was revealed that the Giant Ghost King was only a clone, the second phase of the event began.

The entire city was turned upside down as the rebels searched for the Giant Ghost King's true self. That was when Bai Hao showed up on the scene, holding the Giant Ghost King's true self captive. Everything which occurred after that... would be fixed for all time in the memories of those who had been present.

Three powerful devas were seriously injured, and then... Bai Hao and the Giant Ghost King escaped the city!

From that moment on, Bai Hao would be completely famous within Giant Ghost City. In fact, it was easy to imagine how his name would soon spread to the Wildlands at large.

In a mountain range about 50,000 kilometers away from Giant Ghost City, Bai Xiaochun could be seen speeding along, face ashen, carrying an old man on his back. The man was withered and wrinkled, and his aura was virtually undetectable. In fact, even close examination would lead one to think that he was actually a corpse.

Of course, that old man was none other than the Giant Ghost King. It was hard to say if his current condition was a result of him sacrificing a drop of soul blood, or because of his decay period.

Either way, he was completely and utterly unconscious. His virtually indestructible body was now so profoundly weak that it seemed possible for an ordinary knife to cut through him and end his life.

Bai Xiaochun's aura was also unstable. The Giant Ghost King had slipped into unconsciousness right after the two of them teleported out of the city, several hours before. Bai Xiaochun had also been seriously injured, and the soul blood had done nothing to heal him. Although he had received vital enlightenment, after he slipped out of the Demigod Realm, his injuries all flared up, leaving him feeling incredibly weak.

Thankfully, his fleshly body was very strong, so he gritted his teeth and forced himself to stay conscious. After seeing that the Giant Ghost King was unconscious, he decided not to drag him around by the neck any more, and instead slung him over his back.

Bai Xiaochun knew that he was still wrapped up in a momentous event. The three great clans would not rest until he was dead, and it was the same with the six heavenly marquises. As for the latter, because none of them had a deva, and he had been zipping around the city via teleportation formation, he hadn't encountered any of them. But that didn't mean he wouldn't in the future.

It was easy to imagine... that both the three great clans and the forces of the six heavenly marquises would do everything possible to find him.

“It's a good thing I don't need to hold on for very much longer. Just a few days. Then the Giant Ghost King will recover.... Although, I wonder if that drop of soul blood will change things.” He sighed. If the Giant Ghost King hadn't given him that drop of soul blood, and he had been forced into a corner, then maybe he would have given the man up. At that point, he wouldn't have felt too bad. But considering how things had developed, he simply couldn't do that.

Bai Xiaochun had deeply ingrained principles when it came to paying back debts. He felt moved by how the Giant Ghost King had helped him, which was actually a bit contrary to how he had planned for things to turn out.

“Ah, whatever.” Sighing, he continued onward through the mountains, the Giant Ghost King on his back.

Soon it was evening, and the sky was starting to grow dark. Bai Xiaochun wanted to keep going, but his injuries were so bad that he couldn't. Furthermore, the Giant Ghost King's aura was getting so weak that at times that he couldn't even sense it. The man's body was also starting to grow cold.

Nervous, Bai Xiaochun found a suitable spot to hew out a cave for use as a temporary shelter. Using what scant bit of his cultivation base was left, he made a small bonfire and then propped the Giant Ghost King up in front of it.

Unfortunately, the Giant Ghost King's complexion was ashen, and he only seemed to be getting colder as time progressed. His aura was currently very weak.

“You can't die!” Bai Xiaochun said. Standing up, he patted his bag of holding to produce some medicinal items useful for treating injuries. Unfortunately, even after forcing them into the Giant Ghost King's mouth, nothing happened.

“What do I do, what do I do...?” He thought about asking the little turtle for some advice, but there was no trace of him. No amount of angry threatening got him to stick his head out, so Bai Xiaochun finally gave up. Then he sat there looking at the ice-cold Giant Ghost King for a while before finally slapping his own thigh.

“I know what to do!” he thought, his eyes shining. There was definitely something that could heat the Giant Ghost King up, but as he contemplated it, he hesitated.

Unsure of whether the Giant Ghost King could hear him or not,

he said, “Um... hey, Giant Ghost King old pal, I'm only doing this to save you, alright? No hard feelings.”

With that, he pulled out... and Aphrodisiac Pill, which he then placed into the Giant Ghost King's mouth.

Bai Xiaochun remembered how all the prisoners who consumed Aphrodisiac Pills always got very hot, and even sweated profusely. At the moment, he was in a desperate situation and was grasping at straws, but had no other alternatives. Worried that one pill might not be enough, he pulled out a few more, and then stuffed them into the Giant Ghost King's mouth.

Almost immediately, the Giant Ghost King shivered, and got a bit warmer. His previously fading aura began to fluctuate, and a bit of color even returned to his skin.

Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief, and at the same time, his face shone with pride at the fact that, in his genius, he had created a medicinal pill that could be used both to interrogate prisoners, and save lives.

“Geniuses like me are always lonely. Ai.” At this point, he was finally starting to relax. If the Giant Ghost King had died, then everything he had done up to this point would have been for nothing.

As he calmed down, he thought back to everything which had occurred in Giant Ghost City, and his heart trembled with lingering fear. Frowning, he reviewed all of his actions.

“I got too impulsive. I shouldn't have listened to the little turtle.... Three devas? I... I can't believe I actually escaped from three devas.” The thought of how he had put everything on the line left him gasping. Even the slightest mistake, and he would have died.

“I always say that I'm not going to do anything dangerous ever again. How come I always do, though...?” Frowning, he realized

that his personality was changing, and that he was actually becoming braver.

“Wait a second, that’s not a good thing!” Deeply worried, he looked over at the Giant Ghost King, and then up at the evening sky, and the moon, which was just barely visible. Finally, he sighed.

“I sure hope that what the little turtle said is true.... The Giant Ghost King had better recover in the next couple days.” And so he sat there nervously, surrounded by silence. Considering how exhausted he was and how quiet the area was, he soon began to think back to what it had been like to rise to the deva level, and then beyond that, to the demigod level.

Eventually, his eyes began to shine with both confusion and desire.

“The Deva Realm.... So that's what it feels like. And the Demigod Realm.... It almost seems possible to break through heaven and earth....” The sensations he felt after absorbing the soul blood, and the enlightenment he had received, were forever branded onto his heart. At the same time, his desire to grow stronger increased.

“I want to become a deva.... I want to become a demigod....” Remembering that he needed to change his way of thinking, he tried to inwardly focus on the longevity aspect. “Umm, I guess becoming a demigod would mean I could live even longer, right?”

Time passed. Even before the night was through, Bai Xiaochun felt rested. After checking on the Giant Ghost King to make sure he wasn’t getting any colder, he once again put him on his back and then flew out of the cave.

It was in that manner, only resting when absolutely necessary, that Bai Xiaochun proceeded along for three days.... The Giant Ghost King was unconscious the entire time, and didn’t show any signs of waking up. As for Bai Xiaochun, thanks to his powerful fleshly body, his wounds were recovering nicely.

However, the anxiety in his heart continued to mount. He knew that with every bit of time that passed in which the Giant Ghost King didn't wake up, it meant that the three great clans would be getting closer.

Eventually, on evening of the third day, as he was flying along, the sky above him began to rumble loudly.

A voice filled with boundless venom suddenly echoed out. "Bai Hao!!"

Bai Xiaochun looked up into the sky and saw... three enormous faces, each of them hundreds of meters tall!!

They were none other than... the patriarchs of the three great clans!

The one who had spoken was the Cai Clan patriarch, who had lost his fleshly body. His eyes burned with killing intent, and he was surrounded by a sea of lightning that pulsed with metal-type power. That indicated that this lightning could give birth to metal, and supreme-grade metal at that!

Next to the Cai Clan patriarch were the patriarchs from the Bai and Chen Clans. Both of them had very serious expressions on their faces, without a trace of the derision with which they had previously looked at Bai Xiaochun. In fact... they almost seemed to view him as an equal!

Anyone unfamiliar with the situation who saw that would surely be shocked. After all, these were devas, and Bai Xiaochun was only in the great circle of the Gold Core stage. This... was simply the kind of respect that Bai Xiaochun could earn when he used full force!

As for the Bai Clan patriarch, a strange, mysterious light flickered through his eyes.

Chapter 663: Scared But Not Terrified!

“Bai Hao! Considering that you’re a member of the Bai Clan, if you simply hand the Giant Ghost King over, I’ll count it as a meritorious service and pronounce you clan chief!” The rumbling pressure coming from the Bai Clan patriarch completely surpassed that of the other two patriarchs.

Although the Cai Clan patriarch didn't seem very happy about what the Bai Clan patriarch had just said, he didn't say anything. Clearly, the patriarchs had come to an agreement of some sort. However, when it came to the Chen Clan patriarch, his desire to kill Bai Hao had actually far surpassed that of the Cai Clan patriarch, although no one knew that.

The things Bai Hao had accomplished so far were completely shocking, so much so that they would eventually shake all of the Wildlands. As a result, the Chen Clan patriarch was absolutely certain that if Bai Hao returned to the Bai Clan, they would eventually control all of Giant Ghost City.

“We can't leave him alive,” he thought. “If he sticks around, the Bai Clan will get so powerful that nobody will be able to stop them!”

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times and braced himself as he looked up into the sky at the three patriarchs. Although the Bai Clan patriarch’s offer seemed great, Bai Xiaochun didn’t trust him at all.

Sighing inwardly, he tried to decide what to do when, all of a sudden, a voice entered his ears that he hadn’t heard for several days. It was none other than the little turtle!

“Don’t agree, little punk!” he said urgently. “Lord Turtle hasn’t appeared for the past few days because he didn’t dare to! Dammit! I knew something was off. The Giant Ghost King... is already awake! He woke up much, much earlier! If Lord Turtle’s guess is correct, he’s actually already back at full strength!!

“The wily old fox! Listen, punk, I’ve been helping you out for a long time now, but this time, I had to make a lot of preparations to be able to send you this message behind the Giant Ghost King's back. He’s a demigod, after all. I have to go now, so as for what exactly you should do now, just play it by ear.”

Bai Xiaochun was complexly flabbergasted, but didn’t let it show on his face. After glancing back at the Giant Ghost King for a moment, he looked up in thought. Then, his veins of steel began to pulse, making it seem to those who could see him as if he would continue on his current course no matter what setbacks he encountered. His eyes were now bloodshot, and he stood there looking like a lone wolf, valiant and heroic.

Swishing his sleeve, he spoke out in a hoarse voice that was both decisive and fierce, “Forget it! On the day that I, Bai Hao, left the Bai Clan, I swore an oath to never again be part of that clan! Although you are surnamed Bai just like I am, the meaning of that character is completely different between the two of us!

“The Giant Ghost King gave me a new lease on life, and is like a brother to me. I promised to keep him safe for a month, and I’ll do that no matter what!

“You people want the Giant Ghost King? Sure, you can have him. By stepping over my dead body!”

As he spoke, his voice grew louder and louder, until he was shouting with dauntless courage. There was a lofty arrogance to his words that would make anyone who didn’t know him think that he was the most noble and righteous type of person in the world.

“Even if I, Bai Hao, end up dying in the process, I will never hand over my brother the Giant Ghost King!! I didn’t abandon him in Giant Ghost City, and I’m not going to abandon him here!!” Even as his words rang out, he unleashed the power of his cultivation base. Making sure the Giant Ghost King was secure on his back, he

began to flee again, musing about how amazing his speech had been just now. After hearing it, there was no way the Giant Ghost King wouldn't be moved.

At the same time, he was feeling quite nervous, not because of the three devas, but because of the fact that he knew the Giant Ghost King to be a very slippery character....

He also couldn't stop thinking about how he had slapped the man on the side of the head several times.

Up above, none of the three clan patriarchs said anything in response. Suddenly, the huge face which represented the Cai Clan patriarch blurred, and he emerged from its forehead in nascent divinity form. As he looked down at Bai Xiaochun, his lips quivered as though he were murmuring something. Then, thunderous rumbling could be heard as several lightning bolts appeared and shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

As they moved through the air, they formed together into a sphere of lightning, pulsing with shocking energy that caused the air around it to distort and then ignite into flames!

As that happened, the Chen Clan patriarch also emerged from the giant face that represented him. Brightly colored light flashed in heaven and earth as the entire 50-kilometer area around him suddenly became an enormous sealing mark!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes opened wide. Aware that he couldn't avoid this attack, he looked at the incoming sphere of lightning and roared, "Even if I die, I'll never let any of you hurt my big bro!!"

He stamped his foot onto the ground, causing a huge crater to appear below. Then he gently put the Giant Ghost King down behind him and pulled out his Eternal Parasol to defend the both of them.

Massive rumbling sounds echoed out, and the ground quaked. Rifts spread out as sparks of electricity showered about in all

directions, creating something like a lake of lightning. The Eternal Parasol twisted and distorted, and behind it, Bai Xiaochun trembled and coughed up a huge mouthful of blood. He was trembling on the verge of collapse, bones breaking inside of him as he withstood the force of the attack. After it was over, he gritted his teeth, grabbed the Giant Ghost King again, and took to flight.

As he sped along, he continued to cough up blood. An expression of despair appeared on his face as he looked at the Giant Ghost King and then spoke in a voice so soft only the two of them could hear.

“Everyone dies one day. Compared to the kindness you have shown me, my brother... what does death count for!?!?” At this point, his expression of despair began to turn into one of madness. “I just hate the fact that my cultivation base is so weak. And the fact that I can’t fulfill my promise to you, my brother!!”

With that, he threw his head back and roared in frustration. Inside, he was thinking that he had continued with the act for long enough. If things kept going on like they were, he really would be flirting with disaster.

He had gone all out to defend against that attack just now, and knew that the only reason he had survived was because the Cai Clan patriarch was in nascent divinity form, making his attacks much weaker than normal. If the Chen or Bai Clan patriarchs attacked him in his current state, he probably wouldn’t be able to take it.

“How far does the Giant Ghost King want to take this!? If he doesn’t do something soon, I’ll end up dead, and so will he....” Bai Xiaochun was virtually weeping inside by this point.

Up above, the Bai Clan patriarch sighed in regret about how things were turning out. However, he was a cold-hearted person, and therefore, since this Bai Hao was just too stubborn, he knew he had to act.

“Fine then, just die!” he said, launching a fist strike toward the ground.

RUMBLE!

A huge, illusory fist appeared, and as it descended, incredible pressure weighed down in all directions. That fist represented the will of the heavens, and was so powerful that it could destroy anything it touched!

Within moments, it was bearing down on Bai Xiaochun, causing the ground to quake dangerously!

An intense sensation of deadly crisis erupted inside of Bai Xiaochun. He could tell... that this was not the type of attack he could absorb in defense. Nor could he evade it in time. If it hit him, he would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt!!

“Fudge!” he shouted inwardly. “Come on, Giant Ghost King, don’t tell me you really do want me dead?!” Although he was shaking and terrified, the words that actually came out of his mouth were a bit different than his inner monologue.

“It’s not that I don’t want to live up to my promise, my brother. I really do. I guess the only thing now is for the both of us to stroll the pathways of the Yellow Springs together!”

He looked up at the enormous fist, his heart filled not with terror and alarm, but with peace. Although he was trembling physically, he wasn’t nervous or scared anymore. He knew that if the little turtle was correct, and the Giant Ghost King really was awake, abandoning him wasn’t a viable option. Furthermore, considering how things had developed just now, there was no way he could escape from the three deva patriarchs this time.

“No more gambling and no more acts,” he thought. “Fudge! I guess if I’m really gonna lose my life, then I sure as hell am not going to go out looking terrified....” Gritting his teeth, he put the Giant Ghost King behind him protectively.

Even as the entire world filled with heaven-shaking, earth-shattering rumbling, and the enormous fist was about to crush Bai Xiaochun, even as a huge crater opened up beneath him, and nearby mountains crumbled into dust, even as the air shattered....

The Bai Clan patriarch, instead of breathing a sigh of relief, suddenly began to tremble. His eyes went wide with disbelief, and his face fell as he shouted, "Giant Ghost King!"

He wasn't the only one to react in such a way. The Chen and Cai Clan patriarchs both began to shake, their minds reeling as though they were being struck by hundreds of thousands of lightning bolts. Never could they possibly have imagined that in this exact moment... the person who had just been lying unconscious behind Bai Xiaochun, would suddenly stand up and walk forward!

He was none other than... the Giant Ghost King!!

Chapter 664: Game Over

“This game is now over!”

The voice which rang out was as cold as ice. He spoke five simple words, and yet, he was a heavenly king and demigod expert. His energy was the type that heaven and earth could not support, and it even caused black clouds to roil in the sky above. The three patriarchs immediately began to shake under the pressure; the Giant Ghost King didn't even need to draw upon the power of his cultivation base. His mere threatening gaze was enough to cause the three patriarchs to tremble in place.

This was the Giant Ghost King!!

As of this moment, he seemed to make all colors in heaven and earth fade away. It was as if all creation could do nothing but tremble and bow to him.

That was because he... was a demigod expert!

That was because he... was one of the four heavenly kings of the Wildlands!

That was because he... was the Giant Ghost King!!

As he stood there in front of Bai Xiaochun, he slowly extended his right hand, a hand that seemed powerful enough to hold up the heavens. Instantly, the Bai Clan patriarch's divine ability was nullified; the 300-meter area surrounding the Giant Ghost King was completely unaffected by it!

The Giant Ghost King's body was rapidly reverting from that of an old man to a younger one. His white hair became black, and the wrinkles on his face vanished. His withered frame filled in, and in the blink of an eye, a somber expression could be seen on his face.

A royal crown appeared on his head, and he now wore a violet robe with a serpentine dragon embroidered on it. As of this moment, he seemed more noble than anything else in the world!

The Bai Clan patriarch was trembling, and his eyes were bulging out of his head so violently they seemed like they might explode. At the same time, an icy coldness filled his heart that seemed cold enough to freeze the world.

The Chen Clan patriarch had a similar reaction. Panting in terror, he felt as if he were drowning at the bottom of the sea, a sea so powerful that it could crush him and his clan out of existence!

The Cai Clan patriarch only existed as a nascent divinity now. He was just as shocked, and because he didn't have a physical body to sustain some of the crushing pressure he felt, it all weighed down on his nascent divinity, causing it to twist and distort. Inside, he was screaming in terror at the realization that he and the other two patriarchs... had completely misjudged the Giant Ghost King!

He had not needed three months to recover, or even one. In fact, he hadn't even required half a month. He... had recovered in five days!!

Only five days had passed since the rebellion began, and during that time, the Giant Ghost King had already recovered. The Cai Clan patriarch understood everything now, and couldn't help but think back to the sight of the Giant Ghost King's clone, hovering there above the ruins of the royal palace, a look of complete disdain and contempt in his eyes as he had uttered a very simple sentence.

This has all been nothing more than a game....

The Bai and Chen Clan patriarchs also recalled those words, and suddenly, the entire world around them seemed to go as still and quiet as death....

They hovered there in the air, people who could normally look down condescendingly upon all heaven and earth. And yet, as of this moment, they felt as if they were looking up in awe and fear at the person in front of Bai Xiaochun!!

As for Bai Xiaochun, he stood there, jaw agape, almost incapable of believing that he was still alive. It seemed almost like a dream that the Giant Ghost King really was awake, with his cultivation base restored, leaving the three deva patriarchs shaken to the core.

Of course, he was also deeply nervous about what was to come.

“I hope the Giant Ghost King... has a good impression of me, and forgets about everything that happened before.... He absolutely, positively had better not be holding a grudge!” As Bai Xiaochun stood there, his heart trembling with anxiety, the three patriarchs looked down with flickering expressions. Then, the Cai Clan patriarch let out an ear-piercing shriek as he spun and began to flee!

There was no other option for him. Even if it meant his clan ended up being wiped out, he had no alternative other than to try to escape. He could always establish a new clan, but if he died... then everything would definitely be over.

However, he was the only one to make such a choice. The Bai and Chen Clan patriarchs, in their bitterness, chose instead to power up their cultivation bases and attack the Giant Ghost King.

The rebellion had been a huge gamble. If they had won in the end, they could have achieved a meteoric rise. Now that they had clearly lost... they knew that there would be a price to pay, and that they would never be able to escape.

“The two of you really do have some courage,” the Giant Ghost King said coolly. Although his words were spoken with calm, they contained indescribable pressure, the type that could rebuke all of heaven and earth.

Instead of lowering his right hand, he clenched it into a fist, then stood tall and straight before unleashing a fist strike at the incoming devas.

It almost seemed like a casual motion, without any hints of

containing a magical technique or divine ability. And yet, because of it, everything in the area seemed to grow dark. It was as if the entire world were spinning as a huge vortex opened up, a gaping, sinister mouth ready to gobble up the two patriarchs.

Incredible rumbling sounds could be heard as blood sprayed from the mouth of the Bai Clan patriarch. A scream rang out as his body teetered on the verge of collapsing. Then, he was sucked into the huge mouth. The Chen Clan patriarch laughed in bitter defiance before he too vanished into the vortex.

One fist... had completely overwhelmed two devas. They vanished without a trace remaining, sucked into a black hole, possibly dead, possibly alive.

The sight of it caused beads of sweat to break out on Bai Xiaochun's forehead. He had never seen a demigod fighting before, and although he had experienced the terrifying power of that level because of the soul-blood earlier, to witness it in full measure was completely different.

It only served to increase his nervousness. He couldn't help but think back to everything that had happened, and how he had brazenly slapped the Giant Ghost King, not just once, but seven or eight times, until the man's face was completely swollen.

Bai Xiaochun was wailing inwardly, and wondered what mystical foodstuffs he might have accidentally eaten to give him such gall. He had actually slapped a demigod expert across the face, over and over....

Even as Bai Xiaochun sat there in misery, the Giant Ghost King looked over at the fleeing Cai Clan patriarch. Snorting coldly, he opened his fist and then made a grasping gesture.

Instantly, rumbling sounds echoed out, and the entire world seemed to turn upside down. Even time seemed to flow in reverse, as though the Giant Ghost King now controlled all natural law with the movement of his hand.

To Bai Xiaochun's astonishment, he saw the fleeing Cai Clan patriarch's nascent divinity suddenly flying backward at top speed, a look of utter terror on his face.

"No! Nooooo! I beg for mercy, Your Highness, please...." The Cai Clan patriarch trembled as he seemingly moved backward through time until he appeared in front of the Giant Ghost King, who reached out and grabbed him by the neck!

Before the man could say anything else, the Giant Ghost King causally twisted his fingers. A scream echoed out as the Cai Clan patriarch's entire nascent divinity collapsed into pieces.

However, things weren't over yet. As the nascent divinity began to disperse, a shadowy soul could suddenly be seen. It was none other than... a deva soul!

As soon as it appeared, an intangible vortex sprang up in the sky. Closer inspection revealed that within that vortex was a flowing river filled with countless vengeful souls. It was none other than... the Underworld River!

As the river and vortex appeared, a gravitational force sprang up that contained natural law. It grabbed ahold of the deva soul and began to tug it up. At that point, though, the Giant Ghost King snorted coldly and reached out with his right hand. Instantly, wild colors flashed in heaven and earth, and the gravitational force began to fade away. Apparently, the vortex and the Underworld River didn't wish to fight with a demigod. Gradually, they faded away, and the deva soul floated down into the Giant Ghost King's hand.

Within that soul, it was possible to detect a metal-type aura, as well as a bit of heterogeneous lightning power!!

And thus, matters ended. In the briefest of moments, the Giant Ghost King killed one of the three devas, and dispatched the other two, although whether that was into death or not was impossible to tell at the moment.

Bai Xiaochun's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode, and he was shaking visibly. Sweat poured down him as a feeling of profound disquiet rose up. As he glanced at the Giant Ghost King out of the corner of his eye, the man turned and looked at him, his vision as sharp as a blaze as it pierced into Bai Xiaochun's mind. Clearly, he could kill him with a mere thought if he wanted to!

Bai Xiaochun was panting, his mind spinning as he sensed the destructive power of the Giant Ghost King. He almost felt like a mortal staring into the gaping maw of a fierce tiger!

The pressure was impossible to describe, the type which could overturn heaven and earth with no effort!

“Bai Hao, give me one good reason not to kill you!”

Chapter 665: Many Pretenses Can Be Seen Through, But Not Flattery

The Giant Ghost King's words rumbled like heavenly thunder, shaking everything in the world, and Bai Xiaochun along with it.

The pressure coming off of the Giant Ghost King had Bai Xiaochun trembling physically, as if he were a tiny rowboat in a thrashing ocean of angry waves. In fact, he had the premonition that if he made the slightest mistake, he would be destroyed in both body and soul!

The words the Giant Ghost King had uttered just now had Bai Xiaochun scared out of his mind. He didn't need to think very hard to come up with multiple responses. Whether it was their agreement, or the desperate show he had put on, or the fact that he had saved the Giant Ghost King's life, they all seemed like viable options.

However, Bai Xiaochun had the strong feeling that he couldn't use any of those as his answer!

The Giant Ghost King was aware of all of those things already, and the fact that he had asked the question he did was very, very telling. Trembling in fear, Bai Xiaochun contemplated the fact that the words he uttered next would very likely determine his ultimate fate!

He had not experienced many situations in life that were this nerve-wracking. That was especially true when he looked up at the Giant Ghost King's cold, merciless eyes. Looking into those eyes only seemed to confirm his deepest fears.

"He's holding a metal-type deva soul in his hand.... It seems obvious he's trying to send a message with that.... And yet, he also seems like he wants to kill me.... I can't trust the restrictive spell either!" Unsure of what to do, Bai Xiaochun felt like he finally

understood that old saying, being in the king's company is like living with a tiger. The Giant Ghost King he was facing right now was the real Giant Ghost King, and yet, for some reason, that only made Bai Xiaochun feel like walking up and slapping him across the side of the head again. Of course, as soon as the thought occurred to him, he shoved it away.

“So, feel like slapping me across the side of the head?” the Giant Ghost King asked placidly, his voice cutting like the winter wind. Suddenly, the pressure radiating off of him grew even more powerful, crushing down on everything in the area.

“He's still pissed off at me!” Bai Xiaochun thought. “If I don't word things just right, I'm going to be in profound danger!” Although he was inwardly trembling in terror, his eyes were bloodshot with the realization that true men had to be flexible. In that instant, his eyes shone with... burning zeal.

“Your Highness!!” he said, sounding very excited. “Your Highness, I didn't understand it before, but now I understand that Your Highness definitely deserves to be Your Highness. You are so intelligent and wise that within five days, you completely turned the world upside down. You truly ripped open the overcast grayness to reveal the sunny sky beyond! Every cloud has a silver lining, and you found that silver lining!” Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with unprecedented excitement, and in fact, it was even possible to see tears of joy glistening within them.

The Giant Ghost King was so surprised that a strange expression flickered across his face. However, moments later, he was just as solemn as before as he coolly said, “You're so excited you're crying?”

“Your Highness,” Bai Xiaochun replied loudly, “you truly looked formidable and mighty just now. The wave of your finger wiped out all of those devas! I, Bai Hao, have never seen such an impressive display of heroism in my life! The mere thought of becoming the follower of a hero like you, sir, is an honor the likes

of which couldn't be repeated for many generations. That is why I am overwhelmed with joy!" Bai Xiaochun was apparently so excited he was trembling. An expression of utter zeal overtook his face, and his tears of joy were enough to cause anyone to stare in shock.

A strange expression could be seen on the Giant Ghost King's face; never could he have imagined that this Bai Hao would be skilled at this sort of thing....

When Bai Xiaochun saw that look in the Giant Ghost King's eyes, he finally breathed a sigh of relief. Now that he was sure this method would work, he knew that he had to go in for the kill. Putting an expression of utter reverence on his face, he clasped hands and bowed deeply for a long moment. Then he slowly got back up, looking very impassioned.

"Your Highness, you are wise, intelligent, and courageous, a person who is clever in ways that defy description, a hero who has come out victorious in hundreds of battles, an individual of outstanding talent and bearing, a man versatile and adept in all things, someone who surpasses all other living persons, and who has traveled the length and the breadth of the lands. I, Bai Hao, will follow you to the ends of the earth and beyond. Sir, I know in my heart that you would never do anything to harm such a charming and pitiable young child such as myself...." Bai Hao looked anxiously at the Giant Ghost King, having gone all in with everything he could think of. Actually, the crux of everything was his final sentence, in which he spoke the true feelings of his heart.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun almost seemed like he was begging and pleading, and had no idea whether or not he had made the right decision to go with this tactic.

A profound expression of contemplation could be seen on the Giant Ghost King's face, but inwardly, he wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. Never before had he encountered a person like Bai Xiaochun, who dared to talk in such a way to a somber person like

himself.

However, the more he listened, the more he liked what he heard, and suddenly, a bit of softness could be seen in his eyes.

The truth was that moments ago, there really had been a bit of killing intent in him. After all, if it weren't for Bai Xiaochun, he would never have been in any real danger. However, the events of the past five days really had softened even his iron heart a bit, and left an impression that would never be removed.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun was an anomaly that he could never have planned for. If he took him back to Giant Ghost City now, then based on everything which had happened, it was easy to imagine how powerful Bai Xiaochun would become later on. He would definitely be one of the most influential people in the city.

If he had planned for that all along, then it wouldn't have been a big deal. But to suddenly be presented with this unexpected turn of events left a sour taste in his mouth.

Therefore, he let Bai Xiaochun make the final decision. If he tried to fall back on their previous agreement and demand compensation, then the Giant Ghost King would never give him the deva soul. Instead, he would seal him until the restrictive spell could be unraveled. Afterward, he would be released secretly somewhere outside of Giant Ghost City, all ties to the Giant Ghost King cut. After that point, his life would be in his own hands, and things would be back to the way they had been in the beginning!

If Bai Xiaochun mentioned how bitter the past few days had been, then the Giant Ghost King would give him the deva soul and send him on his way.... His life would be in his own hands, and there would be no connection between them anymore.

With either of those two options, the Giant Ghost King would not bring him back to Giant Ghost City to bask in glory.

If Bai Xiaochun acted stubbornly, and dared to slap him across

the side of the head again, or demanded mercy based on supposed kindnesses from before, then the Giant Ghost King would disregard everything from before and kill him!

These were the three options he had expected Bai Xiaochun to pick from. However, contrary to all expectations, Bai Xiaochun had created something from nothing and made up a fourth option. And thus, a strange, helpless expression could be seen in the Giant Ghost King's eyes. Inside, he was cursing a bit at everything that had happened with this slippery rogue. However, his killing intent and sinister plans evaporated. In fact, he couldn't help but notice how badly injured Bai Xiaochun was, and even began to think about everything that had happened as they fled together.

There was also that scene of sincere bravery in the final, critical moment. Being the wily old fox that he was, the Giant Ghost King could tell that part had been no act. At this point, his ruthless heart truly began to soften.

Then he thought about the string of flattering words that had just been uttered, especially the last line, which pushed the Giant Ghost King into that spot between laughter and tears. At this point, his expression turned cold once again, and he waved his hand, sending the metal-type deva soul flying over to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun had been very carefully observing the Giant Ghost King's expression the entire time. As the moments had ticked by, he had grown more and more nervous, to the point where his feelings were perfectly described by the old saying his heart was beating like fifteen buckets in a well, eight going down while seven were coming up; he couldn't calm down. That was when, to his shock, the deva soul flew toward him, and the Giant Ghost King turned and looked up into the sky as if he were about to leave.

Unsure of exactly what the Giant Ghost King was thinking, Bai Xiaochun grabbed the soul and then hesitated about what to do next. Was he supposed to offer his farewells at this point? Was the

Giant Ghost King not going to mention anything that had happened early on?

Even as Bai Xiaochun stood there wondering what to do, the Giant Ghost King spoke in a cold voice.

“What are you standing around for? I'm going back to Giant Ghost City. Don't tell me you're planning to walk back by yourself?!”

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and his expression immediately brightened. As of this moment, he knew that he had passed all the tests, and that the Giant Ghost King planned to take him back with him....

Bai Xiaochun could only imagine the luxurious life he would be living soon, and immediately flew up into the air to follow....

Chapter 666: Bring Me The Rebels!

The Giant Ghost King's cultivation base was back, and of the three devas who opposed him, he had killed one, and apparently captured two. It happened so quickly that there was no way for the three great clans to know what had happened, much less the six heavenly marquises back in Giant Ghost City.

Right now, the rebels in Giant Ghost City felt very alarmed as they sat and waited to find out what would happen. If the Giant Ghost King had simply died, then there would have been much less to worry about. But he had been rescued by Bai Hao, a fact which hung over the heads of the rebels like a sharp blade. They could only hope that the three deva patriarchs would manage to find the Giant Ghost King and kill him in time.

As for those who had not openly rebelled, they also trembled in fear. After all, despite not having participating in the insurrection, they had tacitly approved by not opposing it, a fact they could not deny.

Every group in the city was feeling a lot of pressure. The streets were virtually empty, with all of the soul cultivators remaining in their own residences, waiting to see what would happen in the end.

As for the armies of the six heavenly marquises, their hearts trembled with apprehension, and yet, they continued to search the city high and low. After all, no one could say for sure whether or not the Giant Ghost King who had escaped was another clone. Although it was unlikely that his true self was still hiding in the city, they couldn't take any chances.

As for the six heavenly marquises, they all wore very grim expressions as they gathered for a meeting in a grand hall somewhere in the city. However, not much was said as they all sat there. Most of them were just looking off into the sky, waiting for

news from the three devas.

“The Giant Ghost King is very weak, and although that Bai Hao is very crafty and vicious, his cultivation base is just too low. This time... he’ll definitely lose!”

“The Giant Ghost King only has so much soul-blood to use!!”

No matter how they tried to console themselves, though, their hearts were all pounding in fear.

Meanwhile, not too far away from the city, there were two mountain peaks, upon each of which sat an old man.

One of them was Duke Netherworld, and the other was Duke Deathcrier. Both had fears of their own, and waited anxiously to see what would happen. Both knew that their fates no longer rested in their own hands. As for which would live and which would die, it would be determined by what happened between the three devas and the Giant Ghost King.

If the devas of the three great clans prevailed, then Duke Deathcrier would have no choice but to submit to them. On the other hand... Duke Netherworld would face much more severe consequences if he came out on bottom. The two heavenly dukes had ceased fighting, and would only occasionally eye each other. The only purpose the two of them served right now in the larger conflict was to prevent the other from being part of the action.

The city was filled with intense pressure, and everyone was very nervous. Time ticked by. Soon it was evening, and the sky burned with red light, almost as if the clouds were on fire. As it did, the pressure weighing down on the hearts of everyone present seemed to grow stronger.

It was in that moment... that the red clouds in the sky began to seethe. In the blink of an eye, intense rumbling like thunder filled the area, seemingly descended from the highest heavens.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The lands began to quake physically, and within the city, everyone looked up in shock. The six heavenly marquises exchanged glances but didn't say anything to each other, and instead just kept looking up into the sky.

Off in the distance, Duke Deathcrier and Duke Netherworld also looked up, their expressions mixtures of nervousness and anticipation.

Then, Duke Netherworld's face fell, and a look of unprecedented disbelief appeared in his eyes. As for Duke Deathcrier, his eyes lit up with joy, and he threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

One reacted with shock, the other with delight. As they did, a peal of thunder erupted in the sky above.

CRACK!

It seemed louder than all other sounds in the world, and as it rang out, the people in the city felt their minds reeling. Looking up, they saw a massive rift being torn open in the sky!

It was fully 3,000 meters from one end to the other. It was as if a huge, invisible blade had sliced the air open, after which a black wind erupted out from inside. Then... two people emerged!

The first one wore a royal crown, and had a violet robe with a serpentine dragon on it. As soon as he appeared, everything began to tremble violently, and countless peals of thunder filled the air. Clearly, this person was so powerful he could crush everything in the world.

His eyes seemed to contain the ability to suck in all the light in the world, making everything around him dark and colorless.

A new pressure began to weigh down on the city, a pressure which vastly surpassed the pressure from moments ago. All of the soul cultivators in the city began to tremble, and at some point, people began to cry out loud.

“The giant... the Giant Ghost King!!”

“Giant Ghost King is back!”

“We offer respectful greetings, Giant Ghost King!!!”

Instantly, the six rebellious heavenly marquises in the grand hall realized what had happened, and their faces drained of blood. Blank expressions could be seen on their faces, along with bleak despair....

They had been beaten.... Utterly and thoroughly beaten!!

Considering the level of their cultivation bases, it only took a single glance to confirm that the Giant Ghost King... was completely recovered. They could well imagine the fate of the three deva patriarchs from the great clans, and had no doubts about how miserable their ends had been.

Gasps could be heard throughout the city as countless eyes peered out at the dazzling figure hovering in the air nearby. However, in addition to the glorious Giant Ghost King, there was also... Bai Xiaochun!

Overwhelmed with excitement, he did his best to keep his breathing under control as he looked down at the city. Not too long ago, he had been running like a rat through the city as people tried to kill him. Now, he returned at the peak of glory, leaving him feeling extremely smug and proud.

All of a sudden, he stepped forward so that he was in front the Giant Ghost King. Looking down at the city, he shouted, “Listen up, everyone. The three leaders of the clans that dared to offend their superiors have been removed from power! His highness the king is back. When exactly do you plan to step forward and offer formal greetings!?!?”

In response to his words, everyone trembled, and within moments, countless individuals nervously flew up into the air, where they began to kowtow to the Giant Ghost King.

“We offer respectful greetings, Giant Ghost King!!!”

“We offer respectful greetings, Giant Ghost King!!!”

In the blink of an eye, countless soul cultivators appeared, all of them offering greetings, their voices combining into a cacophonous roar that rose to the highest heavens.

As for the six heavenly marquises, their faces were as ashen as death, and their eyes filled with despair. They knew that they had no hope of escaping, nor any ability to fight back, so therefore they simply dropped to their knees to kowtow.

As for the four heavenly marquises who had done nothing during the insurrection, they tremblingly appeared to offer greetings, flustered and fearful. At the same time, two beams of light shot toward the city from off in the distance.

They were Duke Deathcrier and Duke Netherworld. As for Duke Deathcrier, he excitedly clasped hands and gave a deep bow.

“Greetings, Your Highness!” he said.

In contrast, Duke Netherworld seemed extremely worried. However, he didn't rashly try to flee; he knew that such action was pointless, and would lead only to death. The only slight chance he had at living came with not fleeing. Face ashen, he dropped down to kowtow.

Complete tumult filled the city as countless respectful cries of greeting rose up.

The Giant Ghost King looked out with an expressionless face, not saying even a word as he surveyed the city with icy eyes. The truth was that he didn't need to say anything. His mere presence would crush any remnants of the rebellion.

Bai Xiaochun's excitement grew at the sight of what was happening, but he didn't forget about how the Giant Ghost King needed to maintain his dignity. After casting a surreptitious glance at him, Bai Xiaochun made his decision about what to do next. Clasp his hands behind his back, he looked down at the crowds

in the city and loudly declared, “Bring me the rebels!”

He was immediately pleased with how incisive and threatening his words were. In response, the four heavenly marquises who had not participated in the rebellion rushed over to seal the cultivation bases of the six guilty marquises.

The six guilty marquises did nothing to fight back. Within the blink of an eye, they were on their knees and incapable of moving. As for Duke Deathcrier, he waved his finger, sealing the cultivation base of Duke Netherworld, who merely looked on bitterly as it happened.

The subordinates of the six heavenly marquises could not escape, and were soon captured and rounded up by the forces of the other four.

The Giant Ghost King watched all of this happen with cold eyes, but nothing more. Inside, he was actually quite pleased with how Bai Xiaochun was handling things. Stepping forward, he appeared in the location where the giant ghost statue had existed, where he waved his hand. Ripples flowed out, and time seemed to move in reverse. Crumbled stones flowed back up into the air, and in the blink of an eye, the statue had reformed!

The royal palace and its grand hall were back in place, and all damage to the statue was healed. Within moments... the giant ghost statue and the royal palace were back in place as if they had never been destroyed!

“I’m back!” the Giant Ghost King said, his first words since returning.

“Giant Ghost King has returned!”

“Giant Ghost King!!”

“Giant Ghost King!!!”

In response, countless voices joined together in a mighty cheer. As for Bai Xiaochun, his voice could also be heard in the cheering,

as if he were the one leading it all....

Chapter 667: Majordomo Bai

Bai Xiaochun's emotions surged under the tide of reverent cheering. Although he was a bit envious of how powerful the Giant Ghost King was, he was also excited by the fact that he had definitely won a big victory of his own!

He quickly hurried over to stand next to the Giant Ghost King, making sure to look like the picture of a loyal servant, glancing around vigilantly in case any rebels might dare make a move.

Although his actions were clearly melodramatic, not a single hint of derision could be seen in anyone's eyes. In fact, most people seemed envious, and clearly wished that they could be in Bai Xiaochun's place. All of them trembled with the knowledge that this Bai Hao... was going to make a meteoric rise. He was like a calm breeze that had been transformed into a dragon, and would soar to the highest height.

The four heavenly marquises who had not joined the rebellion were now looking at Bai Xiaochun with very serious looks. Even Duke Deathcrier was sighing inside. He knew... that the Giant Ghost King now cared deeply about this Bai Hao!

Obviously, the Giant Ghost King took note of Bai Xiaochun's exaggerated protectiveness. Although no reaction could be seen on the outside, in his heart, he wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. Now that his cultivation base was back to normal, this Bai Hao seemed very different from before.

Shaking his head, he said, "Bai Hao, you take care of everything out here.... Duke Deathcrier, you come with me."

With that, he turned and headed toward the grand hall in the royal palace.

"Yes, Your Highness!" Bai Xiaochun said loudly, feeling very pleased at his sudden, newfound power.

Duke Deathcrier sighed. Waving his hand, he pulled the taciturn Duke Netherworld with him as he left. As he did, he happened to notice how intently Bai Xiaochun was looking at the rebel duke, as if weighing him to try to decide if he might pose a threat. That left him grimacing inwardly at how exaggerated this Bai Hao was acting.

However, he didn't let that show on his face. Instead, he gave Bai Xiaochun a friendly smile, nodded, and then flew into the royal palace.

Pleased, Bai Xiaochun looked away. Unable to prevent a feeling of pride from rising up in his heart, he laughed inwardly.

“Hahaha! I, Bai Xiaochun... am truly too outstanding. Even devas have no choice but to give me friendly smiles.” Feeling in incredibly high spirits, Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back as he hovered there in the air near the giant ghost statue, looking down his nose at all the people down below.

Moments later, the four loyal heavenly marquises all flew up to him, smiling ingratiatingly and offering respectful bows of greeting.

“We heard before that you were a mighty hero with superb talents, Brother Bai Hao. But today, the rumors were proved false. You're not just a mighty hero, you're a dragon amongst men, incomparable under the heavens! Listen, old pal, I happen to have a jade pendant with a fifteenfold spirit enhancement. A mere glance at you, and I can tell that you and this pendant were destined for each other. Please, I beg of you to accept it.”

“That's right, Brother Bai Hao. Your battle with those three devas will make you famous throughout all the Wildlands. Do you know how many elite heroes exist in the territory of the Arch-Emperor who could possibly compare with you, Brother Bai Hao? I'll tell you. None! Brother Bai Hao, you don't have a mansion in Giant Ghost City yet, do you? Well don't worry. I already made all

the preparations for you. I really hope you'll kindly accept my offer."

"Of the three deva traitors, Brother Bai Hao seriously injured two, and destroyed the fleshly body of the other. Brother Bai Hao, you are definitely the number one chosen in all of the Wildlands. In fact, I think that you are the only one worthy to use this particular magical item...."

All of the four heavenly marquises were offering gifts along with their fawning words. On any other occasion, they wouldn't even think to act like this, but right now, they were very nervous, and in their efforts to start out on the right foot with this Bai Hao, the words spilled out of their mouths without end.

"Oh, stop exaggerating," Bai Xiaochun said with a chuckle. "I did it all in the service of his highness the king. There's no need for this, you four!" Despite his courteous words, he didn't hesitate at all to continue taking the gifts they were offering.

When the four heavenly marquises saw that he was accepting their gifts, they sighed in relief. They continued to shower him with praise until the entire group was on intimate terms. In fact, not only did they continue to give him gifts, but they also all extended invitations to their homes for formal visits.

Feeling very pleased with himself, Bai Xiaochun licked his lips and continued to chat with them for a bit. Then he waved his sleeve, calling upon the name of the Giant Ghost King to have the six rebel marquises sent away to Devil Penitentiary.

Next, he incarcerated other key figures among the rebels, and passed down orders to get the city back in order. The businesses in the city were repaired, and armies were sent to the three great clans with orders to keep them under strict lockdown.

Although everything didn't proceed completely smoothly, there were no major problems. Having accomplished these things, Bai Xiaochun reassembled the city guard to make sure that public

order was maintained. After that, he stationed himself outside of the grand hall in the royal palace, looking like the picture of a vigilant guard. By this point, the Giant Ghost King and Duke Deathcrier had been meeting in private for some time, presumably talking about matters pertaining to the rebellion. From this, Bai Xiaochun could see that Duke Deathcrier was obviously the only deva who was loyal to the king, and had actually fought on his side. However, that actually caused his vigilance to grow.

“Duke Deathcrier is a deva, and has a higher standing than me.... I should be able to get a general sense of the Giant Ghost King’s attitude from him, right?”

As he stood there thinking, night fell. Eventually, Duke Deathcrier emerged from the grand hall, lingering traces of excitement visible on his face. As soon as he saw Bai Xiaochun, his eyes sparkled, and a smile appeared on his face.

Bai Xiaochun hurried over and clasped hands formally....

“Greetings, Duke Deathcrier!”

Duke Deathcrier laughed heartily, and before Bai Xiaochun could even bow, he said, “There’s no need for such formality, Majordomo Bai. You’ve truly performed a meritorious service today, and have opened up countless opportunities for yourself. Considering that the rebellion in Giant Ghost City was just put down, there are many, many things to do. You and I will need to work together closely in the future, Majordomo Bai, and will definitely have quite a bit to discuss later on.”

When Bai Xiaochun heard himself being addressed as majordomo, he was a bit stunned. However, he still managed to have a short, polite conversation with the smiling Duke Deathcrier before the man turned and vanished. At that point, Bai Xiaochun sighed with relief. It was then that the Giant Ghost King summoned him into the grand hall itself.

Spirits lifting already, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and

hurried inside. When he saw the imposing, awe-inspiring Giant Ghost King sitting there in his throne, he quickly bowed his head in respect.

“How are things going out in the city?” the Giant Ghost King asked.

The way his eyes seemed to flash like lightning caused Bai Xiaochun to suddenly feel very nervous. Quickly clasping his hands, he said in a loud voice, “Normally speaking, the chaos in Giant Ghost City would have been very difficult to sort through. Thankfully, Your Highness is wise and powerful, unparalleled under heaven. Therefore, a single word from you, coupled with a single glance, are like the might of the heavens. Everyone was left in fear and reverence, and couldn’t stop thinking about how wonderful things had been living under your reign. The hearts of the people truly belong to you. Because of all that, handling matters out in the city went very smoothly.”

Even as he spoke, Bai Xiaochun looked out of the corner of his eye to see the Giant Ghost King’s reaction.

Originally, the Giant Ghost King's face had been a mask of solemnity. However, upon hearing Bai Xiaochun’s words, his cheek twitched, and some of that solemnity vanished. By this point, he could see that this Bai Hao was apparently addicted to flattery.

However, deep in his heart, the Giant Ghost King actually enjoyed hearing such words. After all, no one had ever spoken to him in such a fashion before.

“Don’t waste your energy on useless talk like that,” he said. “Your cultivation base isn’t high enough, Bai Hao. You need to focus more on your cultivation, do you understand?” When the Giant Ghost King thought about how this Bai Hao had used a single drop of soul-blood to unleash a demigod-level attack, though, he couldn’t help but marvel.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the look on the Giant Ghost King's face, he breathed an inward sigh of relief, and said, "Don't worry, Your Highness. Sir, your cultivation base is unrivalled and unparalleled. Over the past few days, I gained a lot of enlightenment [from observing how you breathed](#). Furthermore, I was left completely shaken by how powerful you are now that you've recovered. In fact, I hope to go into secluded meditation very soon so that I can make my next breakthrough. Your Highness, I definitely won't lose any face for you. Although... um... I've offended a lot of people. I'm worried that if I go into secluded meditation, enemies will come out of the woodwork looking for revenge."

By the time he reached the end of his short speech, a worried frown could be seen on his face, seemingly placed there accidentally, as if he had become so wrapped up in speaking that he lost control of his facial expression. When the Giant Ghost King saw the look on his face, he seemed a bit nonplussed. However, it was obvious what Bai Xiaochun was getting at; he wanted a position of power!

"You.... Ah, whatever. Listen, from now on you're a majordomo, alright?" With that, he waved his hand to dismiss Bai Xiaochun.

When Bai Xiaochun heard that he was being made a majordomo, he wasn't quite sure what that entailed. However, he was already excited, and feeling a bit more at ease.

"Your Highness," he said quickly, "the three great clans dared to rebel against you, and even tried to kill me. They're really a bunch of villains...." He blinked a few times to emphasize his words. Of course, the reason he was bringing up the three clans wasn't because he wanted to target them, but rather, he wanted to highlight how much effort he had put into keeping the Giant Ghost King safe from them.

The Giant Ghost King looked at Bai Xiaochun and then snorted coldly. Although he didn't say anything, an icy glint could be seen in his eyes.

At that point, Bai Xiaochun chose not to say anything else, and simply turned to leave.

Outside of the grand hall, the wind was blowing, and although he still felt a bit of a chill going up his spine, he breathed a long sigh of relief. Although the conversation had gone smoothly moments ago, he had been very nervous the entire time. After all, the Giant Ghost King seemed very moody, and also very difficult to read.

“At least I know that flattery works! Many pretenses can be seen through, but not the flattery of Bai Xiaochun!” He looked up in thought for a moment, and decided that he would need to do more of this in the future. Then he thought back to how the four heavenly marquises and everyone else had treated him, and he was very happy.

“As long as I keep the Giant Ghost King happy, then who in the Wildlands will ever dare to provoke me?! I've got the Giant Ghost King to back me up!”

The breathing here refers to how cultivators use unique breathing exercises to absorb the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. At a certain point, a person would naturally breathe in a certain fashion whether or not they were conscious

Chapter 668: Goal: Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul!

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun got more excited than ever. By now, the moon hung in the night sky outside as he flew out of the giant ghost statue, feeling very pleased at his recent successes.

“I never asked to be so outstanding. But I guess there’s just no other way. It must be the will of the heavens.... First, I was destined to be the glorious junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect. Then I became a major general at the Great Wall. And now, here in the Wildlands, I’m yet again achieving a monolithic rise to prominence!” Feeling a bit annoyed about how outstanding he was, he shook his head and did nothing to conceal his feeling of pride.

In the past, Bai Xiaochun had been able to fly in the city because he was a prison guard. However, he had never felt completely comfortable doing so. After all, if he had run into a patrol of city guards, they could have forced him down to the ground if they felt like it.

But now, the patrolling guards all looked at him with extreme respect, and even clasped hands in greeting before clustering around him protectively.

Although Bai Xiaochun was initially taken aback, he quickly warmed to the arrangement. Clearing his throat, he took out a jade slip which he studied very quickly, and then clasped his hands behind his back and headed off in the direction of the mansion the heavenly marquis had gifted him.

It was located in the inner city, and had once been a secondary home to that heavenly marquis. It was rather large, with ornamental rocks, as well as streams and ponds. There was a spell formation protecting it, making it very quiet and peaceful. There

were already servants waiting there for him, who immediately offered respectful greetings.

Bai Xiaochun was very, very pleased with all of the arrangements, and couldn't help but sigh in contentment as he entered the mansion.

The night passed uneventfully. Bai Xiaochun didn't immediately merge with the metal-type deva soul. That fifth deva soul was of incredible importance; merging with it would end with him stepping into the Nascent Soul stage, which meant that he wanted to do it when in secluded meditation.

However, now was obviously not the time for a session of secluded meditation. For one thing, it was the following day that the official announcement was made regarding Bai Xiaochun's appointment to majordomo. The news spread like wildfire, leading to widespread astonishment.

“Majordomo.... I can't believe Bai Hao was actually appointed to be majordomo!!”

“We've never had a majordomo in Giant Ghost City before....”

“Majordomo. Majordomo.... On the one hand, that could imply that he's in charge of everything in the city. But on the other hand, it could also imply that he's in charge of nothing.... It's like something between a real appointment and an honorary one. His true power will depend on his favor with the king. And at the moment, Bai Hao... has the king's complete favor!”

Even as everyone in the city began to ponder what true powers came with the position of majordomo, Bai Xiaochun was pondering whether or not he should go out and bask in his newfound glory a bit. Before he could, though, people began showing up to offer formal greetings.

It started with the four heavenly marquises, and then turned into an endless stream of soul cultivators. Virtually all of the groups

and organizations in the city sent people to him.

All of them came bearing gifts, which Bai Xiaochun accepted with great shock and surprise. The sight of so many gifts left him speechless, and at the same time, radiant with happiness.

The most impressive of the gifts was the very mansion in which he now lived. The heavenly marquis who had given it to him was named Chen Hai. He was a rather fat man whose face was always covered with a radiant smile when he saw Bai Xiaochun. Apparently, the man didn't care at all about matters of cultivation base or status; he was being very sincere and welcoming.

Of course, with Bai Xiaochun's sudden rise in status, Zhou Yixing and Li Feng also benefited greatly. That was especially true of Zhou Yixing, who had provided vital services to Bai Xiaochun.

Now that Bai Xiaochun was back in all his glory, Zhou Yixing hurried over excitedly to offer greetings. Bai Xiaochun knew that he had been through difficult times recently, and therefore encouraged him to take advantage of the situation to set up his own power structure within the city.

Zhou Yixing left excited and beaming with contentment. He wasted no time in using the fact that he was backed by Bai Xiaochun to start recruiting his own group of loyalists.

A few days later, the stream of visitors began to thin out, and Bai Xiaochun finally had the time to go for a walk in the city. Wherever he went, the soul cultivators would greet him with immense respect, causing him to excitedly stroll about in every corner of the city that he could find.

“Well met, Majordomo Bai.”

“Greetings, Majordomo Bai.”

“Look, it's Majordomo Bai....”

The more people he heard talking about Majordomo Bai, the more he strutted about and basked in the glory. In a manner that

was very reminiscent of the Spirit Stream Sect, he would sometimes clear his throat to draw the attention of people to alert them that Majordomo Bai had arrived.

Bai Xiaochun was completely intoxicated by the attention he was receiving. In fact, he even decided to go visit Devil Penitentiary....

Although Warden Li Xu wasn't very happy about it, he had no choice but to offer respectful greetings, and then lead Bai Xiaochun on an inspection of the prison.... As for Bai Xiaochun, he loved the reversal of roles, and made sure to point out many important areas of concern as they went through the facilities.

The four deputy wardens and four dark inquisitors all clustered around him, feeling somewhat dazzled. It was almost hard for them to wrap their minds around the fact that this person had started out as a guard, then become a prisoner, and was now a majordomo....

Most stunned of all was Deputy Warden Sun Peng from Cellblock D. However, Bai Xiaochun was the type of person who remembered his old friends, and heaped quite a bit of praise onto Cellblock D. Sun Peng was soon flush with excitement.

Of everyone in the prison, it was the guards from Squad 9 whom Bai Xiaochun was most fond of. He even called the captain out by name to escort him. It was a huge honor that got the entire squad very excited.

Sighing, he said, "I really have a lot of good memories in Devil Penitentiary. This was once my home, and the place where my feelings run the deepest...."

Everyone seemed moved by his words. Soon, the group had arrived in Cellblock D itself, where they stopped in front of his old quarters. At that point, a look of reminiscence appeared on his face.

"A mere look at this place and I almost want to give up my

current position and go back to being a guard!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, everyone hurriedly encouraged him not to do such a thing.

“Majordomo, sir, you absolutely mustn’t do anything of the sort. There are myriad affairs of state for you to deal with. With your position, you are responsible for the prosperity of all of Giant Ghost City!”

“That’s right, Majordomo. The prison guards of Giant Ghost City can’t do without their majordomo!”

After hearing all of their persuasive words, Bai Xiaochun sighed a bit helplessly.

“Ah, whatever,” he said. “Now that all of you put it that way, I guess I have no choice but to give up on my dream. Everything I do, I do for his highness the king! Everything I do, I do for Giant Ghost City!”

Solemn expressions overtook the faces of everyone present, and it was even possible to see teardrops glistening in more than a few eyes.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. Worried that his reveling in success had pushed things too far... he decided to wrap up the inspection tour. Just when he was about to leave, he looked over at Li Xu, who had worn a very odd, borderline unsightly expression this entire time.

During the whole tour, Li Xu’s expression hadn’t changed at all, a fact that Bai Xiaochun wasn’t too pleased about. Looking a bit irritated, he said, “Li Xu, I have to offer a word of criticism. In his highness the king’s moment of danger, I was the only one around to keep him safe. Where exactly were you at that time?”

After a moment of silence, Li Xu gritted his teeth and said, “That day... I, went to see Duke Deathcrier....”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes suddenly turned very cold as he stared at Li

Xu and said, “In his highness the king’s moment of danger, you went to Duke Deathcrier? Are those the actions of a true loyalist, Li Xu?”

Li Xu’s face fell. He could see how cold Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were, and realized that he had erred in his comportment earlier. Bai Xiaochun obviously wasn’t irritated by his facial expression, but by his general refusal to perk up. Realizing that he had offended Bai Xiaochun, and cognizant of Bai Xiaochun’s current status, Li Xu immediately felt deep regret. Clasp hands respectfully, he began to offer further explanations.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t the type to hold endless grudges, and didn’t bear any deep-seated ill will toward Li Xu. Therefore, to see him acting like this in front of a crowd actually left Bai Xiaochun feeling a bit uncomfortable. Seeing that the man had learned his lesson, and was now being a bit humble, he nodded faintly and then finished with the inspection.

Over the following few days, Bai Xiaochun spent all of his time strolling about the city to bask in glory. Of course, he couldn’t forget how the three great clans, and especially the Bai Clan, had worked so hard to see him dead.

He was not the type to seek revenge over the smallest grievance, but considering he had power at his disposal, the thought of what the three great clans had done left him feeling quite angry. However, the Giant Ghost King seemed to have different plans. Other than killing the Cai Clan patriarch, and keeping the Bai and Chen Clan patriarchs captive, he didn’t seem to have any plans to deal with the clans themselves.

After a few days, Bai Xiaochun started to lose patience, and hinted to the people in the city who were particularly loyal to him that it was time to put the three great clans in their place!

A few more days went by. The Giant Ghost King eventually summoned Bai Xiaochun and rebuked him for simply strutting

around all day and doing nothing. Afterward, Bai Xiaochun sulked back to his mansion and went into secluded meditation. Sighing, he pulled out his deva soul and began to cultivate.

It wasn't that he had forgotten about cultivation. It was just that, now that he was Majordomo Bai, he couldn't help but revel in his new position. After all, he had been forced to keep a low profile in Giant Ghost City for so long, that the chance to swagger a bit in the open was too much to refuse.

The past days of seeing Bai Xiaochun using his connections to intimidate everyone in the city left the Giant Ghost King with a much clearer understanding of his personality.

“The wily little fox. Sometimes he seems like a profound schemer capable of the most vicious tactics. But other times he's more like a kid....” The Giant Ghost King shook his head. By this point, he actually felt much more comfortable about having Bai Xiaochun around. Although he was a bit frustrating sometimes, that was only because he enjoyed attention. Overall, he wasn't the type of person who would betray others. Besides, everything that he was enjoying now had resulted because of kindness from the Giant Ghost King.

As for how he had secretly begun to act aggressively toward the three great clans, the Giant Ghost King didn't really care about that at all. It was a minor matter as far as he was concerned.

“However, he's definitely too lazy when it comes to practicing cultivation. Without some pressure, he won't even go into meditation. He obviously likes to enjoy life.” Even the Giant Ghost King wasn't aware of the fact that, after bringing Bai Xiaochun back to Giant Ghost City, he had begun to treat him differently than others....

Meanwhile, in Bai Xiaochun's secluded meditation chamber, he was suppressing all of his pride at his new appointment. His eyes began to grow calm as he looked at the deva soul in his hand.

“This is the last deva soul I need.... Merge with it, and my five elements deva souls set will be complete.... At that point, I will be able to break through!” Eyes shining with excitement, he took the deva soul... and pushed it into his chest.

RUMBLE!

Almost instantly, his aura began to condense in on itself, and his cultivation base began to rotate rapidly. A familiar feeling rose up inside him, making it feel almost as if he were being split into pieces.

Even as he sat there cross-legged, afterimages appeared around him. At the moment, it looked like his true self was sitting there with four other versions of himself in the same spot. Time passed.... Slowly but surely... a fifth afterimage appeared, until it was completely clear!

Rumbling sounds filled his mind as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, then waved his hands through the air.

“Emerge, my clones!”

RUUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

Five clones walked out, surrounding his true self. As they did, incredible pressure weighed down on all six versions of Bai Xiaochun.

All of his clones were in the great circle of Core Formation, and together, they could rock early Nascent Soul stage cultivators!

Although he still didn't have his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul yet, he was already capable of unleashing heaven-shaking, earth-shattering power.

“Next... is the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage!” he thought, his eyes shining brightly.

Chapter 669: Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul!

Reaching the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage... was supremely difficult!

That difficulty lay in the fact that not only did one have to get five deva souls, but each of those souls also had to represent a different one of the five elements. Metal. Wood. Water. Fire. Earth. Only with a complete set could one succeed. It really was a very difficult matter.

In the lands of Heavenspan, deva souls were very rare, and it was only by chance that Bai Xiaochun had begun to collect them. He had been given one in the Spirit Stream Sect, and then gifted one by Du Lingfei. However, it was only when it came to the third soul that he had been forced to work hard to get it.

After putting his life on the line, he got the third soul in the labyrinth, after which he had been teleported deep into the Wildlands. Then, to get his fourth deva soul, he had risked everything, and also offended the Bai Clan!

Then came the final soul, which he got only after a long and bitter struggle.

Even as he merged with the deva soul and formed his fifth clone, he thought back to what had happened recently, and felt lingering fear in his heart. Then he looked around at his five clones, took a deep breath, and thought back to the information on the stone stele in the labyrinth, which had described how to break through to the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage.

“Bring all five clones into one’s body, merge them with the true self... Break out of Gold Core and into Nascent Soul!” He closed his eyes to concentrate; this matter was of vital importance, and no mistakes could be tolerated. After getting his thoughts in order, his eyes opened again, and they shone with determination.

“Metal. Wood. Water. Fire. Earth. Let’s begin with my metal clone!” He unleashed the power of his cultivation base, causing the fluctuations of the great circle of the Gold Core stage to erupt out. Even as the pressure of his Gold Core weighed down in the area, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone brightly, and he looked over at his metal-type deva soul clone.

The metal-type clone looked over at his true self and gave a slight nod. Then, without the slightest hesitation, he turned into a beam of gold-colored light that shot toward Bai Xiaochun’s forehead.

As it drew close, it began to crumble into fragments, sending dazzling light out in all directions. In the blink of an eye, it merged into Bai Xiaochun’s forehead, where it became the power of metal, surging through his body.

Rumbling sounds filled his mind, and he began to tremble visibly as he sensed the metal-type power swirl through him and then pound into his Gold Core.

His Gold Core trembled as an aura appeared therein that could only be described as a mystery within a mystery. It seemed to contain profound levels of life force, which spread out through him and began to transform him.

At the same time, golden magical symbols appeared all around his Gold Core, causing his face to radiate an air of profound holiness!

However, before long, the golden magical symbols began to fade away, replaced by a desolate bleakness. It was almost as if the power of metal itself was too strong, and under its pressure, his Gold Core was beginning to crumble into destruction!

In fact, even his qi passageways didn’t seem capable of handling that level of metal-type power, and began to fall apart!

If things continued on in this fashion, it would only be a few moments before Bai Xiaochun was destroyed in body and soul.

In that moment of crisis, Bai Xiaochun's eyes snapped open, revealing a gaze as sharp as a sword, which swiveled onto his fire clone!

“Vital energy defeats that which is solid. Fire restrains metal!” he roared. At the same time, his fire clone's eyes sparkled brightly, bursting into crimson flames that shot toward Bai Xiaochun and merged into his forehead.

Instantly, the power of metal within him was restrained as the power of fire coursed through him. The metal-type power in his qi vessels was suppressed, and the power of fire shot toward his Gold Core.

Rumbling could be heard as the power of fire turned into a sea of flames that surrounded his Gold Core and then began to pour into it. Instantly, the golden magical symbols began to glitter brightly as the power of metal was replaced by the power of fire, making it impossible to harm his Gold Core.

However, although the power of metal had been suppressed, the power of fire was now posing just as much danger to his Gold Core.

In the blink of an eye, his Gold Core became a Fire Core, radiating such intense heat that Bai Xiaochun immediately began to sweat. It was as if there were a sea of flames sealed up inside of him that was so powerful it could destroy everything in the area if it exploded out.

The sensation of deadly crisis he felt now was no less than before. In fact, it was greater. However, Bai Xiaochun remained calm. Now was not the moment to lose control! Looking over at his water clone, he shouted, “The many defeat the few. Water restrains fire!”

Rumbling could be heard as his water clone became a stream of blue light, within which was a drop of blue liquid, a drop that seemingly contained unending amounts of water. Within the blink of an eye, the drop of water had reached Bai Xiaochun, and merged into him.

As the power of water began to flow through him, it suppressed the power of fire as surely as a bucket of ice-cold water would suppress a spark. Within moments, it was flowing into the Fire Core, and yet, the sensation of danger was still there!

Soon, Bai Xiaochun was filled with the power of water, and it felt as if he were going to be liquified.

It was as if a corrosive force were eating at his bones, filling him with intense pain. At that point, his eyes turned completely bloodshot as he shouted, “The real defeats the illusory! Earth restrains water!”

His earth clone merged into him, causing earth-type power to spread out through his body.

“Focus defeats dissemination. Wood restrains earth!”

Intense rumbling sounds filled him as his wood clone merged into him. As of this moment, he had all five types of power inside of him. The power of earth was suppressed, and the power of wood exploded out, transforming his core into a Wood Core.

However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't alarmed at all by the danger he felt. Eyes shining with anticipation, he shouted, “The unyielding defeats the soft. Metal restrains wood!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, the metal-type power which had been suppressed inside his core erupted out, restraining the power of wood. Then, the resurging power of metal was suppressed by the power of fire, which was suppressed by the power of water, which was suppressed by the power of earth, which was suppressed by the power of wood....

A perfect cycle was completed inside of Bai Xiaochun's Gold Core, which began to rotate with the full power of all five elements!

This... was why the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul required all of the five elements deva souls. With even one missing, no complete cycle would be created, and the person making the cultivation base

breakthrough attempt would be destroyed!

Only when the great circle of the five elements was completed would a perfect cycle be created!

After nine complete revolutions, Bai Xiaochun let out a howl that could shake heaven and earth. As he did, his cultivation base began to grow with terrifying speed. His Gold Core shattered, and the resulting pieces rapidly formed together... to form a small person who looked exactly like Bai Xiaochun!

That small person was his nascent soul!

Its eyes were closed, and it shone with five dazzling colors. The power of the five elements surged through him, and at the same time, a shocking aura appeared within his nascent soul.

If any other Nascent Soul cultivator were here to witness the spectacle, they would cry out in alarm. After all, when an ordinary cultivator used their own core to form their nascent soul, it would be called a Mortal-Dao Nascent Soul. It would be difficult to see clearly, almost as if it were a mortal.

If someone used deva beast souls to create a nascent soul, it would be more clearly visible. Furthermore, based on the latent talent and technique practiced by the individual, it would consist of power of one of the five elements: metal, wood, water, fire, or earth. Furthermore, it would result in a divine light which swirled around the body.

Generally speaking, that was the limit. Only the legendary Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul could be considered the perfect and flawless version, as clear as crystal, and filled with the divine light of the five elements. Such life essence divine light could not be suppressed by any technique based on the five elements; furthermore, when it was unleashed, it could suppress all other types of nascent souls. Whether they were those of Mortal-Dao or those created by deva beast souls, they would all be crushed!

Any other cultivator in the same cultivation stage as a Heaven-
Dao Nascent Soul expert would be, at best, a third as powerful. In
fact, they might even be so weak that they couldn't rotate their
cultivation base.

There were virtually no such nascent souls in the entire world!

This... was the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul!

As the nascent soul's eyes opened, a massive clap of thunder rang
out in the sky over Giant Ghost City.

CRAAAAAAAAAAASH!!!

In that same moment, a burst of Heaven-Dao aura erupted from
within Bai Xiaochun's nascent soul, seemingly in coordination
with the heavenly thunder.

Chapter 670: Invincible To Mortal-Dao Nascent Soul!

The great circle of the five elements. Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul!

Bai Xiaochun was bubbling over with excitement. As his eyes opened, he could feel how his Gold Core had become a nascent soul. The tiny person that was his nascent soul sat cross-legged, radiating a holy aura and a sensation of the Dao of the heavens. Anyone who could observe this nascent soul would definitely be deeply shocked.

Boundless fluctuations rolled out from the nascent soul, surging through his qi passageways, filling him with the indescribable power of his cultivation base.

Bai Xiaochun shivered as he looked around to find everything slightly different than before. The world was brighter and more colorful. He felt completely different, as though he had been baptized. In fact, the boundless sensation he now got from his cultivation base reinforced the fact...

That he was now completely and utterly different from before. In fact, he was now confident that if he met the chief of the Bai Clan, he would be able to crush him with a single palm strike!

“So, this is the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, huh...?” In fact, Bai Xiaochun was also excited to realize that, even though it was hard to accept, he was most likely far more powerful than most ordinary Nascent Soul cultivators.

From what he could tell, a mere breath on his part could shake everything in the area, and a glance from his eyes could become corporeal pressure that would suppress anyone he looked at.

Most importantly, his divine sense was now completely different from before. It was now connected to his spirit and soul, and made it possible for him to perform minor teleportations!

“What’s the range of my divine sense, I wonder...?” Even upon simply releasing it, it went out 5 kilometers in every direction!

He could sense everything happening within that area! However, he could tell that 5 kilometers was not his limit, and sent out some more divine sense. Rumbling sounds filled him as it shot out to a range of 50 kilometers!

Even that didn’t seem to be the limit. He was tempted to keep pushing it out further, but in the end, decided not to. After all, he was in the Wildlands, and didn't want to push things too far. Restraint was the safest option.

“So strong....” he thought, retracting his divine sense. As of this point, he felt much more powerful in all aspects. However, what got him even more excited than everything so far was that when he probed his own life force.... It pulsed with a boundlessness of shocking nature, which immediately pushed him to the brink of losing control of his emotions.

“My life force... heavens! My longevity... it’s... even at this early stage I can tell that I’ll be able to live for thousands of years!!” He was so excited that he was shaking physically. After all, his dream in life was to live forever, and although that dream had not yet been realized, he had just taken a major step in the right direction. The idea of being able to live for thousands of years instantly caused tears of joy to well up in his eyes.

“Worth it! It was all worth it!” Leaping to his feet, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously, dancing up and down in happiness. Just when he was about to go run out and do a few tests to see how strong he was, his expression flickered.

“Things aren’t over yet....” he thought. In that moment, he could tell that his transformation was not yet over. His cultivation base had broken through, and yet, he still had another core inside of him... that was now breaking apart!

It was... his Undying Heavenly King Core!

This was the core formed by reaching the third level of the Undying Codex. The power which had slowly been building up in him as he practiced that third level was now causing his Undying Heavenly King Core to break apart!

At this point, Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with bright light.

“I can borrow the power generated by my cultivation base breakthrough to destroy the shackle of the third level!!” He quickly settled back down cross-legged. He had pushed his Undying Hex to the level of the great circle all the way to the point of making contact with the shackle. Now that his cultivation base had broken through, and his Undying Heavenly King Core was falling apart, his life force began to surge with incredible power.

RUMBLE!

A tremor ran through him, and he suddenly got the sensation that three huge mountains were resting on his shoulders. That indicated that there were three shackles remaining, shackles which limited his fleshly body power.

Now, with his life force flourishing, and with his core falling apart, it was time to destroy that third mountain and break through that shackle!

CRAAAAAASH! RUMBLE!

Rumblings sounds filled him as he drew upon his life force and the energy generated by his crumbling Undying Heavenly King Core. It created an indomitable blast of energy that he sent directly toward the shackle. Cracking sounds immediately began to ring out, and he could feel that mountain falling to pieces. As it did... the shackle vanished!

He immediately felt much more relaxed than he had ever been before, and at the same time, could sense his fleshly body power soaring upward. Power coursed through him as his battle prowess rapidly increased!

He excitedly rose to his feet and took a step forward, whereupon a sonic boom echoed out, and he vanished. When he reappeared, he was several dozen meters away.

“My fleshly body can pierce directly through the air!!” Spirits soaring, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Moments ago, he hadn’t used his nascent soul to teleport, but rather, had pierced through the air with his fleshly body, producing almost exactly the same result. If anyone were here to witness the matter, they would be shocked. After all, when Nascent Soul experts fought, the fact that they could teleport was vitally important, and was why numerous methods were often employed to prevent teleportations.

However, such methods would be useless against Bai Xiaochun! He could use his fleshly body to teleport!

As of this moment, he was not powerful in the simplistic sense of the word. He was powerful in a completely flabbergasting fashion. He could crush anyone in the Mortal-Dao Nascent Soul stage, no matter what techniques they used against him. In fact, someone with a Mortal-Dao Nascent Soul, even one half a step into the Deva Realm, could be easily crushed!

Even if he met someone who had used deva beast souls to reach the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, he could easily defeat them. It would be the same with someone like that in the mid Nascent Soul stage. The only person who might possibly cause a problem for him was someone half a step into the Deva Realm, who had reached the great circle of the Nascent Soul using deva beast souls, and also had some unique trump cards to use! Bai Xiaochun had never fought with someone who was half a step into the Deva Realm and had used deva beast souls to reach that level. However, he was still confident that he would be able to win against them.

Being able to crush someone, and simply defeat them, were two very different things. Crushing someone didn’t require a fight;

whereas defeating someone did.

Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun... was currently only in the early Nascent Soul stage. If he reached the great circle, then he would be even stronger than he was now....

“I really am... too strong!” Patting his chest, he probed his cultivation base, heart filling with nearly uncontrollable anticipation.

Bai Xiaochun began to laugh loudly at the sensation of being able to look disdainfully out of the corner of his eye at all creation. Swishing his sleeve, he proudly said, “From now on, not a single person under the Nascent Soul stage will ever dare to raise their voice to me!”

After reveling in the sensation for a long moment, he took a deep breath and then thought about the fourth level of the Undying Codex, and burning anticipation rose up in his heart.

“It’s too bad that I don’t have any Nascent Soul-level techniques at the moment,” he murmured. “But at least I have a fleshly body technique to practice!”

“The fourth level of the Undying Codex is the Undying Bones!” With that, he thought back to the introduction of the Undying Codex, which described the five levels of skin, flesh, tendons, bones, and blood!

The more he thought about it, the more he anticipated making more progress. After all, the Undying Bones level involved refining all of the bones in one's body. That would lead to increased defenses and greater strength, a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering transformation that left him feeling very excited.

“The Undying Skin focuses on defense. The Undying Flesh is about strength. The Undying Tendons are for speed.... And the Undying Bones combine defense and strength together to reach shocking levels!” Shaken, he thought back to the information

about the Undying Bones, which was broken up into four sub-levels, each of which was further divided into nine strata!

“Tempered Bones, Powered Bones, Heavenly Bones, Undying Bones!

“Tempered Bones involve a full transformation of the body, leading to an explosive rise in defenses!

“Powered Bones increase one’s overall strength to a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering degree!

“Heavenly Bones fuse strength and defense, making it possible to rock all creation!

“Last are the Undying Bones.... By cultivating to that level, even if your soul perishes, your bones will never cease to exist!

“The soul can perish, but the bones are undying.... That fits perfectly with the technique. The Undying Live Forever Technique.... I’m practicing the Undying Codex, which focuses on the undying aspects of the Undying Live Forever Technique!” This train of thought soon led him to the final level of the Undying Codex, the Undying Blood. What pushed him toward the brink of madness was the fact that the description of the Undying Blood had closing words which said:

With one drop of blood, the body can be re-formed!

“I definitely have to finish cultivating the Undying Bones. Then I can move on to the Undying Blood!” With that, he began to review the secret technique of the Undying Bones.

Every level of the Undying Codex came with a unique secret magic. The first three were the Throat Crushing Grasp, the Mountain Shaking Bash, and the Undying Hex. All of them had proven to be very useful. Furthermore, as he continued to cultivate the Undying Bones, they would continue to be part of his arsenal.

“Undying Emperor’s Fist!”

Fleshly body power found its foundation in the bones, and was unleashed through the skin. By blessing that power with secret magic, it became so explosive that it could shake heaven and rock the earth. That incredible power surpassed both the Throat Crushing Grasp and the Mountain Shaking Bash!

The Undying Bones was another level, and it was the same with the Undying Emperor's Fist. Upon reaching the third stratum of the Tempered Bones level, one could unleash double the base power of the Undying Emperor's Fist. At the Powered Bones level, that power would increase to triple. With Heavenly Bones it was quadruple, and at the Undying Bones level, it was five times as powerful!

Theoretically speaking, there was actually no limit to how powerful the Undying Emperor's Fist could be. It was only limited by the limitations of the body itself!

That was the Undying Emperor's Fist!

The secret magic of the fourth level of the Undying Codex!

Powerful and magnificent, it could shake all creation!

Chapter 671: Cooking Oneself

“The Undying Emperor’s Fist....” Bai Xiaochun murmured, his emotions surging and his eyes shining. He could already visualize himself, looking down at his opponent disdainfully as he unleashed the Undying Emperor’s Fist to shocking effect.

After a moment, he took a deep breath and forced himself to calm down. On the one hand, the Undying Emperor’s Fist could be used as a trump card, drawing upon all of the strength in his body, blessing it, and then using that force to destroy everything in his path. On the other hand, after using it, he would be completely drained, and incredibly weak in terms of his fleshly body.

For the time being, the Undying Emperor’s Fist could definitely only be used as a trump card!

At the moment, it was not something he could just casually use. Generally speaking, it could only be unleashed after reaching the third stratum of the Tempered Bones.

“The fourth level of the Undying Codex... the Undying Bones. To cultivate it, I’ll need so much life force it’s difficult to even wrap my mind around it. The third level can’t even compare to it. It would be much easier back in the Heavenspan River region, where I can concoct medicine.” The mere thought of the difficulties involved in cultivating the Undying Live Forever Technique left Bai Xiaochun frowning in anxiety.

“The Wildlands are barren and infertile... I need something that can stand in for life force.” After putting some thought into it, he couldn’t come up with any good ideas. He considered soul medicines, but although they were used like spirit stones by Wildlands soul cultivators, they didn’t contain much life force. After all, they were concocted using souls.

“Maybe I could find some common precious materials and then perform tenfold spirit enhancements on them.... If I enhanced

them high enough, they would eventually have indescribable levels of power.” That was the only good idea he had come up with so far.

Taking a deep breath, he sat down cross-legged, closed his eyes, and began to utilize the methods described in the fourth level of the Undying Codex to cultivate Undying Bones. Before long, cracking sounds could be heard inside of him. They started out soft, but after enough time passed for two incense sticks to burn, they became so loud that they were like thunder in his ears.

From the nature of that sound, it was easy to tell that Bai Xiaochun’s bones were undergoing profound transformations.

All of his flesh and blood seemed to be quivering, as though incredible pressure were weighing down on them. At the same time, streams of life force power were coursing into his bones.

His skeletal system as a whole was like a black hole, emanating a terrifying gravitational force that sucked in all the life force around it.... At the same time, drastic transformations occurred.

As the process continued, the rumbling sounds grew more intense, and he began to tremble visibly. Sweat even began to pour down him. And then, he gradually realized that his fleshly body was showing signs of withering!

As soon as that happened, he opened his eyes and ceased cultivating. His eyes flickered with bright light, and he frowned.

“I can't keep going. After only two incense sticks' worth of time, all of the vestiges of life force from the medicinal pills I've consumed over the years were sucked away.... Cultivating the Undying Bones is terrifying!

“If I had kept going, it would have damaged the very foundations of my life force!” Shock still lingered within him as he looked down at his hands, and he suddenly sucked in a breath.

“I still haven't reached the first stratum of the Tempered Bones... and yet I can already tell that my defensive capabilities have

improved.” Although it was obvious to him that he was tempering his bones, it also felt as though he were tempering his body as a whole, and making it more pure.

After a moment of thought, he sighed. There was no need to get anxious about the matter. What he needed to do was simply wait until he could find something to stand in for life force, and then resume his cultivation.

“I can tell that if I had enough life force... then I could actually complete the Undying Bones in one shot! The obstacle I face now has nothing to do with time spent cultivating, just life force!” His eyes glittered brightly for a moment before he calmed himself down again. After checking on his cultivation base, and observing his nascent soul for a bit, his aura was beginning to thrum with fluctuations just like before.

“I had a bit of control power within my Gold Core. I wonder why I can’t sense it now that my core has become a nascent soul?” After some thought, he simply couldn’t figure out why that was, except for the possibility that it was connected to his lack of Nascent Soul-level techniques....

“What a pity. Could it be that my Human-Controlling Grand Magic... has been hidden away somehow? Why can’t I feel it? I wonder what other strange things are going to happen now that I’m in the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage!?” It really was true that he didn’t know much about the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage. In truth, few people in the world knew about it, other than the Celestial.

In fact, Bai Xiaochun had the premonition that the miraculous secrets of the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul would only be uncovered by contemplation on his part.

“For now, I just won’t worry about my control power or the Undying Live Forever Technique. Medicinal pills are too rare in the Wildlands. Plus, I don’t have any Nascent Soul techniques. If I

want to speed up my cultivation, then there's only one way to do it...." His eyes shone brightly as a smile of anticipation appeared on his face.

"For anyone else, it would be a deadly risk, but for me... it won't be dangerous at all!

"Most importantly, it will serve to rapidly increase my cultivation base! I can advance by leaps and bounds! In fact, this will be the most rapidly that my cultivation base has ever improved in my entire life!

"The time has come... to perform some spirit enhancements on my nascent soul!!" Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with determination, and didn't contain the slightest bit of hesitation. He waved his finger, and dazzling light shot out as the turtle-wok appeared.

Thankfully, he had built up quite a stockpile of souls because of all the gifts that he had been given recently. Using them, he was quickly able to create everything from one-to fourteen-colored flame. At that point, he closed his eyes and settled his cultivation base. Then, his nascent soul's eyes opened, and he stepped out of his fleshly body in nascent soul form to appear out in the open!

He shivered at the sensation of being out in the open as a nascent soul; it was almost as if there were some type of frigid qi in the area that he could only detect as a nascent soul. Actually, nascent souls were particularly sensitive to frigid qi, and reacted to it in much the way that a mortal would react if placed naked into a snowy field.

In fact, being in contact with intense frigid qi for too long could cause irreparable damage to nascent souls. Bai Xiaochun could tell that clearly. Actually, there were many things in heaven and earth that could injure and destroy nascent souls, with frigid qi being only one of them. The fleshly body was like a boat, and without that vessel, the nascent soul was like a baby tossed into the ocean....

If any other Nascent Soul cultivator had been present to see Bai Xiaochun bring his nascent soul out into the open, that person would be so shocked they might not believe what they were seeing. Generally speaking, it was impossible for one's nascent soul to emerge after having just stepped into the Nascent Soul stage. Not even extremely strong nascent soul cultivators could do it. The blow struck to it by the frigid qi that naturally existed in heaven and earth would be too severe.

Not even people in the mid Nascent Soul stage would do such a thing lightly. And if they did bring their nascent soul out into the open, they wouldn't do so for very long. Only people in the late Nascent Soul stage, or perhaps those who had reached the great circle, would have nascent souls strong enough to bring them out into the open and face the frigid qi of the world....

The only people who could ignore such frigid qi... were devas!

But here Bai Xiaochun was, just having stepped into the Nascent Soul stage, and already having brought his nascent soul out into the open. Although his nascent soul seemed to be struggling, it wasn't being hurt. Clearly, that was because this was a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul!

"It's freezing out here!" he said through his nascent soul's mouth. Then he turned back to look at his fleshly body, which was a very strange experience. After looking at himself for a moment, he burst into motion, flying over to sit cross-legged in the turtle-wok.

"So, does this count as cooking myself...?" he muttered. Reaching out with his tiny nascent soul hand, he felt at the surface of the wok. "Well, cooking it is.... I just need to add some fire."

A strange expression could be seen on his face as his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and then he waved his finger. Immediately, the one-colored tongue of flame flew out and merged into the turtle-wok. Moments later, a design appeared on the wok that then began to shine with dazzling light.

He was confident in what he was doing, but still felt nervous. After all, when all was said and done... he was performing a spirit enhancement on himself.

If anything went wrong... Bai Xiaochun could only imagine what it would be like if everyone thought he had been in secluded meditation for too long, and the Giant Ghost King finally came and opened up his meditation chamber to find... a deliciously stir-fried nascent soul waiting for him.

He shivered at the terrifying thought, and even considered flying out of the turtle-wok. However, that was when intense rumbling sounds began to echo out.

He screamed as silver light rose up, completely inundating him. The energy of heaven and earth erupted from the wok, pouring into his nascent soul.

Booming rumbles filled his mind!

Eventually, the sounds faded away, and the silver light disappeared. Bai Xiaochun in nascent soul form flew up into the air, looking terrified. Moments ago, he had felt like a rowboat being tossed about on enormous, angry waves.

“Terrifying! This isn’t spirit enhancement, this is playing with death!” At this point, he decided that he should just give up. However, when he looked down at his nascent soul, he suddenly realized... that there was a silver design on it!

Furthermore, his nascent soul seemed somehow different from before....

Chapter 672: The Hell-Emperor Stele Shakes All Creation!

As of this moment, his nascent soul had matured to a certain extent.

Not only was it stronger, it was also much more resilient to the frigid qi of heaven and earth.

It was an exhilarating feeling, and was normally the type that would come after spending significant time in secluded meditation, cultivating some powerful technique and constantly performing breathing exercises.

And that was the result of a single spirit enhancement!

Bai Xiaochun thought back to the feeling of the energy of heaven and earth exploding into him earlier, and then his eyes began to shine with excitement.

“This really is a secret magic for improving your cultivation base....” Pursing his lips in thought, he recalled the information he had come across when he first arrived in the Wildlands, regarding the successor of the Hell-Emperor. That was when he had first been introduced to the concept of performing spirit enhancements on nascent souls.

“According to what people say, if you perform a fifteenfold spirit enhancement on your Nascent Soul, you can break through into the mid Nascent Soul stage. An eighteenfold enhancement will get you into the late Nascent Soul stage. A twentyfold enhancement is the great circle. There probably isn’t even a need to mention the legendary realm of a twenty-onefold spirit enhanced nascent soul, which is guaranteed to push you into the Deva Realm!”

Immediately, his excitement began to build. At the same time, he realized that performing spirit enhancements on nascent souls obviously produced different results than with other items. That

was clear considering what he had experienced when performing spirit enhancements to a very high level back in the labyrinth. However, nascent souls were unique in heaven and earth, and behaved differently from ordinary objects, so that made sense. Looking down at the two-to fourteen-colored flames he had arranged, he realized that his path to the peak of the early Nascent Soul stage was right in front of him, open and clear.

Then he looked back at the turtle-wok, and realized that unless the wok somehow suddenly malfunctioned, he had nothing to worry about. Suppressing such worries, he said, “There definitely won’t be any problems. If I don’t do this, I’m gonna regret it!”

With that, he sent his nascent soul flying back into the turtle-wok, where he performed another incantation gesture and pointed out, causing the two-colored flame to begin another spirit enhancement process.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun had no way of knowing that even performing a single spirit enhancement on a nascent soul was a heaven-shaking, earth-toppling accomplishment in the Wildlands!

**

Meanwhile, far, far away, in the very heart of the Wildlands, was... a city that vastly surpassed Giant Ghost City in size!

It seemed as big as ten Giant Ghost Cities put together, and was completely golden in color. There was something indescribably noble about it, as though it were connected to the heavens. The sky above the city was filled with auspicious clouds, among which dragons danced, dragons that occasionally cast intimidating glances at the people below.

This city was the most important location in the Wildlands. It was... Arch-Emperor City!

In the eastern part of Arch-Emperor City was an enormous public square, fully 30,000 meters from one side to the other. In the very

middle of that square was a huge stone stele, exactly 2,700 meters tall, green in color, and surrounded by soft, glowing light.

It was a light that seemed so enduring that no divine ability in the world could make it go dark. It was as if, as long as heaven and earth existed, that light could not be destroyed. It was even capable of benefiting the cultivation base of anyone who basked within it. At the moment, roughly eighty names were visible on the surface of the stone stele!

Those names were written in precise and clear fashion, and were the names of various chosen heroes, all of them extremely famous, the type who everyone in the Wildlands had heard of and talked about. They were essentially household names.

That stone stele was none other than the Hell-Emperor Stele! And as for those names... they were the candidates in the running to be the successor of the Hell-Emperor!

When the allotted time for the competition to become the successor ended, then whoever occupied 1st place on that list... would be the successor! Because of how important that competition was, everyone in the Wildlands was very interested in the names on the list.

Currently, the first name on the list was Gongsun Yi, and next to it, a number could be seen: seven!

That meant that this Gongsun Yi had already performed a sevenfold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul!

To perform seven spirit enhancements on a nascent soul, and live through it, was a fundamentally heaven-defying matter. Countless people had been shaken by the matter. Second on the list was someone named [Zhou Hong](#), whose nascent soul had a sixfold spirit enhancement!

The person in third place had a fivefold enhancement. Going down the list, the numbers dropped down all the way into the

ones....

Unless something unexpected happened, it seemed obvious that Gongsun Yi would become the successor of the Hell-Emperor. After all, not even Zhou Hong seemed willing to go past a sevenfold spirit enhancement. That was no surprise, since the success rate was extremely low, and a failure would lead to death.

Because of the list of names on the Hell-Emperor Stele, and the glowing light which surrounded it, there were always soul cultivators gathered in the area. Not only could they improve their cultivation base because of the light, they also could study the names on the list at the same time.

The name list wasn't static. New names would occasionally pop up, and sometimes names would fade away. Obviously, the names that disappeared represented people who had attempted a spirit enhancement on their nascent soul, only to fail and perish. As for the new names, they always caused a stir.

Of course, the stir for a new name usually wasn't very much to speak about. After all, new names usually came with only a single spirit enhancement. The only thing that would cause a true commotion was when someone broke into the top 10.

However, on this day, something completely unexpected happened with one of the new names on the list!!

The first person to notice the new name was a middle-aged soul cultivator who happened to be a member of the Giant Ghost Legion forces that were stationed in Arch-Emperor City. Only a few years before, he had been part of the army that fought the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect at the Great Wall.

However, by this point, the cultivators of the Giant Ghost Legion had all been recalled to Arch-Emperor City for rest and recovery. At the moment, they were waiting for deployment orders to go back to the Great Wall.

That middle-aged soul cultivator was seated cross-legged some distance away from the stone stele, doing breathing exercises. As usual, he was looking at the name list on the stone stele, when suddenly, his jaw dropped as he noticed a new name at the very end of the list.

At first, a blank expression could be seen on the man's face, but then his eyes widened, and his aura began to surge unstably.

“This... this....” What he was seeing seemed completely preposterous, and he was actually convinced that he was seeing things.... He rubbed his eyes a few times, and then he looked over again. At that point, he simply wasn't able to hold back from crying out at the top of his lungs.

“Bai... Bai Xiaochun!!!”

His cry instantly broke the silence in the area of the stone stele. Countless soul cultivators who were practicing cultivation in the area opened their eyes. Most of them seemed confused; the name Bai Xiaochun seemed familiar, but at first, many couldn't place it. However, many of them clearly recognized the name, and were instantly shaken. Then, people look over to see what the middle-aged soul cultivator was looking at, whereupon more shouts of astonishment filled the air!

“Bai Xiaochun? How is that even possible!?!?”

“Bai Xiaochun.... I remember! He's a major general from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's Great Wall!! He's that shameless bastard who figured out how to detonate pill furnaces!!!”

“It's him.... I knew that name sounded familiar. Senior Red-Dust personally offered a bounty of a deva soul for his head! He's in 1st place on the Execution List!!”

All of the soul cultivators were shaken, and soon, as their cries of astonishment rang out, more people heard, leading to even more unsightly expressions.

Originally, Bai Xiaochun's name was not very widely known in the Wildlands. However, after the Giant Ghost Legion's recent attack on the Great Wall, his name became the talk of the army, and from there, spread out into all of the Wildlands!

He had defeated the Giant Ghost Legion over and over again!

He had inflicted heavy casualties on the vengeful soul forces of the Wildlands!

He had not only led the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's forces to victories on the Great Wall, but his methods had been spread to the other three riversource sects, leading to similar victories on other stretches of the Great Wall. Because of that, the Wildlands had suffered defeat after defeat, which was completely unprecedented!

Exploding pill furnaces! Driving beasts to madness! Soul Convergence Pills!

Any one of those tactics would have shaken the Wildlands. Then there was the reward being offered for Bai Xiaochun's head, which skyrocketed to such heights that everyone in the Wildlands was flabbergasted.

Furthermore, his rank of major general had been achieved by brazenly trampling the Wildlanders under foot with impunity!

Because he had eventually gone missing, people started to forget about him. But now, his name had appeared on the Hell-Emperor Stele, causing instant chaos in the area!

Countless eyes came to be fixed on the name list, where there, right out in the open for everyone to see... was Bai Xiaochun's name!

It was not Bai Hao... it was Bai Xiao Chun! Three characters made up his name, and right next to it was the number one, indicating that he had performed a single spirit enhancement on his nascent soul.

“It's Bai Xiaochun!!”

“He’s in the Wildlands! And he’s not dead!!”

“This is too important! Hurry up and report the matter!!” People immediately began to take out bone slips and send messages to their superiors....

It didn’t take long... for all of Arch-Emperor City to be completely shaken!

Trivia point: There was already a character named Zhou Hong in AWE, written with the exact same Chinese characters too. He was mentioned a couple of times in the early chapters as a chosen in the Spirit Stream Sect

Chapter 673: Crazy By A Rise In The Rankings.

As word spread through Arch-Emperor City, everyone who got the news was stunned. For many, it took some thought to recall why the name seemed familiar, and some even had to ask around. In the end, though, everyone was shocked.

Of course, there were some people who instantly recalled all sorts of things when they heard the name.

“Devil Bai has appeared!!”

“So, he’s not dead after all! Not only is he here in the Wildlands, he’s actually in the Nascent Soul stage!!”

“Dammit! This is outright provocation! Bald-faced mockery! There’s no way Devil Bai doesn’t know about what happens when you perform a spirit enhancement on a nascent soul. He obviously did this all on purpose to make sure we knew he had come!!”

Arch-Emperor City in general was shaken, but even more so was the Giant Ghost Legion. Countless shouts of rage could be seen as people raced over to the Hell-Emperor Stele.

Of course, not everyone in Arch-Emperor City was very impressed with Bai Xiaochun’s name. Many thought the stories were exaggerations, and that a person like him wasn’t worthy of the commotion.

“This is outrageous! I can’t believe that Bai Xiaochun is being so pretentious! How arrogant! How imperious!!”

“Hmph! Those are just stories, right? I refuse to believe that this Bai Xiaochun is as important as people say he is. He’s a nobody!”

“Obviously the Giant Ghost Legion just wanted to come up with a reason for why they got defeated so handily. The fact that the other three sects on the Great Wall are using the same tactics just

goes to show that Heavenspan Island arranged it all.”

Regardless of the specific reactions, though, the entire city was shaken.

Generally speaking, the commotion would have died down fairly quickly, and things would have gone back to normal. But then, something else happened that no one was expecting!

Even as everyone was looking at Bai Xiaochun’s name, his name vanished from last place and then reappeared in the top 20!

Next to his name was no longer the number one, but instead, two!!

All eyes went as wide as saucers, and yet, before anyone even had a chance to cry out in shock, Bai Xiaochun’s name vanished again. This time, it moved up to 15th place, and the number three could now be seen next to it!

And things weren’t over yet. Bai Xiaochun’s name vanished again, then reappeared in 8th place!!

At that point, the number next to his name was four!! Moments later, it shot up to 4th place, with a fivefold spirit enhancement!!

Countless gasps of shock could be heard. However, the crowd was being filled with so much pent-up shock that eventually, they couldn’t keep it in.

“Heavens...!”

“A five... fivefold spirit enhancement!!”

“How is this Bai Xiaochun doing this?!?!”

Everyone was completely stunned, battered by waves of astonishment, their minds spinning at what they were witnessing. Immediately, people began to send word to their friends and superiors.

Before, only a few people had been stunned by the mere mention of Bai Xiaochun’s name, with many people believing his reputation

to be exaggerated. However, in the briefest of moments, he went all the way to 4th place on the Hell-Emperor Stele, with a fivefold enhanced nascent soul. Instantly, the people who had believed the stories to be exaggerated were left gasping in shock.

“What!? He performed a fivefold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul that quickly!?!?”

“What's going on with this Devil Bai? How is he doing this so quickly? I can't believe he's so reckless!! Is he tired of living?!”

The waves of astonishment that rocked Arch-Emperor City only continued to grow more intense. Every group and organization within the city heard of the matter, and reacted with complete incredulity. At the same time, more and more people began to fly over to the Hell-Emperor Stele.

There were also numerous streams of divine sense that converged on the area.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was in nascent soul form in his secluded meditation chamber in Giant Ghost City, looking very pleased as he sat there cross-legged in the turtle-wok.

“Hahaha! I love this type of cultivation! This is how things should be done!” The nascent soul Bai Xiaochun's eyes twinkled, and his aura surged with excitement.

Not only did his nascent soul now have five silver designs on it, but he could also clearly sense how much stronger he was.

“I feel like I just spent a whole sixty-year-cycle in secluded meditation!” After a bout of hearty laughter, he licked his lips and waved his finger at the nearby six-colored flame.

The flame flew over into the turtle-wok, whereupon rumbling sounds could be heard, and another silver design appeared. He had performed another spirit enhancement!

Six. Seven. Eight.

Without pausing for a moment, he performed three enhancements in a row. By this point, eight dazzling designs could be seen on his nascent soul, which thrummed with boundless power. Swirling colors could be seen inside of it, and at the same time, the frigid qi of heaven and earth was like nothing.

“Strong. So strong!” Filled with excitement, he waved at the nine-colored flame. Moments later, a ninth silver design could be seen on his nascent soul!

However, things weren't over yet. Heart pounding, Bai Xiaochun began the tenth spirit enhancement. Dazzling silver light shone out from the turtle-wok as a tenth design appeared!

Bai Xiaochun could tell that his nascent soul was growing stronger and stronger, leaving him trembling with joy. He had often pondered how amazing it would be to become so powerful, but had never experienced the feeling. Now he was....

Of course, to the people in Arch-Emperor City, the fact that Bai Xiaochun was performing one spirit enhancement after another on his nascent soul had them all scared out of their minds. They felt like one bolt of heavenly lightning after another was slamming into their brains.

They watched as Bai Xiaochun's name went from 4th place to 3rd, and then from 3rd to 2nd. Then, without even stopping, it reached 1st place!

Bai Xiaochun had performed an eightfold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul....

If that were all there were to the situation, it might not have been a big deal. After all, what he was doing was not beyond the realm of what was clearly possible. But then, the number nine appeared next to his name, and then ten. The soul cultivators were all shaken to the ultimate degree, to the point where it felt like they were in an out-of-body experience.

He was performing spirit enhancements on a nascent soul, which was completely different than performing enhancements on magical items. If a magical item was destroyed, you could get a new one. But if you failed in a spirit enhancement on your nascent soul, you would be killed permanently!

The Hell-Emperor could have the audacity to require his successor perform spirit enhancements on their nascent soul. But to ordinary soul cultivators, that action was simply risking one's life!

A single spirit enhancement was something many people could accept, and potentially a second or third. But any higher than that, and the failure rates were simply too dangerous. What everyone was witnessing here was simply a miracle!

It was something the likes of which had never been heard of in the Wildlands! It was complete madness....

“He went from one all the way up to ten! And he didn't die!!”

“Dammit, what kind of luck is this!?!?”

“Does he have a death wish or something?!”

Not a single person was left unshaken; from their perspective, Bai Xiaochun was toying with his life in an act of complete insanity! Never had anyone dared to enhance their nascent soul in such fashion....

Meanwhile in Nine Serenities City, in a smaller palace adjacent to the royal palace, an enraged roar echoed out. Then, a tall, slender young man burst out from inside the palace. His handsome features were twisted with fury as he raged, “Bai Xiaochun! I, Zhou Hong, put my life on the line to perform a sixfold spirit enhancement on my nascent soul. How could you possibly dare to perform a tenfold enhancement!? How come you didn't die?!?!”

Bitterness filled Zhou Hong's heart. Originally, his only goal had been to overtake Gongsun Yi, and he had been fairly confident in

being able to do so. At worst, he would at least match Gongsun Yi's accomplishments.

But as soon as he got news that Bai Xiaochun had appeared and performed a tenfold spirit enhancement, his hopes were dashed....

“You must be using some trick to do it! Otherwise, there's no way you could succeed! Men, go out and search the Wildlands! Find out where Bai Xiaochun is! Find him!” In response to Zhou Hong's words, Nine Serenities City was thrown into a stir, and his orders were instantly carried out. Of course, the reason for all that was that Zhou Hong was heir apparent in the city!

Similar scenes played out in other parts of the Wildlands, both in the necromancer clans, and in other places that were home to people on the Hell-Emperor Stele's name list. Everyone was trying to guess where Bai Xiaochun might be, and countless people began to search for him.

In one of the four kingly cities, War Champion City, a thatched cottage could be seen atop a lonely mountain. Within that cottage sat a young man with sword-like eyebrows and eyes that shone like stars. Everyone who knew him personally was used to the placid, arrogant expression that he usually wore. However, as of this moment, his face was ashen, and his eyes glittered with disbelief.

“Bai Xiaochun....” he murmured. A moment later, he looked down at the bone slip he held in his hand, and a defiant gleam appeared in his eyes. This young man was the only son of the most powerful among the kings, the War Champion King. He was Gongsun Yi, the second most powerful person in his generation in the Wildlands, right behind Mistress Red-Dust!

Chapter 674: A Huge Sensation

Nine Serenities City and War Champion City weren't the only two cities to be completely shaken. Spirit Advent City was also thrown into a huge commotion. However, there were simply too many heirs to the throne there. In fact, there were more than 10,000 people who could claim a connection to the royal bloodline. Although some among those heirs could be considered chosen, none of them were as spectacular as Gongsun Yi or Zhou Hong. It was actually one of the young women in the city who was the most famous.

When news reached Giant Ghost City about what was happening in Arch-Emperor City, and that Bai Xiaochun had appeared, it also caused a huge commotion.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was unaware of that. His nascent soul sat giddily in the turtle-wok, feeling extremely pleased with how this session of cultivation was going. Eyes sparkling, he waved his finger at his eleven-colored flame.

“Heh heh. Let's keep going!” With that, the turtle-wok began to shine with brilliant light again. However, this time it wasn't silver light, but rather, golden. Moments later, the ten silver designs on his nascent soul vanished, replaced by a single golden design!

Instantly, his nascent soul grew a bit larger, causing Bai Xiaochun to gasp. Remembering that transformations would usually occur after a tenfold spirit enhancement, he suddenly felt uneasy.

“My nascent soul isn't going to change appearance, is it...?” He watched nervously as the golden light faded away, and then inspected his nascent soul. When he found that there were no fundamental changes, he breathed a sigh of relief.

“Even stronger than before.... Based on how things are going, it seems that a fourteenfold spirit enhancement will be the peak of

the early Nascent Soul stage. Normally speaking, even if I had some incredible techniques to use, I would need more than a hundred years to do that....” With those thoughts on his mind, he concluded that this was an opportunity that could not be passed up. Without the slightest hesitation, he began to work on the twelvefold spirit enhancement!

Rumbling could be heard as a second golden design appeared on his nascent soul, and yet, he didn’t stop there. Soon, a third and fourth design could be seen!!

A feeling of explosive strength filled his nascent soul along with the fourth golden design. Now he had the feeling that with a bit more effort, he could break through from the early to the mid Nascent Soul stage!

However, he wasn’t prepared to do that at the moment. At this point, he had no choice but to stop. With that, he opened his eyes and looked down at his nascent soul. The difference between his nascent soul now and how it had been at the beginning was vast!

“I’ve reached my limit,” murmured. “However, once I perform a fifteenfold spirit enhancement, then I’ll break through into the mid Nascent Soul stage!” Even as he spoke, his nascent soul flew back into his fleshly body.

When the fourth golden design appeared on his nascent soul, the number fourteen appeared next to the name Bai Xiaochun on the Hell-Emperor Stele back in Arch-Emperor City. When that happened, the observing soul cultivators were stunned to the ultimate degree. None of them could even imagine what would happen if the successor of the Wildlands’ Hell-Emperor turned out to be Bai Xiaochun. It seemed almost too preposterous to consider!

And yet, by this point, there didn’t seem to be any suspense at all regarding what would happen in the end.... It was at that exact same moment that the explosive aura of a deva suddenly rose up within Arch-Emperor City.

Brightly-colored light flashed in heaven and earth, and the huge dragons in the clouds above were clearly taken aback as a woman flew up from the Giant Ghost Legion. She was beautiful and curvaceous, and yet possessed a murderous aura that was terrifying to the extreme. Furthermore, her eyes were filled with killing intent and madness. She was none other than... Mistress Red-Dust!

Her cultivation base had long since recovered, but she had remained in secluded meditation, and was unaware of anything that was happening on the outside. However, her subordinates and high-ranking officers knew of her enmity with Bai Xiaochun, and therefore, had passed the news along to her.

When she heard what the damnable, detestable Bai Xiaochun had done, it drove her into near madness. She flew at top speed to the Hell-Emperor Stele, where she glared at the name in 1st place, her body trembling and her murderous aura surging.

When people realized that Mistress Red-Dust had arrived, they bowed their heads and clasped hands in respect. Everyone knew that despite the fact that she had only recently become the newest deva of the generation, her battle prowess was far beyond ordinary!

“Bai Xiaochun... Bai Xiaochun....” A very grim expression could be seen on her face, and her eyes shone with cold light. As of this moment, she knew that Bai Xiaochun... must have reached the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage. Anger burning, she pulled out a jade slip to send a message to her subordinates and officers.

“Pay any price to find Bai Xiaochun. I want him alive!!”

The army responded instantly. Soldiers began to rush to and fro within the army camp, issuing orders in preparation to follow Mistress Red-Dust’s orders and find Bai Xiaochun!

In another location in Arch-Emperor City was a young woman who, like everyone else, was paying close attention to the situation

with the Hell-Emperor Stele. Unlike Mistress Red-Dust, there was no icy coldness in her eyes, only anxiety and concern.

She was none other than... Chen Manyao from the River-Defying Sect!

She was a Wildlander, and her Master was a very important person, giving her a unique status in Arch-Emperor City. However, she would never be able to forget everything which had occurred in the River-Defying Sect, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, or the boat that had sailed across the Heavenspan Sea....

In the years in which she had been back in the Wildlands, she had often thought back to the familiar faces she remembered from the past. More often than anyone, she thought of Bai Xiaochun.

Back when she'd first heard that he had gone missing, she had assumed that he was dead, and had slipped into disconsolate melancholy.

But now, his name had appeared on the stone stele, causing her eyes to sparkle with dazzling light.

“Where are you, Xiaochun...?”

Within the imperial palace in Arch-Emperor City was the Grand Heavenmaster, the very same man who had ordered the Arch-Emperor to go into secluded meditation. He was the only person other than the Arch-Emperor who actually held power over the various officials in the dynasty. All of a sudden, the Grand Heavenmaster opened his eyes.

In that instant, the huge dragons in the air above the city trembled, and all of the powerful experts in the city shivered and retracted their divine sense, fearful of doing anything to offend the Grand Heavenmaster.

The Grand Heavenmaster's eyes immediately pierced through all creation to land on the Hell-Emperor Stele, and the name that occupied the 1st place position!

A moment later, he looked away, and then, issued a new order.

“Find Bai Xiaochun and bring him to me!”

The orders came out, not from the Grand Heavenmaster, but rather, under the auspices of the current Arch-Emperor himself! Because of that, even the four heavenly kings had no choice but to acknowledge them....

Before long, everyone in the Wildlands was searching for Bai Xiaochun.

Around that time, Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, causing the entire secluded meditation chamber to fill with something like the crackle of lightning. At the same time, the pressure of the Nascent Soul stage erupted out from him.

He took a deep breath, a look of delight on his face as he performed a quick inspection of himself. Sure enough, he was in the great circle of the early Nascent Soul stage, and his nascent soul had four golden designs on it. There was no way for him to hold back his pride as he swished his sleeve to open the door of the meditation chamber. Then he swaggered out in grand fashion.

Even as he was considering going to show off a bit and make sure everyone knew that he was no longer in Core Formation, he sent out his divine sense to find that there was a huge commotion going on around him.

He could hear people discussing a certain matter, a matter that instantly got him quivering in fear. His previous grandiosity immediately vanished, and all joy evaporated, replaced by alarm and terror.

“Did you hear? Bai Xiaochun showed up! What, you don’t know who Bai Xiaochun is? Well let me tell you....”

“He performed a fourteenfold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul! That’s totally crazy! He must have done it with some powerful magical treasure!!”

“The Arch-Emperor issued orders that everyone in the Wildlands is supposed to find him and capture him alive.... Well, it can't really be any other way. If he ended up becoming the successor of the Hell-Emperor, it would be like some gigantic joke.”

When Bai Xiaochun heard what people were talking about, the blood drained from his face, and he almost fell over on his face because of the fear. He staggered backward, suddenly recalling a key piece of information that had slipped his mind.... Anyone who performed a spirit enhancement on their nascent soul would have their name put on display on the Hell-Emperor Stele!!

“This is big....” he thought. Already, regret was welling up in his heart as he wondered how much of a deadly disaster he had brought upon himself.... Heart pounding with anxiety, he quickly abandoned any ideas of showing off. He also decided that under no circumstances would he let anyone check his nascent soul. Thankfully, because of all the spirit enhancements he had performed, it was extremely powerful. Although people would now be able to sense that he was in the Nascent Soul stage, they wouldn't be able to see any of the details of his nascent soul.

With a bit of adjustment with his mask, he made it seem like, instead of being in the great circle of the early Nascent Soul stage, he had actually just made a breakthrough. Even as he did that, several beams of light appeared, patrolling soul cultivators of the city guard. They clasped hands and bowed to him, then one of them said, “His highness the king issued orders that after emerging from secluded meditation, Majordomo Bai is to go see him immediately!”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun blurted, shivering and heart pounding.

Chapter 675: The Old Pervert!

The mere thought of the Giant Ghost King's stern, threatening features, and the profound gleam that was always present in his eyes which made it seem like he could peer deep into one's mind, caused Bai Xiaochun to shiver.

"I'm finished. Kaput...." Deep regret filled his heart, and realized that he really, really should not have gone and performed spirit enhancements on his nascent soul. The entire world knew what had occurred, and the mere thought of that left him weak in the knees.

And then he contemplated the potential consequences of his actions, and his heart began to race.... Thankfully, he was wearing his mask, and also had years of experience living under cover. Although he feared death as much as he always had, he had long since become an absolute master at keeping up an act.

"The Giant Ghost King probably doesn't know my real identity.... If he did, he wouldn't just send a message summoning me to a meeting.... My mask is incredible, so there's no way anybody can sense my cultivation base fluctuations...." Inwardly, he was grasping at every possible straw to comfort himself, but on the outside, he seemed completely calm. Keeping his hands clasped behind his back, he gave a slight nod to the city guards, and then flew with them toward the royal palace.

Along the way, his facial expression remained completely normal. However, inside, his mind raced as he tried to figure out why the Giant Ghost King might have summoned him. In the end, he was ninety percent confident that it was just a coincidence, and had nothing to do with his true identity.

Although that made him feel a bit better, there was still a ten percent chance that he was in grave danger. As a result, he couldn't wipe the worry away completely. He simply had to force

himself to remain calm, and keep his expression neutral as he followed the guards toward the palace.

The guards treated Bai Xiaochun very respectfully. Upon reaching a certain point, they clasped hands and departed, leaving Bai Xiaochun standing in front of the royal palace. A moment later, he strode inside, and the first thing he heard was the voice of Duke Deathcrier.

“Your Highness, the Ghost King Orchid has not yet begun to bloom.... Furthermore, the Grand Heavenmaster made it clear to me that he will not open the Necromancer Kettle for us alone....”

Next came the Giant Ghost King’s voice. “Go back to the Grand Heavenmaster and tell him that the Giant Ghost King agrees to owe him a big favor!”

“Yes, Your Highness. I’ll go arrange things right away.” A very solemn expression could be seen on Duke Deathcrier’s face as he clasped hands and bowed to the Giant Ghost King. After turning around to leave, he saw Bai Xiaochun entering the palace, and a faint smile appeared on his face. Giving a quick nod to Bai Xiaochun, he left.

Bai Xiaochun hurried over to the throne, doing his best to keep his anxiety under control. Once in front of the Giant Ghost King, he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“My respects, Your Highness!” The Giant Ghost King wore a grim expression on his face, as if he were wrestling with some important matter. When he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, a faint expression of surprise could be seen on his face.

“Eee? You made a breakthrough?” At first, a look of praise could be seen in his eyes, but after a moment, it turned into something more like suspicion. He was an experienced and shrewd person, with exceptional insight, and had picked up on Bai Xiaochun’s nervousness. Of course, Bai Xiaochun had always been nervous in his presence. The difference was that, in the past, he never did

anything to cover it up, whereas now... he was. The Giant Ghost King's eyes flickered.

Bai Xiaochun could immediately see the suspicion in the Giant Ghost King's eyes, and it caused his heart to leap into his throat with the realization that he had slipped up. Considering his personality, the fact that he had just made a cultivation base breakthrough meant that he shouldn't be walking around looking calm.... His heart began to race, and his nervousness mounted. Suddenly, an idea occurred to him, and he instantly made his decision. Without the slightest hesitation, he made himself seem even more nervous, so nervous that he even seemed scared. In fact, he averted his gaze so that he wasn't looking at the Giant Ghost King.

The Giant Ghost King looked at him silently, and as he did, vast pressure began to build up in the grand hall. Bai Xiaochun slowly began to tremble visibly, and sweat began to pour down him. It almost seemed like he couldn't control himself... which was actually the case. He actually felt as if so much pressure was weighing down on him that he might be crushed into powder.

As the pressure built, Bai Xiaochun finally moaned, "Your Highness, your humble servant made a grave error.... I didn't want to do it! But the thing is that the three great clans really do have it out for me. If it weren't for the fact that your humble servant has such an impressive title, I think my poor little life would already have been exterminated.... By the way, the Bai Clan hates me especially deeply.

"Therefore, your humble servant felt he had no other option. Despite the fact that Your Highness had other plans for the three clans, your humble servant secretly instructed certain people to go cause problems for them...." By this point, Bai Xiaochun really looked like he was about to weep from fear.

The Giant Ghost King's eyes widened. He had long since learned of the fact that Bai Xiaochun had sent people to put pressure on the

three great clans. Therefore, this display of nervousness put him right in the middle of laughter and tears. Obviously, Bai Xiaochun misunderstood why he had been summoned, and had thus begun to grow nervous.

“Enough with the histrionics!” the Giant Ghost King said, glaring at Bai Xiaochun.

His glare instantly caused Bai Xiaochun to calm down inside. Externally, though, he looked up at the Giant Ghost King with glistening eyes.

The Giant Ghost King could tell that Bai Xiaochun felt wronged, but decided to simply ignore it. Voice casual, he said, “I summoned you here today because of some orders that came down from the Arch-Emperor. An arrest warrant has been issued for Bai Xiaochun, major general from the Great Wall and cultivator from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. I’m entrusting the matter to you. If Bai Xiaochun appears in the territory I control, you will be sent to arrest him.”

A serious expression appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face. Without the slightest hesitation, he stuck his chest out and loudly replied, “Fear not, Your Highness! It was on my path to Giant Ghost City that I heard about this Bai Xiaochun. Hmmmphh! If Devil Bai dares to appear near Giant Ghost City, then your humble servant will apprehend him immediately!”

His words were spoken with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron, and caused the Giant Ghost King to nod in satisfaction.

“It's not really a big deal, to tell the truth. Unless he actually shows up, just forget about it. However, if you do run into him, be careful. Thankfully, you’ve made a cultivation base breakthrough, so that will help to some degree.” The Giant Ghost King then went on to offer a few more warnings and exhortations about the matter.

“Your Highness, when it comes to my cultivation base breakthrough, I have you to thank... If it weren’t for your insistence that I go into secluded meditation, your humble servant would not have succeeded. Your Highness, you truly are divine and mighty, matchless through eternity! The words you spoke to me were like a mystical elixir that pushed me to new heights. Your Highness, I do hope that you summon me more often for audiences, that thusly, my cultivation base can continue to improve with rapid speed!” Bai Xiaochun didn't seem embarrassed at all to have so instinctively launched into a bout of flattery.

The Giant Ghost King snorted in response to Bai Xiaochun’s words, but inside, actually felt a twinge of pleasure. After all, he couldn’t forget about how Bai Hao had had the audacity to slap him across the side of the head and act in wildly presumptuous fashion. Therefore, this complete reversal was quite pleasing. After all, he was a mighty demigod, the type of person who could control every matter around him. If he wanted to, he could forgive anyone of anything. All of the karma had been resolved. In fact, after his cultivation base was restored, a mere thought on his part had retrieved all of the magical items he’d handed over.

Everyone respected power, and as for this Bai Hao, even if he got stronger than he was, he would still be at the Giant Ghost King’s beck and call. Therefore, to hear a bit of flattery from him was quite pleasing to the ear.

In terms of the fact that Bai Xiaochun had formed his nascent soul without any problems, the Giant Ghost King wasn’t interested in prying, nor did he even think to connect him with the wanted fugitive Bai Xiaochun. It wasn’t that the Giant Ghost King wasn’t quick-witted about such things, it was more that Bai Hao had a very clear and well-known background. Therefore, there was no reason to link him to Bai Xiaochun.

Although the timing was a bit odd, the Giant Ghost King knew that since this Bai Hao had received a drop of his own soul-blood,

that would also make it much easier for him to form a nascent soul. As one of the Giant Ghost King's subordinates, Bai Hao's power came from the good graces of the king, and for him to get stronger was naturally a good thing. The Giant Ghost King didn't even bother to look into the matter of the little turtle.

After their conversation was done, the Giant Ghost King waved his hand to dismiss Bai Xiaochun.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun was sighing with relief in his heart. Backing up respectfully, he was just preparing to leave when he decided that he needed to make his act even more convincing. Looking over his shoulder, he opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something, but then held back.

The Giant Ghost King noticed, and said, "What's wrong now?"

"Your Highness, might it be a good idea to go put a bit more pressure on the three great clans?" From the look in his eye, Bai Xiaochun seemed like he simply wasn't willing to drop the matter.

The Giant Ghost King looked at him grimly for a moment. The truth was that he really did have some special plans in mind for the three great clans. After all, the fact that the incarcerated patriarchs of the Bai and Chen Clans had Deva Realm cultivation bases was of importance to him. Furthermore, the Giant Ghost King knew that if the three great clans fell, other clans would rise in their place, and he didn't really feel like dealing with weak, rising powers like that.

However, after Bai Xiaochun made his suggestion, the Giant Ghost King thought about it for a moment, and then recalled the scene of being chased by those three clans.

"You really were wronged in all of this.... Those three clans have been around for thousands of years, and have deep reserve savings. Perhaps that is what gave them the courage to rebel...." With that, he gave Bai Xiaochun a meaningful look.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback, but after analyzing the king's words, his eyes began to shine. Then his heart began to pound as he realized that when the Giant Ghost King said deep reserve savings, he most likely meant that the three great clans were extremely rich.

Furthermore, that indicated that the king was hinting that he should... go shake them down? Was this his reward for risking life and limb for the Giant Ghost King?

Although he was excited by the prospect, he decided that he should probably double-check that his understanding was correct. “Fear not, Your Highness. My eyes are as sharp as swords. It doesn’t matter how deep the reserve savings of the three great clans are, your humble servant will see to the bottom of everything.”

The Giant Ghost King didn’t respond at all, and in fact, even closed his eyes. Inwardly, he was pleased that Bai Xiaochun could pick up on the meaning of his words.

Bai Xiaochun was immediately enthused by the Giant Ghost King’s reaction, and that it indicated his implicit agreement.... When Bai Xiaochun thought back to how the clans had chased him down, and how he had suddenly risen up in the world, his excitement began to build.

“A shakedown.... I’ve never done anything like that. How exciting to be able to go shake down an enemy.... However, considering the fact that the Giant Ghost King didn’t issue official orders, it indicates that he wants me to keep things low key....” Clenching his fists excitedly, he turned and walked out of the grand hall.

Even as he walked out, though, the lounging Giant Ghost King casually murmured, “The Chen Clan is particularly vile. Especially their clan chief. He always gets lucky with the women, and yet he dared to forge a taboo banner... hmph!”

Although he spoke nearly under his breath, his words reached Bai Xiaochun's as clear as day.

In response, Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped, and he even stopped walking. Eyes turning up in thought, he realized that there were two aspects to what the Giant Ghost King had said that were important. The first was about the taboo banner, and the second... was when he said lucky with the women....

As the wheels in his head turned, he murmured to himself, "That old pervert!!"

Then, face beaming with righteousness, he pretended to have not heard, and strode out of the hall.

After he left, the Giant Ghost King sat there on his throne, the five fingers of his right hand tapping each other as he calculated something.

A moment later, he frowned and murmured, "I'm still not exactly sure of the timing. However, based on the date, the Ghost King Orchid in the Necromancer Kettle should be just about ready to bloom."

Chapter 676: Shakedown

After emerging from the grand hall, Bai Xiaochun looked over in the direction of the three great clans, and an expression of scorn could be seen on his face. Although there were no truly deep grudges between him and the clans, they had attempted to kill him over and over again.

Back when he had been a prison guard, it had been impossible to seek revenge, and even less so after he became a prisoner. But now things were different. He was Majordomo Bai of Giant Ghost City, acting on behalf of the king.

“Summon Heavenly Marquis Chen Hai!” he said with the swish of a sleeve. Instantly, the nearby city guards rushed off to carry out his orders.

Afterward, he stood there outside of the grand hall, looking up into the sky, his hands clasped behind his back as he waited for Chen Hai to arrive. As he was waiting, he pulled out a jade slip to send a message to Zhou Yixing.

“Have your people keep an eye on all of the three of the great clans for me!”

“Don’t worry, milord. I’ll take care of everything. By the way, the people in the Chen Clan are frightened out of their minds.”

After hearing the response, Bai Xiaochun gave a few more instructions, then closed his eyes and stood there waiting. Before long, a beam of light appeared off in the distance, within which could be seen a pudgy, middle-aged man.

He was one of the four heavenly marquises who had not participated in the rebellion. He was also the one who had given Bai Xiaochun a mansion, as well as a large number of other valuable gifts. As soon as Chen Hai saw Bai Xiaochun standing there outside of the royal palace, a serious expression appeared on

his face. Clasp hands and bowing, he said, "What are your orders, Majordomo Bai?!"

"Heavenly Marquis Chen, gather your men. You're taking a little trip with me!" Bai Xiaochun had served as a major general in the army, so when he spoke now, it was with a grand dignity that left Chen Hai feeling shaken. After looking from Bai Xiaochun to the royal palace and then back, he voiced his assent.

Without the slightest hesitation, he issued orders to the soul cultivators under his command, and before long, a force of 20,000 men had gathered. At that point, Bai Xiaochun and Chen Hai, followed by the small army, flew out of Giant Ghost City!

Everyone in the city was shaken by the sight, especially when they realized that the 20,000 soul cultivators were heading in the direction of one of the three great clans, the Cai Clan. As of that point, everyone knew what was going on... revenge!

The army of 20,000 soul cultivators radiated killing intent as they flew along. Bai Xiaochun was in the lead position, his hands clasped behind his back, an arrogant expression on his face. All of a sudden, he felt like he was back at the Great Wall, a mighty major general with subordinates who would jump to heed his every command.

Chen Hai was right there next to him. Sticking his thumbs up approvingly, he said, "Excellent work, Bai, old pal! You're truly a dragon amongst men. Let me tell you, I've seen a lot of people throughout the years who really bungle things up when they suddenly rise to power. But not you, Bai, old pal. You're doing splendidly. It just goes to show that you are a qilin chosen of Giant Ghost City!

"These 20,000 soul cultivators view you like an immovable mountain, as permanent as the sea. Strength of mind like yours is rare even among many imperial princes." Chen Hai had a very serious expression on his face as he talked, and his fat jiggled up

and down a bit. Although he was clearly being a bit flattering, his words seemed completely and utterly trustworthy.

Bai Xiaochun felt wonderful, and couldn't help but muse that Chen Hai really was very observant. Smiling broadly, he thought back to the old saying: even if you have a beautiful sedan chair to sit in, you still need others to lift you up. Therefore, he offered a few ingratiating words of his own. Before long, the two of them were chatting amiably.

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun contemplated how he should go about this shakedown. Considering that the Giant Ghost King hadn't issued formal orders, he couldn't do it in a very forceful manner.

“Maybe I can't use force, but I can still get my revenge in full!” Looking down at his bag of holding, he thought about the little turtle, and suddenly came up with a new idea.

Before long, they could see the Cai Clan up ahead. As for his reason for selecting this particular clan, there was no special factor other than its close proximity to the city.

Of course, everyone in the Cai Clan was extremely nervous because of his arrival. They were all shaking visibly, and the clan chief's face was ashen as he led a group of cultivators to the main gate to receive the visitors.

The young chosen member of the clan who had tried to kill Bai Xiaochun sometime back was there, as well as the silkpants who had tried to bully him with wealth. Both of them were trembling, their faces as ashen as death.

The pressure weighing down on the clan recently had been immense. Their patriarch was dead, and every member of the clan felt like they were hovering on the brink of death.

The news that Bai Hao was personally bringing a large group of soul cultivators with him for a visit caused alarm to fill the hearts

of everyone in the clan. Most fearful of all was the clan chief and certain clan elders, and yet, they managed to remain calm.

After all... if the Giant Ghost King had planned to exterminate them, he wouldn't have waited so long to do it....

As the Cai Clan waited there at the front gate, Bai Xiaochun, Chen Hai, and the 20,000 soul cultivators arrived like a black cloud, blotting out the sky. As they neared, Chen Hai called out in a loud voice, "Lock down the area. Without express orders from Majordomo Bai, no one is allowed in or out!"

The 20,000 soul cultivators immediately fanned out and surrounded the Cai Clan, locking it down completely. The cultivators of the Cai Clan were all shocked. As for the clan chief, his expression flickered, but he had no choice but to simply grit his teeth, hurry over to Bai Xiaochun, and clasp hands respectfully.

"Greetings, Majordomo Bai, Heavenly Marquis Chen." Everyone else in the clan similarly clasped hands and offered greetings.

Bai Xiaochun ignored them, and instead turned and cast a displeased look in Chen Hai's direction.

"Heavenly Marquis Chen, I didn't come here to exterminate the Cai Clan. Why did you have to go and scare the clan chief?"

"I understand, Majordomo Bai," Chen Hai said seriously, "but your humble servant has his orders!"

Bai Xiaochun shook his head and walked over to the clan chief, looking a bit apologetic.

"Oh, don't worry," the clan chief said, "Heavenly Marquis Chen has his orders, we understand. Majordomo Bai, please just come in, and we can discuss what needs to be discussed." There was no way the clan chief would miss the fact that Bai Xiaochun and Chen Hai were obviously working in coordination with each other. However, that realization did him relatively little good.

Bai Xiaochun didn't immediately enter the Cai Clan. Instead, he

cleared his throat loudly, prompting Chen Hai's expression to grow grimmer.

“All Nascent Soul-level officers, step forward to guard Majordomo Bai!” Immediately, a dozen or so soul cultivators flew out from the group of 20,000 and clustered around Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun still didn't seem pleased, but he finally sighed and then gave a wry smile to the clan chief. “I really have no choice, you know. It's not that I don't trust your Cai Clan. It's just that his highness the king really values me highly.”

Feeling more bitter than ever about how things were going, the clan chief replied, “Yes yes yes, of course. Majordomo Bai is extremely important to Giant Ghost City. We definitely can't have any mishaps. I completely understand....”

“Very well, let's go in and talk.” Bai Xiaochun swished his sleeve, reveling in the feeling of being so powerful and important. Of course, the first to actually enter the clan were the Nascent Soul cultivators acting as guards. From the way they carried themselves, if anyone in the Cai Clan did even the slightest suspicious thing, they would attack immediately for the safety of Bai Xiaochun.

The cultivators of the Cai Clan were left trembling in fear, especially that one particular chosen, who stood there with his head bowed, hoping that he wouldn't be noticed.

The clan chief was feeling very irritated, but had no choice other than to join the clan elders in leading Bai Xiaochun into the city.

After entering the clan's main hall, Bai Xiaochun sat down and smiled. “Clan Chief Cai, I'm not here on any official business today. I just heard that the Cai Clan has a thousand years of reserve savings built up, and would like to perform a bit of an inspection.”

“I understand, Majordomo Bai. Please wait a moment.” The clan chief plastered a smile onto his face, then turned to the side and

gave some orders. Before long, another member of the clan came hurrying over, carrying a soul bottle surrounded by scintillating light.

It wasn't very large, and actually resembled an ordinary flower vase. However, based on the light which surrounded it, it was clearly an extraordinary item. Furthermore, there was a single golden design on its surface, indicating that this soul bottle had received an elevenfold spirit enhancement!

After respectfully placing it down in front of Bai Xiaochun, the clan chief said, "Majordomo Bai, this soul bottle is a powerful magical treasure of the Cai Clan. Please, take a look and tell us what you think."

Bai Xiaochun's expression was the same as ever as he picked the bottle up and looked it over. He even examined it with some divine sense. Not only was the bottle itself incredible, but it also contained over 100,000,000 vengeful souls. It was clearly an impressive gift, and although Bai Xiaochun was moved, when he thought about how incredibly rich he knew the Cai Clan to be, and then realized they had only offered him 100,000,000 vengeful souls, he immediately got angry.

Face turning grim, and cultivation base surging, he clenched his right hand into a fist, causing cracking sounds to ring out as the soul bottle was suddenly crushed. As it did, the more than 100,000,000 vengeful souls exploded out. Thankfully, there were plenty of Nascent Soul experts around who were able to suppress the resulting horde of souls.

Glaring icily at the clan chief, he said, "Clan Chief Cai, I may not be a grandmaster of equipment forging, but considering how long I've practiced cultivation, do you really take me to be a fool? You truly think you can pull the wool over my eyes with a soul bottle like that?!"

Chapter 677: Study Away, Majordomo Bai...

Gritting his teeth inwardly, but maintaining a very calm expression, the chief of the Cai Clan rose to his feet and said, "Majordomo Bai, please, calm yourself...."

The clan elders had similar reactions. All of them could tell that Bai Xiaochun's act of breaking the soul bottle indicated that he was not here out of any expression of goodwill.

Clearly, he wasn't going to wipe out their lives, but he was definitely planning to wipe out their thousand years of reserves!

"That was only the first thing we planned to show you. Just wait a moment, Majordomo Bai, there's more to come." Taking a deep breath, the clan chief then issued some more orders.

Before long, another clan member hurried over with five soul bottles, which were placed in front of Bai Xiaochun. When Bai Xiaochun eyed them, his heart immediately began to beat faster.

"A thousand years of reserve savings...." he thought, his mouth going a bit dry. However, he forced a frown onto his face.

The clan chief's heart surged with pain as he realized that if the clan didn't bleed today, they would be put in great danger. Gritting his teeth, he transmitted some more messages, whereupon more clan members arrived, this time to place over a hundred bracelets of holding in front of Bai Xiaochun!

Unexpectedly, each and every one of the bracelets of holding was packed with soul medicine. There was so much that it would be impossible to count in a short period of time. The mere sight of it all got Bai Xiaochun's heart pounding, and he suddenly realized what exactly the thousand year reserve savings of an aristocratic necromancer clan was like.

And yet, he continued to frown with just as much displeasure as before.

The scene playing out caused profound bitterness to grip the heart of the clan chief. Although the things he had offered up were not all of the Cai Clan's thousand years of reserve savings, they were a significant portion. However, considering the danger the clan was in, he had to endure the pain he felt in his heart and send more messages.

Soon, a steady stream of trembling clan members came, bringing all sorts of items with them. There were more than a thousand magical items, many of them spirit enhanced. However, after seeing everything, Bai Xiaochun shot to his feet, looking completely livid as he said, "Clan Chief Cai, I'm here to try to save your Cai Clan from calamity! However, it seems you hold me in complete contempt. Are you really trying to please me with trash like this? Fine. Fine! I'm done with this matter!"

Swishing his sleeve, he chuckled coldly and prepared to leave.

The clan chief's expression flickered, and his frustration surged to the point where he almost lost control. He had already offered quite a bit of resources, only to be rebuffed. Furthermore, he had already given everything he had the authority to give. Everything else... was considered the foundation of the clan, and the decision to do anything with them was beyond him.

At this point, the Cai Clan's grand elder took a deep breath and stepped forward, a smile on his face. He knew that it was a critical moment for the clan. Unlike the other two great clans, their patriarch was dead. That meant that if they weren't willing to part with some of their wealth, they would be courting a major disaster. The entire clan could end up getting wiped out.

"Majordomo Bai, please wait a moment. The Cai Clan still has more treasures for you to study...." He turned to look at one of the other clan elders nearby. "Old Third, open the inner storehouse and bring out... everything!"

The elder who had been spoken to sighed, bowed his head, and

hurried away.

Bai Xiaochun stopped walking. Currently, his heart was pounding with anticipation. The truth was that the gifts which had been offered him so far actually left him very moved. Softening his expression a bit, he went back and sat down again.

Before long, a trembling Cai Clan cultivator hurried over with a little pagoda!

It wasn't a soulhoarding pagoda, but rather, a pagoda crafted from wood. Bai Xiaochun scanned it with divine sense to find that it was filled with multi-colored flame.... It had everything from ten-colored flame all the way up to fifteen-colored flame, six tongues of it!

And yet, things weren't over yet. Another clan member brought a bone slip, which contained the Cai Clan's formulas for everything from fifteen-to seventeen-colored flame. Even as he was accepting the bone slip, another clan member arrived... with a deva soul!

It was a fire-type soul contained in a crystal box, and the sight of it finally caused Bai Xiaochun's expression to brighten a bit. He even gasped slightly.... The members of the Cai Clan had been watching him closely, and noticed the change. As for the clan chief, his heart was wracked with indescribable pain; as of this moment, more than half of the reserve savings of the clan had been handed over.

Even the Nascent Soul experts who were guarding Bai Xiaochun were completely stunned by everything that was being spread out in front of him.

As for Chen Hai, he was actually waiting outside, but had he been inside to witness what was happening, he would have been completely stunned.

“Will this do, Majordomo Bai?” the clan chief asked.

Bai Xiaochun licked his lips. By now, his heart was pounding so

hard it was like thunder in his ears. However, he didn't answer the question immediately, nor did he collect the items up. Instead, he just patted his bag of holding expectantly.

The Cai Clan cultivators who had just been sighing with relief were suddenly even more nervous than before.

A very, very long moment passed. Bai Xiaochun was started to get anxious. One of the reasons he had been so confident going into this situation was that he had sent a message earlier into his bag of holding, to the little turtle, saying that he was hunting for treasure. The little turtle had been immediately intrigued by the prospect.

However, as of yet, he had received no word from the little turtle. Seeing that everyone was looking at him, he finally cleared his throat and said, "Clan Chief Cai, back in Giant Ghost City, you chased me for a full day trying to kill me.... It got me so terrified that I couldn't focus on my cultivation."

Bai Xiaochun sighed.

The clan chief's eyelid twitched, and he looked over at the grand elder sitting next to him. The grand elder's expression turned even grimmer than before as he gritted his teeth and looked around at the other clan members.

"Give him all of the soul medicine you have. Everyone." The other clan members quickly pulled out the soul medicine they had, as well as other random objects and began to hand them over. As long as they could get Bai Xiaochun to leave, they would do anything.

It didn't take long before a large heap of soul medicine was right in front of Bai Xiaochun. Of course, the purpose of the grand elder doing this was to show to Bai Xiaochun that they really had run out of things to give him.

Bai Xiaochun was starting to feel a bit embarrassed, but the fact

that the little turtle hadn't sent him a message yet indicated that something strange was going on. Perhaps the Cai Clan... was hiding some truly powerful magical treasure. Therefore, he cleared his throat again.

“How very polite of all of you,” he said. Sighing, he shook his head and said, “Now that I think about it, I'm a bit embarrassed about the matter of burning up your soulgrounds.... I really do feel guilty about that.”

Blue veins were bulging out on the neck and face of the clan chief as he realized how vicious this Bai Hao was.... And yet, there was nothing he could do about the matter.

“Oh, they were some trifling soulgrounds, nothing more,” he said. “Don't feel guilty, Majordomo Bai. From now on, our soulgrounds all belong to you. If you want to burn them to the ground, feel free to do so.”

The fact that the Cai Clan was actually offering their soulgrounds to him left Bai Xiaochun at a bit of a loss about what to do next. He was finally thinking that he might need to call it a day, when... the little turtle's voice suddenly rang out in his mind.

“Hey, little punk, Lord Turtle found a big treasure! Heavens! I can't believe the Cai Clan has a powerful magical item like this. Even in the Heavenspan River area, something like this would be considered rare. In the Wildlands, it's even more valuable....” The little turtle went on to provide some further descriptions, whereupon Bai Xiaochun's eyes began to shine. But then, a moment later, his expression turned grim as he looked over at the grand elder and the clan chief.

When the rest of the clan members saw that, their hearts began to pound.

“Clan Chief Cai, I heard that your Cai Clan... has a spiritjade statue.... I would very much like to take a look at it.” An icy gleam ran through his eyes.

Although his words didn't mean much to the ordinary clan members, when the clan chief and the grand elder heard them, their faces fell, and they began to tremble with disbelief.

The spiritjade statue was the Cai Clan's greatest secret, something that, other than the patriarch, only the clan chief and the grand elder knew about. It was a strictly kept secret that they were sure not even a demigod would be able to uncover, let alone Bai Xiaochun.

And yet, somehow, he had discovered their secret. The only explanation they could think of... was that the Giant Ghost King actually did know about it. And the only way he could know about it was if he learned about it from their patriarch!!

Madness rose in their hearts as they exchanged a glance. The spiritjade statue was of incredible importance to them, and was the true reserve savings of the clan. It was their signature treasure, and was what had helped the Cai Clan cultivators advance in their cultivation more rapidly than the average person!

As of this moment, it didn't matter how defiant they were, they had no choice but to bring it out.... The clan chief felt so completely powerless that he couldn't move. As for the grand elder, he sighed, took a step forward, and vanished. When he reappeared, he waved his sleeve, causing a three-meter-tall statue of a woman to appear in front of Bai Xiaochun.

The spiritjade statue caused blinding, colorful light to fill the area, as well as incredibly strong spiritual energy. In a barren place like the Wildlands, spiritual energy like that was an assault on the senses!

Everyone was completely shocked, and immediately began to look at the statue with envious expressions.

Chapter 678: Smuggling Is Useless

All spiritual energy in heaven and earth came from the Heavenspan River basin. Considering how far away they currently were in the Wildlands, there was no spiritual energy at all in the area.

It was this simple fact that forced Wildlanders to change their fundamental nature and resort to soul medicine to practice their cultivation. It was only because of the endless supply of vengeful souls around them that they could do without spiritual power. But nothing was absolute!

There were some things in the world that, at least in small measure, could produce spiritual energy similar to that found in the Heavenspan River basin. This spiritjade statue was just such an item.

Everything within 3,000 meters of it existed in an area of spiritual energy that rivaled that within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Even Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but be excited by the statue as he stood there in front of it. His cultivation base was like parched land that suddenly felt sweet rainfall. It was a wonderful feeling that caused his mind to tremble, and his eyes to shine brightly.

“A legitimate treasure!!” Bai Xiaochun could immediately tell that this spiritjade statue... was the true reserve power of the Cai Clan. The deathly grim countenances of the clan chief and the grand elder immediately got him feeling very excited.

“I hit it big this time....” he thought. Waving his sleeve, he collected the spiritjade statue into his bag of holding. As soon as it was inside, the spiritual energy in the area vanished. All sorts of expressions appeared on the faces of the Cai Clan cultivators.

None of them could remain calm. Although they had never been aware that a precious treasure such as the spiritjade statue had

existed in their clan, they could immediately see how important it was. Except, that statute didn't belong to the Cai Clan any longer....

And yet, when it came to the survival of their clan as a whole, there was really no question that it was best to part with it....

With that, he turned to gaze at the pile of other items which had built up earlier. Then he sighed and looked at the clan chief.

“Ai, your Cai Clan really is full of treasures,” Bai Xiaochun said. “I really can't study them all in a short period of time.”

The clan chief was cursing up a storm in his heart. He could see that, not only was this Bai Hao robbing the Cai Clan dry, but he was also waiting for the Cai Clan to give him their blessing!!

Of course, the clan chief didn't dare to point that out. Plastering a smile onto his face that looked worse than the worst grimace, he forced himself to say, “Oh, don't worry, Majordomo Bai. Please take your time studying all of these treasures. Our Cai Clan would be honored if you would be willing to take them home with you for further study. We don't need them at--”

A broad smile immediately appeared on Bai Xiaochun's face. Swishing his sleeve, he loudly said, “Well, since you insist, Clan Chief Cai, I won't refuse your gracious offer. I'll definitely take my time judging the quality of all of these items. Men! Take this stuff away!”

The soul cultivators who had accompanied Bai Xiaochun in as bodyguards exchanged quizzical glances before hurrying forward to collect the items up.

As the clan chief watched all of his clan's reserve savings being taken away, he forced his rage back down into his throat and smiled bitterly.

Laughing heartily, Bai Xiaochun clasped hands to the clan chief. “Very well then, I'll be off now. No need to see me out!”

Beaming, he then turned and swaggered off.

Of course, although he had explicitly stated that he didn't expect them to see him off, the clan chief sighed and begrudgingly hurried forward to accompany him as he left.

As for the Nascent Soul bodyguards, they clustered around him closely as he left through the main gate. Back outside, Chen Hai was waiting for him, looking like the picture of loyalty. As soon as he caught sight of Bai Xiaochun safe and sound, he hurried forward, simultaneously glaring coldly at the Cai Clan cultivators. Obviously, he was ready to destroy the entire clan at a single word from Bai Xiaochun.

Although it all seemed a bit melodramatic, Bai Xiaochun was very pleased by the performance. At this point, he turned and clasped the clan chief warmly on the shoulder. Smiling, he said, "Clan Chief Cai, you've been far too kind. There's really no need to see me off. If I have time in the future, I'll definitely come back to chat with you a bit."

Feeling more proud of himself than ever, he turned and flew up into the air, followed by Chen Hai and the other soul cultivators. Under the anxious watch of the Cai Clan, the entire group then flew off into the distance.

After they left, the clan chief finally took all the anger that had been building up in him and released it in a maddened howl. The other clan members who had come out with him all stood there silently.

The grand elder sighed and seemed to age visibly. "Just forget about it," he said. "They took our reserve savings, but by capitulating, we avoided being completely wiped out."

Of course, the events which had played out could not be kept secret. Word spread almost immediately to the other organizations in Giant Ghost City, leading to widespread shock and fear. Furthermore, many people began to look in the direction of the

other two great clans.

Clearly, things weren't over yet. The Cai Clan had been viciously cut down a notch, and next... would come the Chen and Bai Clans. Perhaps the Chen Clan might get off lightly, but when it came to the Bai Clan....

“I'm afraid the Bai Clan is finished!” That was what most of the in-the-know people in the city were thinking.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun brimmed with righteousness as he led the 20,000 soul cultivators along toward the Chen Clan. Along the way, his transmission jade slip buzzed several times, prompting him to pull it out and return messages.

When Chen Hai saw that, he considered asking what was going on, but then decided that he needed to be circumspect. “Majordomo Bai, news about the Cai Clan is already spreading. Presumably the Chen Clan will be prepared. Do you think we should pick up the pace?”

“Oh, no, it doesn't matter. I've long since planned things out. In fact, why don't we slow down a bit.” Bai Xiaochun didn't offer any other explanation than that. Taking his transmission jade slip out again, he sent another message, then continued slowly on his way to the Chen Clan.

Of course, the Chen Clan really had made advance preparations. In fact, the Chen Clan patriarch had formed an emergency backup plan before the rebellion even began. Those orders had been followed, and the Chen Clan's valuable resources had already been moved out of the clan by various means and dispersed all over the map to random tribes of savage giants. Many members of the clan had gone along with the goods to keep them safe.

Although those tribes weren't openly connected to the Chen Clan, their loyalty had been earned secretly over the course of many years.

After hearing about what had gone on at the Cai Clan, the members of the Chen Clan were all extremely nervous. In the Chen Clan's ancestral palace, the clan chief was meeting with all the clan elders, and the entire group was grim-faced and anxious.

“Things shouldn't get too bad. After finding out that the patriarch is in custody and not dead, we immediately began to disperse the clan and hide all of our reserve savings....”

“Yes. The clan members who left covered their tracks well, making it impossible to track them down after the fact.... By now, they should all have reached the various savage tribes that were their destinations....”

“Although, don't you think we might be shooting ourselves in the foot...? The fact that the Giant Ghost King didn't exterminate us shows that he has plans for us. He might just want to weaken us a bit by taking away our reserve savings.... If he finds out we've sent them away....”

It was through gritted teeth that the clan chief responded, “Hmph! Our patriarch is alive and in custody, which puts us in a completely different position than the Cai Clan. We're not going to just sit around and wait to be executed!”

It was the clan chief who had been the staunchest supporter of the plan of dispersing the clan's reserve savings. Although he had also questioned the wisdom of the tactic, he had felt there was no other option than to go through with the original plan.

It was even as the clan chief and clan elders discussed the matter nervously that a whistling sound pierced through the air. Faces flickering with various emotions, the group rushed out of the hall and looked up into the sky to see something that looked like a black cloud. It was... an army of 20,000 soul cultivators.

With what seemed like practiced ease, they fanned out to surround the clan, leaving a path through which Bai Xiaochun swaggered in through the main gate. Next to him was Chen Hai,

who bristled with open killing intent as he glared at the Chen Clan cultivators.

Even as Bai Xiaochun landed and entered the Chen Clan, something else was happening some distance away in the territory controlled by the Giant Ghost King. At the foot of a mountain which was home to a savage tribe, a small army of a few thousand soul cultivators had gathered, led by Zhou Yixing and Li Feng.

Zhou Yixing held a jade slip in his hand, and had a very cold gleam in his eye as he turned to look at Li Feng, who stood next to him.

“Brother Li, the majordomo has given the go-ahead. This task has fallen to the two of us to accomplish.”

“The Chen Clan thinks they can smuggle their stores to safety!?” Li Feng said. “Not if I have anything to say about it!” His heart was pounding with grand aspirations. After Bai Xiaochun’s meteoric rise to the position of majordomo, the lives of both Li Feng and Zhou Yixing had changed dramatically. After conferring with each other and realizing how different things were for them, they came to the conclusion that there was no need for infighting. That was especially true considering how big and complicated a place like Giant Ghost City was. Clearly, joining forces was the best way for the both of them to advance by leaps and bounds. As of this moment, Li Feng laughed heartily as he and Zhou Yixing led thousands of their own men toward the savage tribe on their mountain.

Under the command of Zhou Yixing and Li Feng, the soul cultivators began to fight their way into the tribe.

Immediately, the Chen Clan cultivators who had gone into hiding here began to fight back with desperate looks on their faces. After the fighting went on for a bit, a voice suddenly rang out from a tent in the middle of the tribe.

“The Chen Clan treasure is right here!”

Delighted, Zhou Yixing was the first to rush over into the tent. Li Feng, not thinking much about the matter, also hurried over. However, as soon as Li Feng entered the tent, it was to his shock that three people attacked him. And one of them was none other than Zhou Yixing!

Li Feng face fell as he blurted, “Zhou Yixing, you--”

But before he could even do anything, he was hit by a devastating killing blow. His voice was drowned out by Zhou Yixing’s battlecry, and within moments, his chest caved in and his heart shattered!

As he lay there dying, his mouth moved as though he wished to talk, and yet, no words came out.

Zhou Yixing squatted down next to him, then leaned over and whispered something into his ear that only the two of them could hear. “I had to kill you. For my future.”

Then he slammed his hand down onto the top of Li Feng’s head, killing him instantly!

With that, Zhou Yixing looked over at the two soul cultivators who had helped him, and solemnly reinforced his promise of riches and glory to come. They knew they had performed a great service for Zhou Yixing in his efforts to rise in the world, and that from now on, they were his men.

Before long, the Chen Clan cultivators in the savage tribe were defeated, and the reserve treasures rooted out. Similar scenes played out in other savage tribes in the region of Giant Ghost City, and before long, all of the treasures that the Chen Clan had smuggled out of their clan were found.

There was so much treasure that anyone who looked at it was struck mute. However, no one would ever dare to covet that which belonged to Majordomo Bai. In fact, when Zhou Yixing saw it, he didn’t even bat an eyelid. He simply directed all of his forces to

start heading in the direction of the Chen Clan.

On the way, they happened to pass by the Jungle of Lost Souls, whereupon Zhou Yixing's eyes flashed with cold light, and he came up with a reason to slaughter one of the savage tribes in the area. Coincidentally, the two soul cultivators who had helped him kill Li Feng died in the fighting.

“Finally, there are no holes left! Fudge. I'm not doing this for him, I'm doing it for me!” Zhou Yixing had done everything he could to erase the evidence connecting himself to the labyrinth and the events which had played out there. Of course, all of his actions up to this point had been according to his own plan, not Bai Xiaochun's. And just as he had said, it was to protect himself.

Although the Giant Ghost King didn't suspect that Bai Hao was Bai Xiaochun, Zhou Yixing was privy to too many clues. He had long since come to suspect the truth, and when the matter of Bai Xiaochun reaching the Nascent Soul stage occurred, he had been completely convinced. Although he could think of some benefits to revealing the truth about him, he had instead chosen to bet everything on sticking with him! As for what would happen in the future, only time would tell!

Chapter 679: This Is Outright Robbery!

The 20,000 soul cultivators surrounding the Chen Clan radiated intense murderous auras that combined into a soul-crushing pressure that enveloped the entire clan.

Everyone was left trembling, and had faces as ashen as death. That was true even of the clan chief and clan elders, all of whom felt sensations of intense, deadly crisis.

As Bai Xiaochun strode toward them, a vicious expression appeared on the clan chief's face, and he shouted, "Don't push things too far, Bai Hao!!"

Bai Xiaochun stopped walking, a cold glint in his eyes. He had anticipated a reaction like this from the Chen Clan. After all, this was the same clan that had dared to forge a forbidden banner, a heinous crime that angered gods and men alike.

They really had only two choices. Either fight to the death in resistance, or... stoop low and capitulate.

From the look of things, the Chen Clan wanted to choose the former option.... Or perhaps it was the choice of the clan chief. After all, he had come very close to killing Bai Xiaochun with his forbidden banner in their last encounter, and was convinced that he could finish the job if fighting broke out now.

"What gall!" Chen Hai said in a voice like thunder, [aware that the time had come for him to intercede](#). He even took a step forward. At the same time, all of the Nascent Soul experts who were guarding Bai Xiaochun looked over at the clan chief with brightly shining eyes.

The clan chief shivered in reaction to Chen Hai's shout and the killing intent of the Nascent Soul experts. As for the clan elders, they were also shocked.

Bai Xiaochun looked coldly at the clan chief for a moment before

coldly saying, “So, is this how you Chen Clan people want to do things?”

His casually spoken words, coupled with the killing intent of 20,000 soul cultivators, crushed down onto the Chen Clan like boulders. As for the clan chief, he was left panting, his eyes completely bloodshot. He knew that although this Bai Hao might not be capable of exterminating the entire clan right now, if fighting broke out, he himself would surely die!

The clan chief couldn't forget the lengths Bai Hao had gone to try to kill him back in the chase in the city. If the patriarch hadn't interfered to save him, the clan chief wouldn't have just lost an arm; he would have perished! Furthermore, the Myriad Children Blood Banner was something detestable to gods and men alike, condemned by all creation.

“We already sent all of our reserve savings out of the clan,” the chief said, “along with all important clan members with potential for future growth. I've done everything I can for my clan. With our patriarch incarcerated, it doesn't really matter whether we here survive or not. As the final clan chief, I am proud to lead the entire clan into a bloodbath! That way, we will go out in a blaze of glory instead--”

Before he could finish speaking, the clan's grand elder stepped forward.

“Greetings, Majordomo Bai!” he said, clasping hands and bowing deeply. Trembling, the other members of the clan also bowed in greeting.

When the clan chief saw what was happening, his face turned ashen, but he didn't dare to continue to curse at Bai Xiaochun, and instead bowed his head.

As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes glittered, and the smile stayed on his face as he looked down imperiously at the Chen Clan.

“Since I’ve come here in my role as majordomo, I assume you know what that means for you?”

“Of course we do, Majordomo Bai. The Chen Clan has plenty of treasures available for your study.” The grand elder had noticed early on that the clan chief was acting strangely, but had never imagined that he would intentionally infuriate Majordomo Bai. The consequences of such an action were too terrifying to contemplate.

“Trying to drag us down with you into death...?” the grand elder thought, casting an icy glance at the clan chief. Then, he quickly passed down orders to have large amounts of treasures brought over.

Soul medicine, vengeful souls, multi-colored flame, spirit enhanced treasures, flame formulas, and all sorts of other items soon began to pile up. There were even some unique treasures that cast dazzling light up into the sky, illuminating the clouds above.

Although there appeared to be quite a collection of treasure, it was really only a small portion of the Cai Clan’s wealth. Bai Xiaochun’s face immediately darkened.

“That’s it?”

The grand elder smiled wryly, but unfortunately was out of options. The reserve savings had been taken away, a fact that he was not quite willing to explain clearly. Even as he stood there hesitating, the clan chief laughed coldly.

“After this calamity, our Chen Clan will be left completely destitute. If you don't believe us, go search for yourself. If you find anything you like, just take it!”

Chen Hai could sense the open scorn in the clan chief’s words. Looking over at Bai Xiaochun first, he snorted and waved his hand. Immediately, soul cultivators poured into the Chen Clan’s city to search it.

Bai Xiaochun simply remained in place, hands clasped behind his back as he waited for Chen Hai to finish with the search. Before long, the soul cultivators were done with their work, and were recalled by Chen Hai. At that point, Chen Hai approached Bai Xiaochun, face grim. Lowering his voice, he said, "Majordomo Bai, the Chen Clan prepared well in advance... there's nothing here."

Bai Xiaochun nodded, but didn't say anything. He simply remained in place, hands clasped behind his back, waiting. Time ticked by, and the silence in the Chen Clan became a weight that grew heavier with each passing moment. The Chen Clan cultivators' terror grew, and to them, the pressure they felt from Bai Xiaochun felt like the weight of the heavens, something that could crush them out of existence in the briefest of moments.

Even the clan elders' auras were fluctuating uncontrollably from anxiety. Only the clan chief stood there, sneering madly, seemingly ready to throw caution to the wind at any moment and start fighting.

At a certain point, a smile suddenly broke out onto Bai Xiaochun's face, and he turned to look off into the distance. At that point, Chen Hai and the grand elder also seemed to sense something. Moments later, something like a black cloud could be seen on the horizon.

More and more people noticed, and before long, all eyes were turned in the direction of the black cloud. As it approached rapidly, it soon became obvious that it was a group of more than 10,000 soul cultivators.

Leading them was a young man with a proud expression and a murderous aura. He was none other than... Zhou Yixing.

It only took a few breaths' worth of time for him to reach the Chen Clan, whereupon the soul cultivators he led spread out to join the forces which had surrounded the clan. As for Zhou Yixing, he hurried forward, looking neither left nor right as he approached

Bai Xiaochun.

Chen Hai's expression flickered with unease, but after looking over at Bai Xiaochun, did nothing to block Zhou Yixing's path. Soon, Zhou Yixing was in front of Bai Xiaochun, hands clasped and bowing deeply.

“Mission accomplished, milord. All of the reserve savings that the Chen Clan moved out of the clan have been recovered. Please take a look, sir!” With that, he waved his sleeve, causing a massive amount of treasure to spill out of his bag of holding.

Soulhoarding pagodas, multi-colored flame, spirit enhanced treasures, and even ten jade bottles that each contained copious amounts of Heavenspan River water.... Even more astonishing were two crystal boxes that clearly contained valuable treasures!

There were other items which Bai Xiaochun didn't recognize. Altogether, this collection was exponentially more valuable than what the grand elder had produced before. In fact, it was no less valuable than what he had acquired from the Cai Clan, assuming the spiritjade statue was left out of the picture.

As the treasures appeared out into the open, a look of complete madness overtook the clan chief's face. The clan elders began to pant in astonishment, and the other ordinary clan members stared in abject shock. Not everyone had been privy to the information about smuggling the reserve savings outside of the clan, but as of this moment, everyone could see!

Despite having just seen a similar scene play out in the Cai Clan, Bai Xiaochun was still moved by what he saw. And yet, his facial expression was as calm and collected as ever. Swishing his sleeve, he coolly said, “Take them away. Since the Chen Clan didn't bother keeping these things around, I guess I'll take them. Many thanks, Clan Chief.”

As he laughed heartily, Chen Hai gasped in shock. As for Zhou Yixing, he voiced his assent, and then quickly began to arrange to

take away everything which had been piled up.

The clan chief's face was as ashen as death, and his mind was spinning beyond control. As for the clan elders, despite the fury which raged in their hearts, the sensations of deadly crisis they felt ensured that they didn't dare to even look up. However, there were some younger, hot-headed clan members who, used to their clan being strong and uncompromising, could not hold back from shouting out in anger.

“I can't believe you people!”

“This is outright robbery, Bai Hao!!”

The clan elders' faces fell, and they immediately turned to stop the younger clan members' outburst. However, they were too late. Seeing a chance to intervene, Chen Hai waved his finger through the air, his eyes burning with killing intent.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the two younger clan members who had just shouted out suddenly found bloody holes in their foreheads. The rage could still be seen in their eyes as their bodies then flopped down to the ground, dead.

With a cold snort, Chen Hai glared out at the rest of the Chen Clan. “What outrageous gall! None of you have the right to casually speak the name of Majordomo Bai out loud!”

This chapter is a perfect example of how shared surnames don't necessarily indicate any relationship. Chen Hai has the same surname as the clan, but clearly is not a member of the clan.

Chapter 680: Humiliation

Chen Hai's fierce glare caused the hearts of the Chen Clan cultivators to tremble. As for the grand elder, he could see that the clan chief was just about to speak, so he puffed his chest out and glared at the man.

“Clan Chief!!” he yelled angrily. The clan chief's face fell, and he closed his mouth.

“Majordomo Bai,” the grand elder continued, “for their impertinence, those two Chen Clan Juniors definitely deserved to die!

“However, since Majordomo Bai has already confiscated our thousand years of reserve savings... then it means our Chen Clan really has nothing left to give. Majordomo Bai... please leave us with enough to survive.” With that, he clasped hands and bowed, looking very solemn and even tragic.

Bai Xiaochun didn't respond at first. The truth was the that the Chen Clan really had just about nothing left. Although they had tried to kill him in the past, they had obviously learned their lesson by now. However, it was at that point that his gaze came to rest on the face of the clan chief, whose eyes flickered with a burst of venom.

Although the clan chief was trying hard to keep that venom hidden, he couldn't conceal it from Bai Xiaochun's penetrating gaze. Immediately, Bai Xiaochun's previous caution hardened a bit, and he made his decision about what to do next. Outwardly, he put on an expression of hesitation, and even embarrassment. Then, he looked over at the female members of the Chen Clan.

Every single one of the female cultivators was beautiful, and as Bai Xiaochun's gaze swept over them, it didn't go unnoticed by the rest of the people present. The grand elder's jaw dropped; never could he have imagined that this Bai Hao would have such

proclivities....

“Well, he is young after all....” the grand elder thought. Immediately, he gave orders for the ashen-faced women to all step forward and line up in front of Bai Xiaochun.

There were even some female clan members who weren't in that larger group who were sent forward to stand in front of Bai Xiaochun. In the end, there were several hundred of them, all of them beautiful in different ways.

“Majordomo Bai, you are young and have unlimited potential, a true dragon amongst men. It would really be best for you to have some handmaidens to keep you company. These are all beloved daughters of the clan, any of whom would be blessed to be looked kindly upon by you....” As far as the grand elder was concerned, if this Bai Hao took one of the daughters of the clan with him, it would actually be a good thing. In fact, the man's heart even began to pound in anticipation.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. Inwardly, he was cursing the Giant Ghost King for being such a pervert, and yet, there was nothing he could do but brace himself and do what needed to be done.

Sighing sadly, but having no choice other than to follow orders, he said, “I'm not really interested in these clan daughters of yours. However, I heard that the clan chief is quite lucky with the women. Please bring his wife out for me to take a look at....”

As soon as the words left his mouth, the Chen Clan cultivators' jaws dropped, and many cries of shock could be heard. The grand elder simply stared at Bai Xiaochun, completely stunned.

The clan chief could no longer restrain himself.

“This is outrageous, Bai Hao!!” he bellowed.

Bai Xiaochun felt a bit guilty, and muttered a few more inward curses directed at the Giant Ghost King. However, he couldn't back

down now. Off to the side, Chen Hai looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a strange look that contained a bit of admiration.

Then he stepped forward, slapped the clan chief's face and shouted, "What gall!"

Blood sprayed out of the clan chief's mouth as he staggered backward. At the same time, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun with burning anger. However, the truth was that inside, he wasn't actually that angry. He had already come to the conclusion that if this Bai Hao wanted to take his wife away, then afterward, he would finally be off the hook.

After all, stealing another man's wife would earn him quite a bit of criticism. If he then went on to kill the husband, that would earn him the full ire of the public, so that seemed like a very unlikely possibility.

Naturally, the ideal thing for the clan chief to do at this point was to get out of the situation alive. In fact, he was already trying to think of a way to not just do that, but also improve his reputation within the clan.

"Alright, if he's going to take my wife, then I have to make it seem like an unacceptable insult that I will only endure for the sake of the clan. That will resolve my issues with the grand elder and get everyone else in the clan to trust me!!" Having reached this point in his train of thought, the clan chief bit down on his tongue and then coughed up a massive mouthful of blood. Looking up grimly at Bai Xiaochun, he radiated the air of a desperate, injured wild animal, ready to throw away everything to harm his opponent.

Those who saw the look of madness in his eyes were instantly shaken, and as for the Chen Clan cultivators, flames of anger began to burn in their hearts.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit frightened himself, and almost felt like crying. This whole situation was definitely a big humiliation, but

he had to take the unjust blame in the place of the Giant Ghost King.... However... it really was an outrageous situation, and after a moment, he decided that the best thing... would be to go back and have the Giant Ghost King do the deed himself....

At this point, just when he was about to take it all back, the clan chief could see that he was hesitating, and instantly got nervous. Abandoning his act, he shouted, "Fine. Fine! I'll do it for the clan! Men... bring out my wife!!"

The clan chief was trembling with so much anger that he seemed to age visibly. The other members of the clan were so furious that they had forgotten their terror and were glaring with open anger at Bai Xiaochun. When the clan chief saw that, he chuckled inwardly, and then intentionally swayed back and forth, as if he were about to fall over. He also bowed his head in bitter fashion. Of course, there was a glimmer of satisfaction deep in his eyes.

Bai Xiaochun stood there with his mouth open, having been unable to speak a single word. He could only sigh at the injustice of it all.... Then he thought about how he would surely become the subject of public ridicule, and that people might even curse him as a wife-stealer. He would probably drown in the drops of spittle that would inundate him from all the cursing he would endure. He wanted to cry, and yet, knew that he could not give voice to his lamentation. The only parties who would be privy to the truth other than himself would be heaven, earth, and the Giant Ghost King. Bai Xiaochun sighed in distress and simply watched as one of the members of the Chen Clan escorted a woman out.

She appeared to be a bit over thirty, beautiful, with snow-white skin and the elegant charm of a mature woman. However, she seemed terrified, although she was trying to keep herself under control. As soon as she appeared in the open, even Chen Hai couldn't hold back from looking her up and down a few times. All of a sudden, he seemed to understand why Majordomo Bai wanted this woman.

Bai Xiaochun was cursing angrily inside. Although she was definitely beautiful, he didn't really care about that, and in fact, was so embarrassed he simply cleared his throat.

"Ahem... sorry about this...." he said to her. With that, he turned and walked away, filled with embarrassment and unable to keep from wailing inwardly at how his name was going to be in ruins from now on.

As for Chen Hai, a strange smile could be seen on his face. Zhou Yixing gulped in a breath, but quickly pulled himself together. Then the two of them exchanged a glance and stepped forward to politely escort Mrs. Chen forward.

Mrs. Chen had already been informed about the situation. Face pale, she looked around at the clan, and then over at her husband, who had a pained look on his face. In her eyes flickered a venomous hatred; she knew her husband well, and although no one else would be able to tell, there was no way she would miss out on the clues that indicated he was putting on an act. Smiling faintly, she didn't hesitate at all to follow Chen Hai and Zhou Yixing out of the clan.

Her seemingly heartless reaction aroused the ire of many in the clan, and many of them swore to never forget the insult.

Before long, the thousands upon thousands of soul cultivators were gone from the Chen Clan. As for the clan chief, he watched everything playing out, and felt very pleased with himself. After all, losing a mere wife to save his life was definitely a price he was willing to pay.

Bai Xiaochun had a taut expression on his face, and felt profoundly annoyed. It was at this point that Chen Hai hurried over with Mrs. Chen in tow.

"Majordomo Bai, she... she requested an audience, sir." After delivering Mrs. Chen over, Chen Hai quickly hurried away, heart filled with admiration at Bai Xiaochun's daring act, and at the

same time, feeling sorry for the woman.

Bai Xiaochun turned in surprise to face the exquisitely beautiful Mrs. Chen, and was just about to ask what she wanted when she took the initiative to speak.

“Many thanks, exalted one, for extracting me from a life of complete bitterness. Your humble servant would like to make a request. I sincerely hope that you can fulfil my wish, exalted one!”

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback, but after seeing how sincere Mrs. Chen seemed, and feeling a bit guilty about the whole situation, he nodded.

“Sure. Just say the word, and as long as it’s within my power, I’ll do my best.”

“Exalted one, I request that you please... kill Chen Shishan!” The words came out of her mouth one word at a time, and afterward, she seemed as if a great weight had been lifted off of her. Of course, Chen Shishan was none other than the chief of the Chen Clan!

“What!?” Bai Xiaochun blurted, eyes widening as he looked in shock at Mrs. Chen. Things were already turning out very differently than he would have imagined.

“Chen Shishan is narrow and petty-minded. He is also ruthless and violent, and used living children to forge a magical treasure, arousing the wrath of men and gods alike. In fact, in order to gain more perfect control over his treasure, he sacrificed our own children to become the main souls in the item. I was powerless to stop him, and the grief and rage that incident caused has remained cold in the bottom of my heart ever since....

“Exalted one, for you to take me away this day is like a dream come true. I don’t hate you. In fact, I’m grateful. Considering your lofty position, exalted one, you have unprecedented power. Furthermore, I can tell that you aren’t really very interested in me, nor do you care much about your reputation. You must have your

own secret sorrows and goals. As for me, I can guarantee that if you grant my request, that no matter what happens in the future, no matter what position you occupy or where you go, I will always carry out your orders without hesitation!" Although her words were spoken quietly, the wisdom and decisiveness within them carried incredible power. Moved, Bai Xiaochun looked at her closely.

In Bai Xiaochun's heart, the matter of the Myriad Children Blood Banner was something that made the clan chief unfit to exist in heaven and earth. Then he heard that the man had sacrificed his own children to make it, which was something that not even wild beasts did. That made the clan chief worse than an animal! After a moment of thought, Bai Xiaochun turned and sent a message to Chen Hai.

Chen Hai was stunned at the message, and looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun. Then he turned and left. When he returned... he had the clan chief's head in his hands!

The chief's eyes were filled with disbelief and defiance... even in death, he had no idea why Bai Hao had dared to kill him!

When Mrs. Chen saw the clan chief's head, her heart filled with profound emotions. Struggling to control her breath, she bowed at the waist to Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 681: Kill Them!

As the majordomo of Giant Ghost City, his actions were subject to intense scrutiny. Obviously, his action of taking tens of thousands of soul cultivators out of the city to visit the three great clans with violent intentions had not gone unnoticed.

Because of that, news of what had happened in the Cai Clan was already the talk of the town shortly after it occurred. Obviously, it wasn't even necessary to mention how quickly rumors spread about the Chen Clan....

Almost everyone in the city heard the news, and soon, everyone was talking about the fate of the clan chief.

Faces flickered in shock and disbelief, and soon, the gossip in the city was raging.

“What? He forcibly took Mrs. Chen!?!?”

“Whooaah! This Bai Hao.... Who knew that he had such proclivities!? He actually took a liking to Chen Shishan's wife. You know, I heard that she's actually a top-rate beauty that has the perfect body for that type of cultivation....”

“You're right... I don't even know what to say.... This Bai Hao is far too brazen. Not only did he steal Chen Shishan's wife, he actually went so far as to kill the man!!”

Gossip raged like wildfire. As for some of the more well-informed individuals, they often responded to the shocking news with scornful words and jeering smiles.

As word spread, Bai Hao, in addition to being called vicious and merciless, and a reviler of his own family, was now known as someone who took an interest in the wives of others....

As would be expected, the Giant Ghost King eventually heard of the matter, and it caused his expression to turn grim. However, the fires of passion burned in his heart, and he turned his gaze in the

direction of the Chen Clan, an expression of praise in his heart.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun provided Mrs. Chen with an escort of cultivators and sent her back to his residence in Giant Ghost City, while he took the remaining tens of thousands of men toward... the Bai Clan!

As they went along, Chen Hai would often cast admiring glances in Bai Xiaochun's direction. When he thought about the unexpected proclivities that had been revealed, he suddenly felt like a new world had been opened up to him. He almost couldn't believe it was possible to be so flagrant and brave. And considering that Majordomo Bai was a powerful person, Chen Hai decided that the best thing to do was spend even more time with him than before.

Zhou Yixing prevented any strange expression from appearing on his face, and didn't dare to speak a word about the matter. However, considering that he was a follower of Bai Xiaochun, he decided that in the future, he would take careful note of any other beautiful wives he saw....

How could Bai Xiaochun not know what the two of them were thinking? Although he felt more wronged than ever, there was nothing he could do to explain the situation. Sighing with frustration, he kept his gaze fixed on the Bai Clan up ahead, his eyes glittering with cold light.

Many things had happened since he first arrived in this part of the world. Some of those things he had put behind him, but there was one thing that he could never forget: the sight of an ashen-faced young man underneath a towering tree.

"Bai Hao...." he murmured. Whether it was the deva soul or his overall grudge with the clan, all of it was wrapped up in karma. And the entire time, Bai Xiaochun had hoped to get justice for his apprentice.

Now... that time had come!

Tens of thousands of beams of light shot through the air toward the Bai Clan, radiating a bleak, deadly aura.

As for the Bai Clan, everyone was on edge, and many people were rushing around frantically. However, things were a bit different than in the Chen or Cai Clans. In the Bai Clan, the direct bloodline cultivators all knew that they had a life-or-death grudge with Bai Hao!

However, not everyone in the clan was part of the direct bloodline. Those members of the auxiliary bloodlines were nervous, but because they had not really participated in the hunt for Bai Hao, weren't as worried.

Furthermore, during the rebellion, although the auxiliary bloodlines had participated in storming the city, they hadn't been the ones to try to kill Bai Xiaochun.

The direct bloodline had taken the lead in that, and especially the clan chief. Even the clan elders who had attacked Bai Hao had mostly been from the direct bloodline. Because of that, the divide between the direct bloodline and the auxiliary bloodlines was vast and clear!

In fact, the direct bloodline cultivators were currently surrounded and isolated by the auxiliary bloodlines, who stared at them with icy glares.

The clan chief, Madam Cai, the grand elder from the Hall of Corrections, the direct bloodline elders, and nearly a thousand other clan members all waited with ashen faces and expressions of despair.

It wasn't that they didn't wish to flee. It was that, despite how big heaven and earth was, it wasn't big enough to have a place for them to hide. Besides, their enmity with Bai Hao was well-known. After the Giant Ghost King returned, and Bai Hao rose to prominence, everyone in the area had been trying to get on Bai Hao's good side. Furthermore, many gazes had been cast in the

direction of the Bai Clan.

After becoming the majordomo, Bai Xiaochun had hinted to many of the powerful organizations in the area that they should pay special attention to the Bai Clan. He had essentially sealed off the entire clan, making it impossible for anyone to leave it without making a wild and open attempt at escape.

Of course, none of the other groups in the area would have permitted that. Especially considering... that the Giant Ghost King hadn't yet made clear his intentions for the future of the three great clans. If the clan as a whole tried to simply flee, they would definitely have been exterminated.

From the outside, the clan seemed unified, but the truth was that they were in fact dramatically divided. And thus, things had dragged on until the current moment. Most importantly of all... the auxiliary bloodline elders and clan members all knew that they would have to give an explanation to Bai Hao about the situation. If the direct bloodline fled, then it was entirely possible that Bai Hao would vent his anger on them.

Therefore, for their own safety... they had to make sure that the direct bloodline was around when Bai Hao came.

The entire clan was silent. Because of the taciturn attitude of the auxiliary bloodlines, the direct bloodline clan members were trembling, along with many of the servants associated with them. One of them was a young woman who had sneered at Bai Hao the moment he had entered the clan. Another was the old valet who had rebuked him. Everyone who had scorned and humiliated Bai Hao was there.

As time ticked by, their despair and hopelessness grew. That was especially true of the clan chief, whose face was ashen and whose heart was filled with bitterness. During the fight near the moat in the city, the detonation of the demigod soul had destroyed half of his body, and had nearly shattered his cultivation base. Thanks to

some of a secret treasure in the Bai Clan's reserve savings, he had recovered. But now, he was simply forced to wait as time passed. Next to him was Madam Cai, her face devoid of blood as she occasionally looked up into the air, her terror interspersed with specks of venomous hatred.

Of everyone present, no one hated Bai Hao more than Madam Cai. At the same time, no one felt more terror and despair than her. Never could she have anticipated that even with all the resources of the Bai Clan that she had put into her efforts, she would fail in the end. And Bai Hao... would actually turn everything around and rise to the heavens.

As the Bai Clan waited in silence, there was one beautiful young woman in the crowd who had a very complicated expression on her face as she occasionally scanned the skies. She was the fifth young lady. Even she could never have imagined that Bai Hao would one day achieve the things that he had.

Also in the crowd was an old man who was apparently viewed as a leader by the clan elders from the auxiliary bloodlines. He was the grand elder from the Hall of Justice. He wore a wistful expression as he thought back to the scene of Bai Hao betraying the clan. Eventually, he simply closed his eyes.

“What a pity... The true qilin son of the Bai Clan....” Despite being a powerful grand elder, he couldn't go against the orders of the patriarch. The best he had been able to do was not attack Bai Hao during the fighting.

Suddenly, both of the grand elders' expressions flickered. Other clan elders reacted similarly, as did the clan chief. People held their breath as a sound like thunder filled the air, and a black cloud covered the sky, radiating killing intent!

“He's here....” It was impossible to say who said it. The entire Bai Clan waited nervously, looking up into the black cloud of tens of thousands of soul cultivators. Descending from within that cloud

was... Bai Xiaochun!!

Every step he took was like a bolt of lightning that slammed into the hearts of the direct bloodline clan members, and left their faces as ashen as death.

The clan chief was trembling, and the venomous rage in Madam Cai's eyes was overshadowed only by the terror she felt....

“I don't like killing people,” he said, his growling voice echoing out in all heaven and earth, “but sometimes, I have to do it anyway.... It doesn't matter if I'm doing it for myself or for others... or whether it's right or wrong.... Kill them!”

Chapter 682: Changes

Bai Xiaochun pointed in the direction of the Bai Clan, not at the auxiliary bloodline members, but at the encircled direct bloodline!

His action of pointing his finger was like a crash of thunder. He didn't make a speech. He didn't grandstand. He simply pointed.

Chen Hai was at his side like he had been the entire time, and as soon as Bai Xiaochun pointed out, the man's killing intent soared.

“Carry out the orders of the exalted majordomo!” Chen Hai's voice seemed to contain a rain of carnage as he spoke these words. At the same time, he blurred into motion toward the Bai Clan!

Behind him, tens of thousands of cultivators followed, killing intent raging.

Among them were dozens of Nascent Soul experts, as well as numerous necromancers. It was an entire army of deadly cultivators descending on the Bai Clan!!

Fierce fighting broke out instantly, and although everyone in the clan had been prepared for it, it was still unexpected. Blood began to rain down almost immediately.

“Bai Hao!! You unfilial bastard!!” the clan chief howled, his eyes bloodshot. The clan chief had never expected that things would play out so simply, that no mercy or compassion would be shown at all. After all, this man was Bai Hao's father!

He had originally hoped to try to talk matters out, to admit that he was in the wrong. He had hoped to acknowledge that Bai Hao was a member of the clan, and that for the sake of the clan, they should let bygones be bygones.... Of course, from the very beginning, he had also planned to figure out a way to seek revenge later on. But now... all of his plans were pointless.

Bai Xiaochun did not waste time. He hoisted the blade, and then chopped it down!

Rumbling sounds could be heard as Chen Hai and his men attacked. Screams began to rise up, as well as pleas for mercy. Although they reached Bai Xiaochun's ears, he simply looked up into the sky, an unreadable expression on his face. Were Li Qinghou here to see him, or his Elder Brother sect leader, they would be shocked. This was a Bai Xiaochun who was very different from the Bai Xiaochun of the past.

Although his fundamental personality had not changed, his methods and tactics had most certainly transformed.

The auxiliary bloodline members looked on silently. They didn't interfere, nor did they help the direct bloodline. They simply watched. The fifth young lady, the grand elder from the Hall of Justice, and everyone else did the same thing.

Screams rang out from the direct bloodline clan members. The young servant girl who had scorned Bai Xiaochun was stabbed through the chest with a blade, and died with a look of despair on her face.... The old valet also met his end in horror, his eyes blank.

All of the people who had scorned Bai Hao were put to death by Chen Hai and his men. They couldn't even fight back. The direct bloodline elders who had chased after Bai Hao outside the clan or attacked him in Giant Ghost City were overwhelmed by despair. A few of them managed to fight back, but then, stained with blood, howled and tried to flee in various directions.

“Loose arrows!” Chen Hai growled with a cold smile. Countless soul cultivators suddenly drew greatbows out, and within moments, a cloud of arrows pierced through the air. Then, the fleeing clan elders screamed as they were destroyed in body and soul!

Bai Xiaochun didn't watch. Instead, he looked up into the sky, motionless and expressionless.

The grand elder from the Hall of Corrections died with a bitter smile on his face, cut down by Chen Hai and two other Nascent

Soul experts. Soon, the only person left standing was the clan chief.

He looked around at the mountains of corpses, despair filling his face. Then he threw his head back and howled. Throwing all caution to the wind, he transformed into a beam of light that shot directly toward Bai Xiaochun.

“If I die, I’m taking you with me, you unfilial bastard!!” As he shot through the air, numerous Nascent Soul experts moved to intercept him, and soon, fighting broke out in midair.

The clan chief fought with utter ferocity, until he was only about 300 meters away from Bai Xiaochun. Soaked in blood, eyes filled with madness, he tried to push forward further, but was then set upon by more Nascent Soul experts.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The fighting was fierce, and the clan chief was soon coughing up blood as he glared at Bai Hao, who was standing only 150 meters away. He was trembling, and his life force was almost out. His chest was caved in, and his nascent soul almost destroyed. His eyes were even beginning to fade. He was like a lamp running out of oil, unable to continue fighting, barely able to breathe.... And yet, in his madness, he continued to stagger toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun slowly looked down from the sky toward the clan chief.

“Let him come over,” he said. The surrounding soul cultivators immediately stayed their hands and stepped back, allowing the clan chief to approach.

Oh so slowly, Bai Xiaochun buried the image of the dying Bai Hao into the depths of his heart. Then he focused on the trembling, maddened clan chief.

“Do you feel any regret at all?” Bai Xiaochun asked softly. “Bai Hao... is also your flesh and blood. Your son.”

“Yes. I regret letting your mother die so quickly. I should have made her die screaming in pain! And I also regret the day you were born! I should have crushed you to death that instant!!” The clan chief truly had descended into madness, and even began to cackle maniacally. However, as he laughed, the light in his eyes slowly began to fade, until he simply toppled over onto the ground....

The chief of the Bai Clan was dead!

The members of the auxiliary bloodline stood there quietly, their heads bowed, their hearts filled with complex emotions and deep melancholy.

The public square in the middle of the clan was filled with corpses at the moment. But there was still one person left alive. She was spattered with blood and shaking physically, and yet filled with the vilest of hatred. Deranged laughter rose up as she struggled to her feet.

“Your mother was a slut, you son of a bitch. Get over here. Don’t you hate me? Why don’t you kill me yourself!?!? The only thing I regret is that the people I sent to kill you failed in their task!!”

She actually should have died earlier, but the Nascent Soul cultivators who took the lead in the slaughter knew that Bai Hao’s enmity with Madam Cai was particularly deep. Therefore, they held back, injuring her and leaving her alive for him to deal with.

Bai Xiaochun ignored the hysterical Madam Cai, and instead turned to look at Chen Hai.

“This Madam Cai didn’t just send one assassin. She sent many. Get me their names.” With that, he took a step forward and vanished into the air. When he reappeared, he was in an abandoned courtyard residence somewhere in the Bai Clan.

The courtyard was choked with weeds, in the midst of which could be seen numerous children’s toys, all of them old and rotting. Also in the courtyard was a well....

Bai Xiaochun stood there for a long moment before sighing.

“As Bai Hao’s Master, I am acting on his behalf to execute vengeance on you, Madam Cai.” He waved his hand, and the weeds in the courtyard vanished. The toys turned into dust....

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust....

Having accomplished these things, he left. On his way out of the clan, he looked over at the fifth young lady. Sensing his gaze, she looked up at him, and their eyes met.

“Fifth Elder Sister, why don’t you act as the clan chieftess from now on.... Grand Elder, please offer her your support....”

With a light sigh, the grand elder from the Hall of Justice looked at Bai Xiaochun and nodded. Then he turned and clasped hands respectfully toward the fifth young lady. As for the other surrounding members of the auxiliary bloodline, they slowly began to awaken from the nightmare of blood, whereupon they too clasped hands to the fifth young lady.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun took the Bai Clan’s thousand years of reserve savings with him when he returned to Giant Ghost City. Along the way, Chen Hai turned to him and said, “We got the names you asked for. As for Madam Cai... she’s dead.”

“Heavenly Marquis Chen,” Bai Xiaochun said softly, “might I trouble you to bring the heads of every name on that list to me within three days?” Chen Hai nodded somberly.

By the time they returned to the city, word was already beginning to spread that the direct bloodline of the Bai Clan had been exterminated. Although it was shocking news, it wasn’t entirely unexpected. And of course, it further impressed upon people how vicious and merciless Bai Hao was.

The slaughter which had been carried out caused Bai Hao’s reputation to grow. A mere look from him would cause people to immediately stop talking. A snort from him was like heavenly

thunder that would resound in the hearts of all present.

To the powerful organizations in the city, the lost lives of the Bai Clan's direct bloodline became a clear reminder of what type of person Majordomo Bai was.

He was in the good graces of the king, a powerful official who existed far above everyone else in the realm....

Even devas like Duke Deathcrier felt pressure because of him. After all, nobody had done more for the Giant Ghost King than him.

Chapter 683: Are You Stupid, Bai Hao!?

After returning to Giant Ghost City, Bai Xiaochun took some time get his emotions back under control. He didn't like killing, but after everything that had happened to him during his time as Bai Hao, too much frustration and rage had built up inside of him because of the injustice of it all.

For Bai Hao's sake, he made the Bai Clan pay the price for their past actions. The direct bloodline had been wiped away forever!

After he was calm again, he looked at the pile of dazzling items that he had accumulated, and his eyes began to glitter brightly.

Although he generally wasn't a greedy person, and wasn't overly attracted to worldly possessions, he was currently looking at the type of wealth that most ordinary people wouldn't be able to accumulate even in ten thousand lifetimes. It was enough to get his heart pounding audibly.

Countless vengeful souls.... A seemingly endless amounts of soul medicine.... A deva soul. Innumerable spirit enhanced magical items. As he examined them all, he gasped constantly.

Most moving of all were the secret treasures that had come from the reserve savings of the three clans.

The Cai Clan had its spiritjade statue, but the Chen and Bai Clans also had similar items. For example, the Chen Clan's secret treasure was a crimson jade bottle, within which was a drop of blood that could supposedly enable any dead soul to recover its memories from its previous life, and become intelligent. Essentially, it could transform a soul into something like a ghost cultivator!

In the wildlands, precious materials like that were as rare as phoenix feathers or qilin horns. Originally, the Chen Clan had planned to use that drop of blood on their patriarch, after he

reached the demigod level and then ran out of longevity. It would enable that patriarch to live on as a ghost cultivator and protect the clan for endless years. Unfortunately, the Chen Clan patriarch had been incarcerated after the rebellion, rendering such plans useless.

The Bai Clan's reserve savings contained a seven-colored [lotus seed pod](#). Originally it had contained seven lotus seeds, but it now only had two. Anyone who consumed one of those miraculous seeds would experience a complete recovery from any injuries. In fact, even if one's body were completely shattered, those seeds would return that person to their original state, as if they had been reborn.

The reason why the clan chief and the deva patriarch had been able to recover from their serious injuries so quickly was because of those seeds!

Any one of these three secret treasures would be enough to shake heaven and earth, and went to show how profound the reserve savings of the three great clans were.

“Those three clans were definitely way too rich....” Bai Xiaochun thought, licking his lips. Next, he picked up a jade slip that contained flame conjuring formulas from all the clans, everything from one-to seventeen-colored flame.

Despite scouring all three of the clans, though, no formula for eighteen-colored flame had been recovered. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun came to be convinced... that the three great clans didn't have such a formula. Actually, among all of the necromancer clans in the entire Wildlands, the formula for eighteen-colored flame was one of the rarest things imaginable.

“Ah, whatever. I'll just have to wait for a future opportunity to find the formula. Or, who knows, maybe Bai Hao's method will eventually produce it.” Despite the fact that his pile of treasures didn't contain that formula, he was still very excited overall.

“I really struck a goldmine this time. I don’t think I’ll be able to get rid of all this stuff if I tried for my entire life....” By this point, he realized that he really enjoyed shaking down rich clans. Compared to shakedowns, cleaning out soulgrounds was a virtually pointless activity.

“If I have a chance in the future, I’ll definitely shake down some more clans.” He was fully convinced that this was the best route to take. However, moments later, a frown could be seen on his face, and an uneasy feeling rose up in him.

“Wait a second, there are just simply too many valuable treasures here.... If I keep them all for myself, people are definitely going to get jealous.... And the Giant Ghost King probably wouldn’t be happy either....” Hesitating, he eyed the pile of treasure for a bit before making a decision. “Material possessions are nice, but my poor little life is the foundation of everything.”

Eyes glittering, he thought back to his time on the Great Wall, and what that one particular city magistrate had done. Gradually, his eyes began to shine. Swishing his sleeve, he began to separate out some of the treasures in the pile.

He finished his work around evening, whereupon he flew up to the royal palace on the giant ghost statue. Upon arriving, he clasped hands and bowed respectfully, then said in a loud voice, “Bai Hao is here to seek an audience with his highness the king.”

Silence met his request, so he stood there quietly for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn. Then, a solemn voice rang out.

“Come in.”

The time spent waiting had been very nerve-wracking, so at this point, he finally breathed a sigh of relief. Heart thumping, he mused that the Giant Ghost King really did love to scheme and plot, and then sighed at the memory of being able to slap the man across the side of the head over and over again.

Unfortunately... that excitement was something he had to bury deep in his heart. Even if he were ten thousand times more daring than he actually was, he would still never dare to do such a thing again.

Settling his thoughts, he put a fawning smile onto his face and then hurried into the grand hall to find the Giant Ghost King sitting there solemnly on his throne.

“You’re back?” the king said coolly. “You certainly made quite the scene.”

He looked neither angry nor pleased, and from the words he spoke, it was impossible to say whether he was offering praise or criticism.

Bai Xiaochun was both confused and nervous. Now that the Giant Ghost King had his cultivation base back, he was completely terrifying. Bai Xiaochun couldn’t shake the feeling that if he said even one wrong thing, the man would fly into a rage and have him executed.

However, he was fairly certain how to deal with this version of the Giant Ghost King, and plastered a look of such incredible excitement onto his face that it seemed like he must wish to worship him.

“Just as you had predicted, Your Highness, the three great clans were overflowing with wealth. Vengeful souls, soul medicines, magical items, they had too much stuff to count.... However, instead of handing them over, they defiantly tried to deceive your humble servant.

“Unfortunately for them, I had come to visit you beforehand, and thanks to your boundless royal grace, was given plenty of inspiration, and thus saw through their little plot. I even managed to get my hands on the secret treasures in their reserve savings!” From the look on his face and the way he worded things, it seemed like he was giving all the credit to the Giant Ghost King.

No expression could be seen on the Giant Ghost King's face, but there was the faintest hint of irritation in his eyes. Clearly, he was becoming slightly immune to the powers of Bai Xiaochun's flattery, although he still enjoyed it to some degree.

"Let's forget about the Chen and Bai Clans for the moment," Bai Xiaochun continued. "The Cai Clan's secret treasure is just completely shocking. It's a spiritjade statue, three meters tall and mysterious to the ultimate degree. It emits light that can surpass the heavens, and has spiritual energy of the rarest type here in the Wildlands." As he spoke, he continued to look extremely excited, but also took the time to secretly gauge the Giant Ghost King's reaction.

"As soon as it comes out into the open, the entire area for 3,000 meters in all directions gets filled with incredibly strong spiritual energy. In terms of large-scale use, it could sustain an entire clan, and if used alone, would count as a precious treasure for personal cultivation!" Bai Xiaochun's facial expression was extremely lively, and he used compelling gestures to emphasize his words. From the way he described it, the spiritjade statue was obviously something completely one-of-a-kind.

Although the Giant Ghost King had never seen the spiritjade statue, Bai Xiaochun's description made it sound incredible. "Hm. Yeah, if what you say is true, then that thing really is incredible."

However, despite his words, his face remained completely expressionless.

Bai Xiaochun had been measuring the Giant Ghost King up this entire time, and after seeing his current reaction, he decided to take a step forward and lower his voice.

"Your humble servant has already put the spiritjade statue in one of your side courtyards, sir. Feel free to go study it at any time."

At this point, the Giant Ghost King's eyes widened, and then a broad smile appeared on his face. This was the first time he had

ever shown such warmth to Bai Xiaochun. Clearly, he was very pleased with what Bai Xiaochun had done, and even looked at him with open praise.

“This little hooligan...” he thought. “Really knows what to say and how to say it. Not only is he skilled, he’s generous too.... On top of that, he knows how to figure out what people are thinking.” As of this moment, the Giant Ghost King’s opinion of Bai Xiaochun was only continuing to grow higher. However, at this point he suddenly seemed to remember something, and cleared his throat. “Oh right, I heard that the wife of the former clan chief of the Chen Clan is supposedly a peerless beauty, as has a physique perfect for cultivation assistance--”

Before he could finish speaking, Bai Xiaochun, despite cursing inwardly, gave a knowing chuckle. “Your Highness, I’ve already delivered Mrs. Chen to your side courtyard. You can go study her any time you wish, sir....”

The Giant Ghost King immediately slapped his palm down onto the arm of his throne. Eyes widening into a glare, he barked, “How impudent! Mrs. Chen is the wife of a former clan chief, and I am one of the four heavenly kings, a majestic demigod! How could I do such a thing!? If word got out, what do you think it would do to my reputation!? Are you stupid, Bai Hao?!?! Get Mrs. Chen out of here this instant!”

Chapter 684: More Power

The Giant Ghost King truly seemed angry, and also extremely disappointed by Bai Xiaochun's failure. From the look on his face, if Bai Xiaochun didn't get Mrs. Chen out of the royal palace immediately, then he would take action and make sure Bai Xiaochun understood what it was like to be punished for making a mistake!

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very wronged, and was inwardly cursing the shameless Giant Ghost King. However, he simply stood there, giving a level look to the Giant Ghost King, seemingly unmoved by the anger on display.

“What are you doing just standing there!?” the Giant Ghost King roared, slapping his hand down onto his throne again.

By now, there was no fawning look on Bai Xiaochun's face, only a pained expression. Sighing, he said, “Your Highness, don't worry.... The only parties privy to this matter are heaven, earth, you, and me. There isn't a third person in the world who knows the truth. Everyone thinks that I, Bai Hao, took a liking to Mrs. Chen, that I'm the one who swept her away and then killed the clan chief....

“Furthermore, no one knows that she is in your side courtyard, sir.” He sighed again, looking at the Giant Ghost King as if to say... enough with the act, nobody's fooling anybody here....

The Giant Ghost King's eyes went even wider than before, and yet he was a bit at a loss for words. Originally, he had assumed that Bai Hao would flatter him like he usually did, after which he would eventually pretend to give in. He had never imagined that Bai Xiaochun would be so direct about the matter....

Furthermore, the way that Bai Xiaochun put on an air of being wronged caused an embarrassed smile to surface on the Giant Ghost King's face. The truth was that this Bai Hao really had

suffered a blow to his reputation because of the matter, and nobody else in the world knew the truth of the matter....

Inside, the Giant Ghost King was actually feeling wonderful about the whole matter, and as of this moment, his opinion of Bai Hao only continued to climb. Although he was delighted at how the matter had been handled, he continued to glare in disappointment.

Finally, he sighed helplessly, shook his head and said, “Ah, whatever. Just don't do this kind of thing ever again, alright?!”

Bai Xiaochun's face twitched, and he continued to cast a level gaze at the Giant Ghost King, the expression on his face saying... it's only the two of us here, there's no need for the act....

The two of them stared at each other for a moment, after which the Giant Ghost King started to feel more guilty. Clearing his throat, he said, “The position of majordomo is really just honorary. How about I appoint you as the inspections commissioner of Giant Ghost City? No one will be exempt from investigation, and if you find any indications of rebellion fomenting, you can execute the guilty with impunity!”

The Giant Ghost King emphasized his last words with the flick of a sleeve, and a very serious expression.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes sparkled in response. The thought of being the inspections commissioner, a person who could investigate anyone he wanted, was very exciting.

Bai Xiaochun decided to confirm what he had just heard. “What if people offer resistance?”

The Giant Ghost King chuckled coldly. Considering everything that had occurred during the rebellion, he actually didn't trust anyone in the city. And that was especially true considering that the Nine Serenities King had been involved. Therefore, he felt little good will toward anyone. Waving his hand, he summoned a

black spear, which he threw over to Bai Xiaochun.

It was like a black bolt of lightning which shot through the air to appear right in front of him. To his shock, as the spear came to a stop in front of him, thrumming loudly, he realized that it had six golden designs on it!

Mind reeling, and eyes as wide as saucers, he gasped and said, “A sixteenfold spirit enhancement!?!?”

“I used that spear a lot in my early days,” the Giant Ghost King said. “Take it as a reward. If anyone causes any problems, use that spear to execute them!” The decisiveness in his voice was intense and also somber. As he looked at Bai Xiaochun, he recalled the fact that he hadn’t abandoned him despite all of the dangerous situations they faced, and also thought about how there was a powerful magical treasure and a beautiful woman waiting for him in his side courtyard.

“The right hand of the giant ghost statue used to be the palace of operations for Duke Netherworld. Let that be your official mansion from now on.”

Bai Xiaochun’s chest heaved with pride, and his eyes sparkled with excitement. The Giant Ghost King had officially promoted him, given him a precious treasure, and also provided him with a palace of operations. All of that showed that he was indeed very pleased.... Radiating health and vigor, he clasped hands and loudly said, “Thank you, Your Highness!”

Smiling in approval, the Giant Ghost King offered a few more words of encouragement, then gave a look that indicated that Bai Xiaochun should take his leave. Bai Xiaochun knew how to behave himself when necessary, and could tell that the old pervert was getting antsy. Therefore, he put the spear he had been given into his bag of holding, then clasped hands and prepared to leave.

Just when he was about to walk out the door, he stopped and looked back at the king. “Your Highness, you don’t happen to have

a formula for eighteen-colored flame, do you sir?”

“A formula for eighteen-colored flame? I don’t. Only the earthly necromancers have that formula. There are three of them in all of the Wildlands, and they have incredibly high positions. I couldn’t take the formula from one of them even if I wanted to.” The Giant Ghost King knew that Bai Hao was a genius when it came to flame conjuring, but what he had just said about the formula for eighteen-colored flame was completely true.

With that, he gave an impatient wave of his hand, and then vanished.

“Old pervert!” Bai Xiaochun cursed inwardly. With that, he left the royal palace and flew in a beam of light to his old residence. Then, he took some of the treasures he had taken from the three great clans and gave portions to Chen Hai and Zhou Yixing.

He also had them distribute rewards to the tens of thousands of soul cultivators who had helped them deal with the three clans. After all, he had long since come to understand the value of rewarding the efforts of the people who worked for you.

Chen Hai was very happy, and Zhou Yixing was equally excited. And as the rewards were distributed to the other soul cultivators, their reverence for Bai Xiaochun grew.

Having accomplished these things, Bai Xiaochun looked up at the palace of operations on the right hand of the giant ghost statue. For a moment, he hesitated; he had a lot of secrets, and it made him nervous to think about being so close to the Giant Ghost King himself.

But then he stuck his chin up and proudly murmured, “Ah whatever. It’s only a palace of operations. As the majordomo of Giant Ghost City and the inspections commissioner, I can’t just have one single residence.”

With that, he rubbed his bag of holding, within which were more

than ten tongues of fifteen-colored flame!

Those fifteen-colored flames had all been taken from the three great clans!

“Although I can’t concoct fifteen-colored flame, with these finished flames in hand to study, perhaps I can reverse engineer my way to success. At the very least, I’ll be able to cut a lot of time off of my research! Plus... with a fifteen-colored flame, I can break through from the early Nascent Soul stage into the mid stage!”

That thought got him even more excited. Once he performed another spirit enhancement on his nascent soul, it would definitely cause another huge stir in the Wildlands.... As if it weren’t bad enough that everyone was searching for him....

“Well, I can’t let that fact hold me back from improving my cultivation base. What am I scared of anyway? As the majordomo of Giant Ghost City and the inspections commissioner, I’m the one in charge of looking for Bai Xiaochun! There’s nothing at all to fear! If I can’t find Bai Xiaochun, then who else could?!” After going back and forth for a few more minutes, he headed to a secluded meditation chamber.

Once inside, he set up some spell formations and also utilized the powers of his mask to make sure he was completely safe. Then he took out his turtle-wok, sat down cross-legged, and sent his nascent soul flying out of his body.

Then, a fifteen-colored flame appeared, and golden light flickered!

Far away in Arch-Emperor City, on the Hell-Emperor Stele, Bai Xiaochun’s name was still in 1st place on the list, with the number fourteen next to it. But then, his name began to shine with dazzling light.

All of Arch-Emperor City was thrown into another commotion as people looked up in shock to see... the number fifteen appear next

to Bai Xiaochun's name!

“Fifteen!?!? Bai Xiaochun performed another spirit enhancement on his nascent soul?!?!”

“Is this guy suicidal or something? He just won't give up on toying with his life! What a psycho!!”

“I have the feeling that as long as he doesn't get killed, Bai Xiaochun is going to end up being the successor of the Hell-Emperor....”

Quite a few people were making that very prediction.... As the city devolved into chaos, Mistress Red-Dust was sitting in meditation in the Giant Ghost Legion. When she found out what was happening, she let out a shrill scream; her hatred for Bai Xiaochun already ran as deep as the depths of the Yellow Springs.

Of course, the news flew out of Arch-Emperor City as surely as if it had wings, and the search for Bai Xiaochun grew more frantic.

All of the chosen in the Wildlands were forced to grit their teeth angrily. It was almost as if they had all been slapped across the face. There in the Wildlands, the Hell-Emperor Stele had been overtaken by a cultivator from the Heavenspan River! It was really driving them mad.

“I'm gonna kill this Bai Xiaochun!!”

“You better hope I don't find you, Bai Xiaochun, otherwise I'll crush your bones into powder and throw it into the wind!!” All sorts of curses could be heard throughout the Wildlands.

Although Bai Xiaochun had no way to know for sure how everyone was reacting, he could guess. His nascent soul's eyes opened, and it flew out of the wok and back into his body. After he carefully inspected it to make sure there were no problems, he breathed a sigh of relief.

“Hmmmphh. Want to kill me? Why don't you try and find me first!” Feeling very pleased with himself, he tested out his

cultivation base a bit, and was immediately very excited.

His cultivation base was now as boundless as the sea. He was in the mid Nascent Soul stage, far beyond his previous level. In fact, he suddenly felt the impulse to go find someone half a step into the Deva Realm to fight with!

Chapter 685: The Ghost King Orchid Blooms

“It’s too bad I still don’t have a way to cultivate my Undying Bones....” Although he was happy to have improved his cultivation base again, the mere thought of his Undying Bones got him depressed.

Although he had acquired plenty of treasure from the three great clans, he hadn’t found any objects that could provide abundant life force. That left him sighing with regret at the fact that he hadn’t used his Eternal Parasol on the Giant Ghost King back when he’d had the chance. That would have at least given him a bit of life force to work with.

“What a pity. Well, time and tide wait for no man....” Sighing, he drove such dangerous thoughts from his mind. After all, if the Giant Ghost King ever found out he had thought such things, he would probably skin him alive....

“For now, I’ll have to forget about my Undying Bones. The most important thing right now is my research into fifteen-colored flame....” Obviously, the best way to keep improving his cultivation base was by working hard with multi-colored flame. Up to now, he had already done plenty of research into fifteen-colored flame, but there were still many aspects of the formula that he didn’t understand.

Taking a deep breath, he produced a tongue of fifteen-colored flame from his bag of holding, then began to study it closely. Soon, the glow of augury could be seen in his eyes as he began to analyze it from all angles.

Studying an actual fifteen-colored flame in this way would make him much more proficient in using it, and would be a reference point that would make future work much smoother.

Three days passed by in a flash. Bai Xiaochun remained immersed in researching fifteen-colored flame, and on numerous

occasions, his eyes flickered with delight and anticipation. Although three days was a short time, because of his augury method, he actually made significant progress.

Eventually, he sent the flame spreading out to look at it in a different state, and then even went so far as to intentionally destroy it. When all of the fifteen different types of flame appeared, he compared the familiar fourteen colors with the unfamiliar fifteenth. Based on what he already knew, that gave him significant further enlightenment.

When evening fell on the third day, he took a deep breath and looked at the destroyed fifteen-colored flame for a long moment, then closed his eyes. After an hour passed, his eyes opened, and they glowed brightly. He quickly pulled out another fifteen-colored flame to continue studying, when all of a sudden, he turned his attention outside of the secluded meditation chamber.

“Three days have passed....” he murmured. With that, he emerged out in the open and waited in the courtyard, looking up into the sky. Before long, a beam of light appeared, within which was Chen Hai.

“Bai, my boy!” he said, laughing heartily. After landing in front of Bai Xiaochun, he clasped hands and bowed, a broad smile on his face.

“Chen, old pal!” Bai Xiaochun said, stepping forward to pull him up from his bow.

“Bai, my boy, the mission was accomplished smoothly! All of the things you asked me to get for you are right here.” With that, he produced a bag of holding, which he handed out to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun looked at it, and was already starting to pant. Eyes flashing with cold light, he clasped hands to Chen Hai, took the bag, and then chatted for a few more minutes. Eventually, Chen Hai left.

At that point, Bai Xiaochun went back into his secluded meditation chamber and sat down cross-legged. Inside of the bag of holding were nine human heads!

They were the nine assassins that Madam Cai had identified when being interrogated. None of them were from the Bai Clan; they had all been employed directly by Madam Cai. Regardless of their identity or standing, they were now nothing more than bodiless heads.

All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun found himself thinking of that moment when he had first arrived in the Wildlands, and had actually glimpsed Bai Hao in the flesh, still alive. A moment passed, and he waved his hand, transforming the nine severed heads into nothing more than ash.

“Bai Hao, my apprentice,” he said softly, “I have avenged your death. Even though I'm still using your identity, I think that your spirit can now rest in peace.” At this point, he finally let out a long sigh. The direct bloodline had been put to death, and all of the killers were now nothing more than ash. As of this point, all of the karma was completely and utterly resolved.

Bai Xiaochun took a bit of time to calm himself again, then pulled out another tongue of fifteen-colored flame and began to perform auguries.

More time passed. An entire month flew by, during which time Bai Xiaochun immersed himself in his study and auguries regarding fifteen-colored flame. He never came out of secluded meditation, and yet, his fame continued to grow in Giant Ghost City. The talk about the things which had occurred with the three great clans was beginning to die down a bit, but the reverence people felt toward Bai Xiaochun only grew.

And then there was the announcement that the Giant Ghost King had appointed Bai Hao to be the inspections commissioner, and had even gifted him with a treasured spear and an official palace of

operations, and his name grew even more powerful and famous.

As Bai Xiaochun grew more powerful and respected, the various groups and organizations within the city began to quiet down. The crisis period for Giant Ghost City had passed, and things were really starting to get back to normal.

However, no one could ever have anticipated that, just when Giant Ghost City was getting back to normal, one afternoon, a very shocking incident occurred 500,000 kilometers away!

It was a vast, 50,000-kilometer area covered with dense fog, a muddy marsh that wasn't even inhabited by wild animals. Because of the lack of any sort of living beings, it was a location of death and lifelessness.

The fog never lifted from the area no matter the time of year, which made it very difficult for anyone to see in. Because of the intense aura of death, and the vile miasma that was dangerous even to Nascent Soul cultivators, few people ever entered the place for long. If they did, they would surely die.

It had long since become a forbidden region that no one entered. Any soul cultivator who found the place in their way would always skirt around it.

However, any almighty being who could look down on the place from above would notice that there was actually a structure within the swirling fog!

It looked like a gigantic tea kettle....

The area around the tea kettle swarmed with souls. However, they were different than the vengeful souls usually seen in the Wildlands. Their eyes were bright red, and they seemed particularly violent. They even had horns sticking out of their foreheads, making them look like evil ghosts!

However, the violent, evil ghosts only existed directly around the tea kettle, and didn't fly out into the fog beyond. Apparently,

unless they were provoked, they wouldn't actually cause harm.

This location was one of the arcane pocket realms belonging to the imperial clan. It was the Necromancer Kettle!

No investigation or research had ever confirmed the origin of the Necromancer Kettle, or the reason why it bore the semblance of a tea kettle. The only thing that was known was that the good fortune inside of it belonged exclusively to the imperial clan. The fog around the kettle formed a year-round seal that was only opened on occasion. However, on this day, the entire Necromancer Kettle began to tremble unexpectedly, and the lands around it started quaking violently.

Thunderous rumbles filled the air, and the fog began to seethe and slowly rise off of the ground. At that point, high in the sky above the Necromancer Kettle, a bizarre, black flower appeared!

The black flower had five petals, each of which resembled the face of a ghost. As the flower bloomed, the fog swirled around it and also turned into the shape of a ghost face. It was a very shocking sight to behold.

The first person to notice the sudden change was none other than the Giant Ghost King in Giant Ghost City. Moments before, he had been sitting in his royal palace listening to Duke Deathcrier report on some matters relating to Nine Serenities City. His eyes had been flickering with cold light, and he had been about to ask a question when, all of a sudden, his face fell, and he looked off into the distance.

“The Ghost King Orchid!” he said, his aura fluctuating wildly. Duke Deathcrier's eyes went wide as the Giant Ghost King suddenly vanished, to appear high in the sky above the city. There, he began to move as quickly as a lightning bolt, to appear in the area near the Necromancer Kettle. When he saw the black flower floating in the sky, his eyes began to shine brightly. He cast a glance at the Necromancer Kettle, and then turned and vanished

again, to reappear back in his royal palace. After dismissing Duke Deathcrier, he closed his eyes thoughtfully for a long moment, then turned to look in the direction of Arch-Emperor City.

It was in that very city, far, far away from Giant Ghost City, that, in a certain grand hall in the imperial palace, eight ancient and crumbling bones had been enshrined. Suddenly, one of those crumbling pieces of bone began to belch out black mist, which quickly took the shape of a flower identical to the one above the Necromancer Kettle!

Several old cultivators who acted as guards outside of that particular hall had sensed the change, and rushed inside. When they saw the black flower coming out of the crumbling bone, they were shocked to the core.

“The Ghost King Orchid is blooming!!”

After exchanging glances, the old men took out jade slips to notify the Grand Heavenmaster.

The Grand Heavenmaster was currently in Arch-Emperor City’s Heavenmaster Hall. When he got the news, he opened his eyes and looked off into the distance toward the Necromancer Kettle. “The Necromancer Kettle is active, and the Ghost King Orchid is blooming! One of the eight arcane pocket realms has opened. That flower is of particular importance to the Giant Ghost King....”

Suddenly, he heard a voice from outside.

“Heavenmaster, Goddess Red-Dust is here requesting an audience.”

The Grand Heavenmaster’s eyes flickered, and then he said, “Send her away. Make an announcement that the Ghost King Orchid will be available to whoever destiny sees fit.”

After the Grand Heavenmaster’s announcement, news about the blooming of the Ghost King Orchid quickly spread through Arch-Emperor City. Meanwhile, back in Giant Ghost City, Bai Xiaochun

had just gone through his sixth fifteen-colored flame. However, his level of control was improving, and it was at this point that he excitedly took out a soulhoarding pagoda. Moments later, a vast horde of vengeful souls flew out into the open, and Bai Xiaochun began to work on conjuring a fifteen-colored flame.

Chapter 686: He Wants To See Me Again?

Due to his augury and reverse-engineering methods, Bai Xiaochun was very confident regarding the formula for fifteen-colored flame. However, it was still a very difficult thing that would require a lot of work.

Thankfully, he had plenty of vengeful souls to work with. He made one attempt after another, and failed at every one, but at the same time, learned from every one. After identifying the reasons for failure and then resolving them, he made constant progress. Time passed, and he became more and more proficient in flame conjuring.

“Ten more times! That’s all I need to succeed!” Even as he pulled out more vengeful souls to work with, the blooming of the Ghost King Orchid was causing a huge stir in Arch-Emperor City.

“The Ghost King Orchid is blooming!! Supposedly, the first generation Arch-Emperor personally planted that Ghost King Orchid in the Necromancer Kettle. If you eat the fruit of that flower, you can heal a damaged divine soul and purify your body, removing any defilements!”

“There’s another thing it can do. It can perfectly reset your cultivation base, allowing you to completely replace all of the techniques you use with other ones!”

“I also heard that the fruit of the Ghost King Orchid can bring dead souls back to life!!”

In the briefest moment, Arch-Emperor City began to buzz with all sorts of talk. The important nobility and influential people within the city were all buzzing with excitement. Although the Ghost King Orchid was of vital importance to the Giant Ghost King, it could also be very beneficial to others. Virtually all of the luxurious mansions in the city were astir, and yet, nobody was actually taking action. After all, the Necromancer Kettle belonged

to the imperial clan, and although the announcement had been made that the flower would go to whoever destiny saw fit, the specific rules governing the competition had not yet been made public.

However, that quickly changed as an imperial decree came down!

The Necromancer Kettle, one of the eight arcane pocket realms belonging to the imperial clan, is now open. In accord with the will of the Grand Heavenmaster, no one above or below the Nascent Soul stage may enter. Only Nascent Soul cultivators may go in and seek the good fortune therein!

From members of the imperial clan down to the families of the aristocracy, any group may dispatch a single person to enter the pocket realm!

As soon as the decree went out, all of the influential groups in the city began to analyze the deeper meaning behind it. Soon, eyes were cast in the direction of Giant Ghost City.

Clearly, the decree had not really been put out by the Arch-Emperor, but rather, by the Grand Heavenmaster. Nowadays in Arch-Emperor City, the words of the Grand Heavenmaster were taken more seriously than the Arch-Emperor's.

However, the reaction from the influential groups in the city was muted, as if they were waiting for something.

Eventually, news about the decree reached the ears of the tall, muscular Nine Serenities King. He stood there in his royal palace in Nine Serenities City, a huge battle-axe propped up next to him, looking at a jade slip. Slowly, a smile spread out across his face.

“You really want that Ghost King Orchid, don't you Giant Ghost King? Well, I'll make sure you don't get your wish!” He and the Giant Ghost King had been at odds with each other for many years, during which time he had never been presented with the opportunity to personally do anything about the situation.

However, during the Giant Ghost King's decay period, he had absolutely taken the initiative to strike a blow along with the three great clans' rebellion.

A cold smile appeared on the Nine Serenities King's face as he said, "Tell Prince Zhou Hong to come see me immediately!"

Next, a bone slip appeared in his hand as he transmitted messages to other influential groups and clans in Nine Serenities City, giving them various instructions.

On top of a towering mountain in War Champion City, a middle-aged man stood there, clad in a green robe, his hands clasped behind his back. He was not burly like the Nine Serenities King, but he still seemed like a paramount figure in heaven and earth, radiating pressure which weighed down on all creation.

That man was none other than the War Champion King.

"Interesting. The Ghost King Orchid has already bloomed four times. In the past, it was always one of the giant ghost kings who got the flower. The flower is obviously very important to the current Giant Ghost King. If he gets this one, he'll be able to complete the five elements structure, and his technique will be even more deadly. From that point on, he would never again have a decay period!

"That means that whoever gets the flower this time will be able to get the most valuable treasures imaginable from the Giant Ghost King in trade...." Eyes narrowing, the War Champion King thought of a particular medicinal pill bottle that the Giant Ghost King owned, which could refine all types of high-level medicines.

After another moment of thought, the War Champion King smiled faintly and said, "Yi'er, come see me immediately!"

The Nine Serenities King and the War Champion King both had their various thoughts about the matter. Meanwhile in Spirit Advent City, the last of the four heavenly kings, the Spirit Advent

King, was also moved. He was an extremely fat man, a mountain of flesh who was even more exaggeratedly fat than Big Fatty Zhang had been all those years ago.

Of course, it would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find someone in the Wildlands who would tease him about his weight. As he sat there in his royal palace, surrounded by handmaidens, a glass of alcohol in hand, his eyes began to shine brightly.

“The Giant Ghost King is sure going to have it rough this time. I bet everyone is going to do their best to screw him over. Well, how could I possibly ignore this chance to profit from his misfortune?”

Laughing heartily, he turned his head and bellowed, “Shanshan, my lovely daughter, aren’t you always looking for people to pick fights with? Well I’m going to give you a chance to do just that. Go to the Necromancer Kettle and fight with whoever you feel like. Get the fruit of the Ghost King Orchid, and bring it back for me!”

In an auxiliary courtyard deep in Spirit Advent City, an intense rumbling sound could be heard as a valiant and formidable young woman appeared....

The actions of these three heavenly kings were like a wind vane that indicated what all of the other powers in Arch-Emperor City would do. It was almost like a chain reaction.

Before long, numerous voices could be heard within the headquarters of the influential groups and clans.

“One person per group? That means only one person from Giant Ghost City will be there. I guess we could risk offending the Giant Ghost King, but getting involved in a fight between the four of the heavenly kings wouldn’t be worth it. The Zhou Clan will not be participating!”

“The Giant Ghost King might be a demigod, but considering our Li Clan’s good relationship with the Nine Serenities King, we have

no choice but to participate. Fine, send the Li Clan's qilin son into the Necromancer Kettle to earn a name for himself!"

"It's been a long time since a competition has come along that virtually all of the clans can participate in. This is a perfect chance for the Nascent Soul Juniors to rise to prominence! We might end up offending the Giant Ghost King, but with the War Champion King participating as well, we shouldn't have anything to fear!"

Scenes such as this played out in numerous locations in the Wildlands. Of course, Duke Deathcrier had eyes and ears in many places, and soon got word. Looking very grim-faced, he headed toward the royal palace.

After he left, a roar of rage could be heard from within the royal palace. The Giant Ghost King leapt off of his royal throne, his eyes shining as cold as ice. The truth was that he didn't really need to get any secret reports from Duke Deathcrier; he had long since guessed that this instance of the blooming of the Ghost King Orchid would cause a huge stir.

After his decay period ended and he returned to Giant Ghost City, he had been thinking constantly about the Necromancer Kettle. Even his rough calculations had led him to the conclusion that the Ghost King Orchid would soon be blooming for the fifth time.

As a result, he had given orders to Duke Deathcrier to keep an eye on the other heavenly kings, and had also opened up talks with the Grand Heavenmaster, hoping to get him to agree to give Giant Ghost City exclusive entrance rights.

Clearly, the Grand Heavenmaster had refused that request. Not even the Giant Ghost King's offer to owe him a huge favor had changed his mind. Although it was not a huge blow to him, it still made him angry. And yet, there was nothing he could do about the situation. The Grand Heavenmaster held sway over the emperor and the nobility, and was definitely a person to be feared.

"Everybody knows how important the Ghost King Orchid is to

me. Do those three bastards really think they can steal what's mine?! Furthermore, they're trying to weaken me by preventing the organizations I'm on good terms with in Giant Ghost City from participating!

“Hmph! The three other kings ganging up on me is of secondary importance. The Grand Heavenmaster's attitude is the most important thing....” The Giant Ghost King gritted his teeth at the fact that the Grand Heavenmaster had specifically issued orders preventing demigods and devas from entering the Necromancer Kettle.

“Do they really think that I wouldn't be ready for something like this though?!” With a cold snort, he thought about a certain person, and then suddenly smiled. “I need to teach that little hooligan a lesson anyway. My head is not to be smacked around casually!”

Having reached this point in his train of thought, the Giant Ghost King issued a royal decree.

“Summon Bai Hao to see me. Immediately!”

As the orders went out, Bai Xiaochun was in his secluded meditation chamber, working on conjuring a fifteen-colored flame. He had failed more than ten times, but his eyes shone with stubborn determination. He was currently focused completely on the fire in his hand, and on feeding it the surrounding vengeful souls.

He didn't dare to relax for even a moment. As the vengeful souls poured into the fire, his eyes turned completely bloodshot. Fire spread out, and then it began to converge back together onto his palm, whereupon he closed his fingers into a fist.

Taking an excited breath, he opened his fingers to reveal a tongue of flame right there in the middle of his hand. He immediately began to laugh delightedly.

“It finally worked!!”

It was none other than fifteen-colored flame!

This fifteen-colored flame indicated that Bai Xiaochun was no longer a terrestrial necromancer, but had reached the celestial rank!!

There were less than a hundred celestial necromancers in all of the Wildlands, making them very rare. But now, thanks to his constant research and augury, Bai Xiaochun had risen to that very rank!

Even as he reveled in his pride, he heard a voice outside of his secluded meditation facilities.

“Majordomo, his highness the king has summoned you, posthaste!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide as he wondered why the king might have summoned him, especially right when he had already been planning on coming out of secluded meditation....

“This seems weird. He couldn't see me in here, could he?!” Feeling very nervous, he looked around, and then put away his fifteen-colored flame.

After emerging from his secluded meditation facilities, he saw that there were two city guards waiting, who immediately greeted him with clasped hands.

“What does his highness the king want to see me for?” he asked casually.

The two guards hesitated, but knew that Bai Xiaochun was a person they could not afford to offend. Lowering their voices, they quickly explained what they knew about the Ghost King Orchid, and their guesses about how it involved him.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the news, his heart trembled with fear. “All of the Nascent Soul chosen in the wildlands are going?”

he thought. “Sounds way too dangerous!”

Having reached this point in his train of thought, his expression suddenly flickered, and he coughed up a massive mouthful of blood. Staggering backward, he wailed, “I just had a setback with my cultivation base! Report back to his highness the king that I have to go back into secluded meditation to make some adjustments....”

With that, he rushed back into his secluded meditation facilities and slammed the door behind him.

The two city guard were left flabbergasted by this unexpected turn of events....

Chapter 687: Dont Worry, Your Highness!

The Giant Ghost King's divine sense wasn't so powerful that it could maintain daily scrutiny of all of Giant Ghost City. That was even less the case considering how wrapped up he was in his current plans. In fact, after issuing the summons to Bai Xiaochun, he had already started to completely change his overall plan.

The fruit of the Ghost King Orchid was too important to him. None of the previous giant ghost kings had ever reached his current level of progress. He had accumulated four of the fruits so far, and only needed one more to make a complete set of the five elements. With that full set, he would be able to remove the weakness in the technique he cultivated.

Therefore, he was unwilling to accept the possibility of any mishaps. He needed to guarantee with one hundred percent certainty that he would get that ghost king fruit. After all, if someone else got it, he would then be in the passive position, and it was impossible to say what unexpected things would result.

The optimal outcome would be for him to acquire the fruit by his own means.

The Giant Ghost King was in the middle of contemplating all of these matters when the two guards returned with the unexpected news that Bai Xiaochun had gone into a protracted, half-year-long session of secluded meditation....

The Giant Ghost King's eyes went wide, and his anger immediately began to burn. Shooting to his feet, he vanished, to reappear right outside of Bai Xiaochun's auxiliary courtyard. Completely disregarding the spell formation that protected Bai Xiaochun's secluded meditation facilities, he stepped forward to appear inside.

The instant he appeared, he saw Bai Xiaochun, his face ashen and eyes cloudy, pushing down onto his chest as he coughed up a

massive mouthful of blood.... Although he seemed surprised to find someone else in his secluded meditation chamber, he managed to struggle to his feet, whereupon he clasped hands and bowed.

“Humble greetings, Your Highness.”

The Giant Ghost King was a bit shocked by how much blood Bai Xiaochun had just coughed up, and at how weak he looked. After scanning him with some divine sense, he could sense instabilities in his cultivation base, whereupon his face darkened.

“How did this happen?” he asked with a growl.

“Your Highness....” Bai Xiaochun smiled bitterly and shook his head. Taking a deep breath, he wiped the blood from his lips, lowered his voice, and continued, “Your humble servant went through hell and high water for you. Unfortunately, my cultivation base wasn’t powerful enough, and in my overhasty push into the early Nascent Soul stage, I made some mistakes....”

Although his voice quavered weakly, his eyes shone with the determination to keep speaking.

“But don’t worry, Your Highness, all I need is half a year, and I’ll be back to normal!” Seemingly summoning the effort, he slapped his chest to emphasize his words, looking like the type of person who wouldn’t hesitate to die for his sovereign. At the same time, he was secretly sizing up the Giant Ghost King, and vowing that he wouldn’t go into any dangerous areas no matter what happened. Giant Ghost City was definitely the safest place to be....

The Giant Ghost King’s expression flickered as he pondered the situation. After looking Bai Xiaochun up and down, he finally decided that everything was just too coincidental. How could it be that, right when the Ghost King Orchid bloomed, causing a huge stir among all the chosen in the land, that Bai Hao’s cultivation base would suddenly have a problem? However, now was not the time to go picking apart Bai Xiaochun’s words. Waving his hand, he summoned a medicinal pill.

It was pure white, and shone with dazzling light. Inside of it could be seen the image of a dragon, and it emanated a shocking medicinal aroma. As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw it, his eyes went wide, and he even gasped. This was the first time he had ever seen a medicinal pill in the Wildlands.

As an grandmaster apothecary , he could instantly tell that this was some sort of holy medicine designed to heal injuries. In fact, it appeared to surpass the Godly Vestige Pills he had used in the past. It was completely unprecedented!

A medicinal pill like this could be considered rare even in the Heavenspan River region, let alone in the Wildlands, where medicinal pills virtually didn't exist. Clearly, it was a treasured item to the Giant Ghost King.

“This pill's name is Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill. You can only eat nine in your lifetime, and the reason that my decay period was so short was because I consumed nine at once. Anyone else who consumes it under normal circumstances will experience a full recovery from all injuries in only one breath of time.

“Take a minute to think. Even if you're seriously injured, you're going on this mission, whether you want to or not. If you refuse to take the pill, and fail in the mission, I won't cause any problems for you. But if you do consume it, then you definitely must succeed in the mission!” The Giant Ghost King spoke in a tone that brooked no argument, then looked at Bai Xiaochun with glittering eyes as he flicked his finger and sent the medicinal pill flying toward Bai Xiaochun's mouth.

Bai Xiaochun shivered in fear, but still managed to reach out and snatch the pill out of the air. Scowling on the verge of tears, he looked back at the king, cursing inwardly, but knowing he had no choice in the matter. Considering how decisively the Giant Ghost King was acting, Bai Xiaochun could tell that it was just as the man had said: he would be going on this mission whether he wanted to or not....

Although he felt very wronged about the whole thing, he didn't let that show on his face. In fact, it was at this point that some cracking sounds suddenly rang out from inside of him, and his previously unstable cultivation base suddenly returned to normal.

“Don't worry, Your Highness, I'll definitely accomplish the mission!” he said loudly.

“You've recovered?” the Giant Ghost King asked, his eyes narrowing as he smiled.

“Eee? You said it even before I noticed it, Your Highness! Wow, this is great! My cultivation base breakthrough came because I had an audience with you, and now I've recovered for the same reason! Both of these developments occurred because of meeting with you face-to-face! Your Highness, your might surpasses all creation, like a dragon flying to the highest heavens. A mere glance from you is like consuming a holy medicine of healing!” All of Bai Xiaochun's flattery was delivered without the slightest blush, and was spoken with utmost sincerity.

The Giant Ghost King sighed, well aware of what Bai Xiaochun was doing. Not concerned about how crafty Bai Xiaochun was trying to be, the Giant Ghost King's expression turned somber as he went on to give some more information about what was to come.

Bai Xiaochun listened with rapt attention, and afterward, actually breathed a sigh of relief. After all, he knew that, considering how incredible he was, he could crush anyone who tried to make a move against him.

The more he listened though, the wider his eyes went, and the more his heart began to pound at the fact that virtually everyone was teaming up against the Giant Ghost King.

“We're talking about multiple heirs apparent to heavenly kings, plus chosen from the nobility and aristocracy in Arch-Emperor City! Although not all of them reached the Nascent Soul stage with

deva beast souls, there are bound to be a few.... Plus, they're all going to be working together against me....” Soon his scowl returned. All of the cultivators who would be going to this trial by fire were powerful chosen. Even though Bai Xiaochun knew himself to be incredible, even a tiger couldn't fight a pack of ravenous wolves. The slightest misstep on his part, and his poor little life would be in danger....

“Dammit, how come only Nascent Soul cultivators can go!? It would be much better if most of the people were in the Core Formation stage....” Although he wished to cry, no tears would come. The truth was that even if he were stronger than he was, he still wouldn't be confident. However, considering the stubborn look on the face of the Giant Ghost King, he knew that there was nothing he could do other than nod in agreement.

The Giant Ghost King could sense Bai Xiaochun's pensiveness, so after a moment, he sighed and said, “However, don't feel too much pressure. With my trusty spear, and some Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pills, you should be very safe. Furthermore, I will make other arrangements to make sure that everything goes smoothly in the Necromancer Kettle.”

However, not even such assurances wiped the scowl off of Bai Xiaochun's face. At this point, the Giant Ghost King lowered his voice and said, “Don't forget about that restrictive spell that connects the two of us. Do you really think I would send you somewhere to get killed?”

Upon hearing that, Bai Xiaochun's mood brightened a bit. The more he thought about it, the less likely it seemed that anyone would try to cause problems for him. Besides, based on what the Giant Ghost King had just said, it seemed there would be people on the inside who would help him if he needed it.

After offering a few more words of instruction, the Giant Ghost King handed Bai Xiaochun a medicinal pill bottle, within which were eight Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pills! Including the one

he had given him moments ago, that made a total of nine!

After seeing all of those pills, Bai Xiaochun felt even more confident than before.

With that, the Giant Ghost King left, simultaneously passing orders to Duke Deathcrier to accompany Bai Xiaochun on a giant ghost battleship to the Necromancer Kettle.

**

The giant ghost battleship was an enormous black airship that pierced through the sky with incredible speed. It had a giant ghost statue on it that radiated black light, as well as a fearsome aura.

Bai Xiaochun was currently standing on the deck of the battleship, sighing listlessly. Next to him was Duke Deathcrier, who was looking at him with a bemused expression. Chuckling, Duke Deathcrier said, “What’s with the furrowed brow, Majordomo Bai? You didn’t frown like that even when three devas were chasing you down.”

“What a load of crap....” Bai Xiaochun thought inwardly. Back when the three devas had been chasing him, he had plenty of secret weapons to call upon. He’d known that the Giant Ghost King would recover within days, and had thus been willing to take a big risk. The current situation was nothing like that.

However, he also realized that now was not the time to be weak or scared. Standing up straighter than before, he smacked himself loudly on the chest and said, “You’re seeing things, Duke Deathcrier. I wasn’t frowning, I was thinking! And this is no furrowed brow, it’s an expression of killing intent!”

Duke Deathcrier’s expression turned even more quizzical, but he didn’t say anything further.

The two of them didn’t speak much during the rest of the trip. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun realized that there was a huge group of vengeful souls moving along on the ground beneath them.

When Duke Deathcrier noticed what he was looking at, he offered a brief explanation. “Whenever the Necromancer Kettle is opened, it attracts lots of vengeful souls. They instinctively try to get into the place....”

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun realized even more than before that this Necromancer Kettle was clearly an extraordinary place, and also a dangerous one. Another two hours passed, and by now, the battleship was in the actual region of the huge kettle.

It was evening, and the previously clear sky was now choked with clouds. Furthermore, it was possible to see the shocking Ghost King Orchid off in the distance!

Countless vengeful souls swirled around in the area of the Ghost King Orchid, filling the sky and land alike, creating a screaming vortex that no one would dare to get close to.

Bai Xiaochun had actually arrived early, and there was no one else in the area. He was the first.

However, that gave him plenty of time to study the surrounding area. Before long, he could see an enormous kettle beneath the Ghost King Orchid!

It was pitch black, and seemed profoundly ancient. Furthermore, it was the black mist pouring out of the kettle itself that created the enormous, misty Ghost King Orchid up above.

This was the Necromancer Kettle!

Bai Xiaochun gasped, and his heart trembled. Even with a single glance, he could tell that this kettle was some type of magical item....

“There is another heaven and earth inside of the Necromancer Kettle,” Duke Deathcrier explained. “Its origin is a mystery, but according to some legends, it came from beyond the heavens. Other stories say that it was a treasured item belonging to the first generation Arch-Emperor. At this point in time, it’s really

impossible to determine the truth. As for the Ghost King Orchid, it actually grows in a basin in the very middle of the world of the kettle.

“It's very large inside, but all you have to do is fly to the very center of the place, and you'll find that basin.... Incidentally, according to all of the records we have, it will actually take some time after the mist flower forms for the true form of the Ghost King Orchid to mature.

“All you have to do is get your hands on its fruit, and then after you get out, I'll safeguard you. If anyone dares to attack you or steal the fruit from you at that time, his highness the king will personally come to handle the situation.

“Inside of the kettle, you'll be on your own.” Duke Deathcrier then went on to offer some more warnings and exhortations.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling more nervous than ever, but kept telling himself that everything would be alright.

A bit later, beams of light became visible off in the distance, some coming from the direction of Arch-Emperor City, and others coming from the other three kingly cities. A few others approached from teleportation portals in the area.

Chapter 688: An Old Friend

Duke Deathcrier's expression flickered slightly, and Bai Xiaochun looked very nervous.

Even as Bai Xiaochun's turned to look off into the distance, two beams of light streaked toward them, unleashing sonic booms as they pierced through the air. Soon, two people became visible!

One of them was a wizened old man wearing a black robe. His eyes were cloudy, and his face slack. He seemed fused with heaven and earth, so much so that he was even invisible when inspected with divine sense.

He glanced briefly at Bai Xiaochun, then looked at Duke Deathcrier and smiled, simultaneously clasping hands in greeting. Duke Deathcrier clasped hands in return.

Next to the old man was a young man in a violet robe. There was something tyrannical and haughty about him, especially his eyes, which were piercingly sharp. His cultivation base was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, which made him seem like an unsheathed sword, ready to chop anything to pieces.

The young man glanced briefly at Bai Xiaochun, chuckled coldly, and then looked away at the Necromancer Kettle.

Seeing how seriously Bai Xiaochun was taking the arrival of these two, Duke Deathcrier transmitted a message.

“He's the heir apparent of the Nine Serenities King... Prince Zhou Hong. He has a reputation for being cruel and callous, and has killed many people in his time!”

Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard. Although he wasn't sure exactly how he knew it, but just looking at Zhou Hong, he could tell that he had reached the Nascent Soul stage by using deva beast souls. Perhaps he knew it because he had a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul. Zhou Hong looked incredibly impressive. He was an heir apparent,

and surely had some demigod-level secret magics. Obviously, he was a chosen the likes of which were not to be provoked.

“I bet I could beat him in a one-on-one fight. But considering who his father is, I probably shouldn’t mess with him.” Even as Bai Xiaochun made this decision, more light appeared off in the distance, two beams that contained two women.

One of them was an old woman wearing a voluminous white robe. Her expression was placid, but the young woman next to her was clearly the bossy and domineering type. Her eyes brimmed with the desire to do battle, and despite the fact that she wore violet gloves, and was very beautiful, she was clearly the violent type.

As soon as the young woman appeared, Zhou Hong’s eyelid twitched with trepidation, as though he didn't dare to look at her. When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he gasped quietly.

At this point, Duke Deathcrier transmitted more information. “Princess Xu Shan, daughter of the Spirit Advent King.... A violent girl, the type who will lose her temper if you say one wrong thing....”

“How come all of these Wildlands chosen seem completely brutal...?” Bai Xiaochun thought, his own eyelid twitching. “This Xu Shan reached the great circle using deva beast souls, and has an incredibly powerful fleshly body!” Considering the fact that even Zhou Hong seemed to fear Xu Shan, Bai Xiaochun didn’t dare to look at her for more than a moment.

However, before he could look away, their eyes locked, and Xu Shan glared at him. From the look in her eyes, she was itching to fight him, but thankfully, the old woman next to her cleared her throat, and Xu Shan backed up a few steps in disappointment.

Bai Xiaochun could see how violent of a girl she was; she wanted to attack him for merely looking at her....

“This place is way too barbarous. The Wildlands definitely isn’t a suitable place for me!” Even as he sighed, more beams of light approached, this time containing dozens of people. These were the chosen children of various groups in the Wildlands, all of them escorted by Dao protectors. None of the Dao protectors were devas, like those sent by the heavenly kings, but most of them were half a step into the Deva Realm.

After arriving, the newcomers fanned out. Some of them joined Zhou Hong, while others went to stand near Xu Shan. Some of them gathered together in smaller groups, where they looked off into the sky, as if they were waiting for someone.

“Little Wolfgod, Li Tiansheng, Zhao Dongshan, Miao Lin’er....” As the chosen arrived, Duke Deathcrier would tell Bai Xiaochun their names. And as he did, Bai Xiaochun’s heart continued to pound.

Little Wolfgod was a young man with a perpetual expression of killing intent on his face, and eyes that radiated brutality. Li Tiansheng seemed a bit better, but had a sinister look to him that left Bai Xiaochun feeling very uncomfortable. Zhao Dongshan was particularly burly, as though the blood of savage giants ran in his veins. He looked like a small mountain as he stood there, holding an enormous [wolf tooth club](#) in one hand.

Most of the chosen weremen, with few women. However, there was one woman who caught Bai Xiaochun’s eye. She was none other than the one Duke Deathcrier had introduced as Miao Lin’er. She wore very revealing clothing that well-accentuated her lithe frame, and made her quite the center of attention among the other chosen.

She didn’t seem to care about that, and even wore a carefree smile. When she noticed that Bai Xiaochun was looking at her, she covered her smile with her hand. As she swayed forward, her long, milky legs were prominently displayed, causing Zhao Dongshan, who was right next to her, to start panting.

Bai Xiaochun stole a further glance. Heart pounding, he couldn't help but analyze her objectively. "These Wildlander women dress quite daringly, but they don't measure up to my Song Junwan."

Although the Wildlanders were all handsome and even beautiful, they all had murderous auras that indicated they had killed many people.

"I'm here representing the Giant Ghost King, so where are the Giant Ghost King forces? Why isn't anybody coming to stand by me?!" Bai Xiaochun was starting to feel as if something was off. "Maybe they're not here yet? Or maybe they're keeping their identity secret?"

After looking around at the growing crowd, he tried to guess who it might be that the Giant Ghost King had arranged to come help him.... However, after a bit of time, his suspicions about the matter only continued to grow.

More people continued to arrive, roughly half of them being Dao protectors. Most of the Dao protectors just stood there quietly, although a few chatted with each other.

The other half were the Nascent Soul chosen who would be going into the Necromancer Kettle. Bai Xiaochun sized them up, and could see some of them doing the same with him. Some of them looked at him with scorn, while others had icy expressions. Some seemed curious. Most of them knew at least a little bit about him.

Bai Xiaochun was getting very nervous; very few of these people seemed to have anything but ill will toward him. Even as he stewed in his anxiety, everyone suddenly went quiet. Even Duke Deathcrier's eyes seemed to grow unusually focused as a beam of light suddenly appeared off in the distance!

There was only one person approaching, with no Dao protector. However, the fantastic energy radiating off of him seemed enough to crush all of the other chosen in the area.

He was a young man in a green robe, with a placid expression that seemed to indicate nothing in the world could possibly faze him. As he approached, the other chosen clasped hands in greeting, especially those who had not joined the other larger groups.

“Well met, Junior Champion King!”

“Greetings, Junior Champion King!”

Many voices rang out, although the young man completely ignored them. After reaching a certain point, he simply hovered in place with his eyes closed. He never even looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

Although a slightly defiant look could be seen in Zhou Hong’s eyes, he kept it in check. Xu Shan from Spirit Advent City seemed more intent than ever on getting into a fight, and from the look of things, was vastly more interested in this Junior Champion King than she was in Bai Xiaochun.

“He’s the son of the War Champion King,” Duke Deathcrier explained, “which is why he is called the Junior Champion King. His name is... Gongsun Yi!”

Bai Xiaochun sighed. From what he could tell, this Junior Champion King was already in the great circle, and was almost on the verge of being half a step into the Deva Realm.

Just when he was thinking about asking Duke Deathcrier where his own helpers were, another beam of light appeared.

This time, there were three people, with two of them being particularly eye-catching. One of them was a handsome young man, and the other was a girl who could only be described as a matchless beauty. As soon as they appeared, everyone instantly looked over at them.

“The second prince....”

“That’s... the Grand Heavenmaster’s apprentice, Chen Manyao!!”

Even as the buzz of conversation rose up, Duke Deathcrier began to make the introductions. However, Bai Xiaochun's mind was spinning, and he didn't even hear Duke Deathcrier talking. The complete focus of his attention was on that spectacularly beautiful young woman!

She was none other than Chen Manyao, and she looked just as beautiful as Bai Xiaochun remembered, with the fairest of skin, and a beautiful figure. The way her long hair swirled around her made her seem like an immortal goddess, and would cause virtually any man who saw her to gasp.

However, she carried some sort of undispellable anxiety with her, and seemed soft and tender in a way that only served to accentuate her incredible beauty!

“Chen Manyao....” Although no one could tell, Bai Xiaochun was suddenly being filled with very complex emotions. This was his first time in the Wildlands... to see a familiar face!

Chen Manyao, disciple of the River-Defying Sect.... She had accompanied Bai Xiaochun to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, but after the journey to the Great Wall, had disappeared without a trace. Although Bai Xiaochun had guessed that she eventually ended up at home, he had always felt a bit worried for her. As of this moment, he suddenly thought back to many memories from the River-Defying Sect....

He remembered how she was the one who had orchestrated the incident with the love letters, which had been such a cause of irritation to Hou Xiaomei and Song Junwan.... He also remembered how infatuated Xu Baocai had been with her....

Of course, Chen Manyao's current cultivation base was very different than the last time they had met. She now radiated a strong Nascent Soul aura; clearly, she had encountered profound good fortune after returning to the Wildlands.

Almost immediately, Bai Xiaochun found himself lost in thoughts

of how much he missed the River-Defying Sect. And yet, as of this moment, he was in the Wildlands, very, very far from home.

Chapter 689: They Want To Kill Me?!

Even as Bai Xiaochun felt lost in his thoughts, the person behind the second prince and Chen Manyao stepped forward and spoke in a raspy voice, “It seems everyone is assembled. In addition to escorting the second prince here, Fellow Daoists, I have been appointed by the Grand Heavenmaster to preside over the opening of the Necromancer Kettle.”

He was a middle-aged man, and completely expressionless, with ice-cold eyes. There was also something cold about his raspy voice that pulled Bai Xiaochun out of his reverie.

“Fellow Daoist Deathcrier, Fellow Daoist Cloudpeak, Fellow Daoist Redsieve, might I ask for your assistance?” A mere step took the man to a position above the Necromancer Kettle. As he did, Duke Deathcrier, as well as the two old-timers who had come with Zhou Hong and Xu Shan, nodded and followed along.

Above the Necromancer Kettle, they all began to perform incantation gestures, causing ripples to spread out as deva power descended.

Soon, intense rumbling sounds could be heard, and the Necromancer Kettle began to vibrate. More black mist poured out from inside of it, which then rose up into the sky.

“After enough time passes for a single incense stick to burn, the Necromancer Kettle will open, and the lot of you must enter immediately. We four can only keep it open for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn, so therefore... don’t delay. Opening the kettle a second time would be very difficult. However, it will open automatically after the flower fully blooms. At that time, you’ll have only two hours to emerge, lest you face deadly peril!” The surrounding chosen immediately began to get nervous. Rotating their cultivation bases, they sized each other up, and many of them even seemed to be transmitting messages.

Bai Xiaochun looked over at the Necromancer Kettle and considered trying to delay so that he would be the last one to go inside. However, he didn't see how he could really do that with only half an incense stick's worth of time to deal with.

“Ah, forget it....” he thought, feeling a bit depressed. However, it was in this exact moment that he suddenly realized that something seemed very off. It was as if he were now the subject of dozens of gazes, a feeling which caused him to look around vigilantly.

Countless chosen were all looking at him with thoughtful expressions, and gazes that were clearly filled with ill intentions. Even Zhou Hong, Xu Shan and Gongsun Yi were there in the crowd. Bai Xiaochun was starting to get a bad feeling.

“So, they're actually going to team up,” he thought, starting to pant a little. As far as Bai Xiaochun could tell, if everyone attacked him at the same time, it wouldn't matter if he was stronger than he currently was. There were more than a hundred people here... and all of them had deadly trump cards at their disposal, such that they could cause a headache even to a deva.

Not willing to be outdone, he quickly began to comfort himself and even work himself up a bit, “These people are all villains! What gall they have! I'm a mighty major general from the Great Wall, the famed majordomo of Giant Ghost City, a person who dares to fight with devas! I even kidnapped a demigod! How could I possibly be afraid of these people!?”

“On the other hand, I can't bully them. Ah, whatever. I have a really high status, and am in the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage. I shouldn't lower myself to their level. This time, I really have to keep a low profile. I'll just go in and take a look around, and definitely won't get into fights with any of these kids.” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun was convinced that he had reached a higher way of thinking than these other chosen. Planting a benevolent smile onto his face, he nodded kindly back at all of the chosen.

However, his smile didn't seem to do any good. Not only did the gazes locked onto him not grow any less malevolent, some of the chosen, including Zhou Hong and Zhao Dongshan, even began to sneer at him.

That immediately made him mad. After all, it wasn't common for an incredibly powerful person like him to show such good will. And yet here these dogs went and turned their noses up at him!

"This is outrageous.... Ah, whatever. Just forget about it. It's not a big deal. There's no point in bickering with them." Saddened, he decided to simply endure the situation, and was just about to look away, when suddenly, a chill ran through him!

"What's going on...?"

As of this point, he could sense killing intent within the eyes of the people looking at him.... Not all of these chosen were adept at hiding their true intentions, or perhaps it was that they didn't feel they needed to. Either way, Bai Xiaochun could clearly sense how much they wanted to kill him.

"They want to kill me?!" His heart immediately began to thump. Although everyone had come to fight over the Ghost King Orchid, and he was here on behalf of the Giant Ghost King, he had always thought that simply refraining from the fighting would make the entire thing much less dangerous.

But now, with so many people staring at him with killing intent, he suddenly felt the need to be completely on guard.

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun's instincts were correct. Although not every single last one of these chosen wanted to kill him, many of them did. Of course, it wasn't anything about him personally. However, all of them knew that he was not anyone important in the current dynasty; he was nothing more than one of the Giant Ghost King's subordinates, and therefore, he was someone they would naturally dare to kill!

Killing him would be the easiest way to resolve the biggest issue they all faced. With Bai Xiaochun out of the picture, the matter of who got the Ghost King Orchid fruit wouldn't be as important, at least, not unless the Giant Ghost King had made other arrangements.

As for which of the other heavenly kings got the fruit, it didn't really matter. Any of them could trade it to the Giant Ghost King. Furthermore, it didn't really matter which of the other chosen got it, although whoever did would surely benefit in some way.

Everyone knew that killing Bai Xiaochun would offend the Giant Ghost King, and normally speaking, they would be worried about that. But in this situation, all three of the other heavenly kings were working together, and their combined power ensured that even if the Giant Ghost King got angry, he wouldn't be able to do anything about it.

Everything came down to karma, and everyone knew that the four heavenly kings didn't really get along with each other. Besides, when other secret treasures had appeared in the Wildlands in the past, the kings would always fight over them, and on more than a few occasions, the Giant Ghost King had come out on top. Therefore, the fact that this incredibly important Ghost King Orchid had appeared ensured that the other three kings would take advantage of the situation to strike a blow against the Giant Ghost King.

When it came to the struggles of demigods, chosen like the ones present today would view Bai Xiaochun as a nobody who could be killed at will.

**

As the second prince stood there, he pondered some of the advice he had been given. Although he didn't plan to refuse the advice, in his heart, he was chuckling coldly. Nowadays in the Wildlands, the Arch-Emperor was weak. The Grand Heavenmaster controlled the

son of heaven and the nobility, and the four heavenly kings were not devoted heart and soul to protecting the dynasty. Therefore, one of the second prince's priorities were looking out for his own interests and solidifying his own power base.

For example, this arcane pocket realm was one of eight that specifically belonged to the imperial clan. And yet, a single order from the Grand Heavenmaster wrested it into the public domain for countless people to struggle over. Considering his status, the second prince hated both the Grand Heavenmaster and the four heavenly kings. Therefore, the infighting among the four kings was a good thing as far as he was concerned. However, the one person who he felt uneasy about was Chen Manyao.

She stood there next to the second prince with a cool expression on her face, as though nothing which was going on held any interest to her. She was here on the orders of her Master to acquire the ghost king fruit; anyone who acquired the fruit before she did was to be viewed as an enemy.

It didn't take long for half an incense stick's worth of time to pass. During that time, Bai Xiaochun's thoughts began to race faster and faster as he became convinced that there were people here who wanted to kill him.

“At least it's not everybody, only some of them.... Besides, if I did get killed, then the Giant Ghost King would die too; there's no way he would send me to my death....” Even as he frowned over the matter, the time limit passed, and rumbling sounds echoed out. As of that moment, the mist stopped pouring out of the Necromancer Kettle, and within the black mist that did exist around it... a tunnel appeared!

The middle-aged man who was presiding over the opening said loudly, “What are you waiting for?!”

Instantly, Gongsun Yi and Zhou Hong shot into motion, followed closely by others. As for Bai Xiaochun, he sighed and then sped

into motion.

“I need to catch them off guard and make sure they don’t have a chance to join forces. That’s the safest way to play things.” Gritting his teeth, he accelerated into the tunnel that led to the Necromancer Kettle.

Although the tunnel appeared to be very long, upon entering it, the chosen all vanished, including Bai Xiaochun. Moments later, they appeared in the world inside of the kettle!

A gray, overcast sky could be seen up above. The land was violet, and black mist floated everywhere, within which could be seen countless evil ghosts. From the sinister looks in the eyes of the ghosts, they were just waiting for people to pounce on.

Stifling pressure weighed down everywhere, causing a sense of profound danger to rise up in the hearts of the various chosen.

It was just barely possible to see mountains rising up around them, and further off in the distance, an enormous basin!

That basin was covered with a thick conglomeration of mist that formed into a flower that looked exactly like the Ghost King Orchid outside....

The flower was clearly in the middle of blooming, and needed a bit more time to complete the process....

Chapter 690: King Giant Ghost, You Fudge-Licking Prick!

All eyes came to focus on the misty Ghost King Orchid that rose up above the basin. As for Bai Xiaochun, he eyed his surroundings, glanced at the flower, and then prepared to cautiously slip away. However, it was in that very moment that a white light suddenly began to shine up from him.

It was impossible to cover up this light; it poured through his clothing and made him completely conspicuous within the darkness cast by the overcast sky.

Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped; he had no idea what was going on. As for everyone else, although some of them were inclined to try to kill Bai Xiaochun, most had just been planning to head toward the Ghost King Orchid. There were some who viewed it as beneath them to fight with someone like him. Only a few of them had actually intended to attack him right away.

But before anyone could even move, Bai Xiaochun started glowing with bright light, which instantly attracted a lot of attention. More than a hundred gazes instantly locked onto him, causing his scalp to tingle with fear.

All of these people were Nascent Soul cultivators, and the weakest among them was in the early Nascent Soul stage. Blinking in astonishment, he loudly said, "Calm down, everybody... um... On the behalf of the Giant Ghost King, I forfeit all right to the ghost king fruit! Don't worry everybody, I'm not going to try to fight you for it!"

He tried to make himself sound especially sincere as he spoke.

Everyone in the crowd was surprised, and many strange expressions appeared on their faces. However, before anyone could say anything in response, the light shining off of Bai Xiaochun

grew even more intense, making him completely eye-catching.

“What are you doing, Bai Hao?!”

Bai Xiaochun wanted to cry, but no tears would come. He anxiously began to inspect himself to try to figure out what was happening, and soon, found the source of the light. It was none other than... the restrictive spell from the Giant Ghost King!!

Bai Xiaochun's heart began to pound with a very ill premonition. As of this moment, the white light hardly seemed connected to him at all, and in fact, was leaving him, heading at top speed toward the basin!

This sudden development caused numerous faces to fall. With blinding speed, the light shot toward the basin, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as it came to settle on top of the Ghost King Orchid!

Before long, a white shield of light had covered the entire flower. Then, moments later, a huge vortex appeared inside, the gravitational force of which caused the flower to begin to bloom more rapidly!

One could well imagine that with that shield of light, and that gravitational force, the Ghost King Orchid would soon bloom, and the fruit would appear. When that happened, the vortex would surely take the fruit away....

Everyone watching was completely taken aback, and Bai Xiaochun was dumbstruck. He began to tremble, and his pulse raced as he realized why the Giant Ghost King had been so confident in sending him here....

“Giant Ghost King, you fudge-licking prick!!! You didn't arrange for anybody to help me, did you!? Y-y-you....” Bai Xiaochun's face drained of blood as he realized that he had been completely screwed over by the Giant Ghost King. All the Giant Ghost King needed was for him to get into the Necromancer Kettle, and all

issues would be resolved thanks to the way the restrictive spell worked....

That restrictive spell... was the Giant Ghost King's true trump card. It was his way to get the ghost king fruit no matter what happened!

Bai Xiaochun moaned inwardly as he realized that the white light shining out from him was also causing his cultivation base to drop. In the briefest moment, he was half-drained! Backing up, his scalp tingling explosively, he suddenly felt a sensation of intense, deadly crisis. As of this moment, it was obvious... that he was in big trouble!!

“Damn that Giant Ghost King!!” Bai Xiaochun was so flustered and exasperated that he was sure he was going to start crying at any moment. Just as he considered how to flee, all of the people around him gasped and then began to cry out in anger and alarm.

“That's a void spell created by someone with a nascent divinity.... As long as the host of the restrictive spell doesn't die, not even a demigod could blast it open!!”

Not even the top chosen like Gongsun Yi or Zhou Hong could keep their faces calm. Although none of them could specifically state the name of this particular restrictive spell, they could see that it was obviously too powerful for Nascent Soul cultivators to break open. The only way to get through it... would be to kill the host of the spell. And the host... was obviously Bai Hao!

That was even more obvious given that Bai Xiaochun was still shining with white light that flowed forth to connect him to the restrictive spell. The killing intent in the eyes of the gathered chosen grew more intense.

“Feeling suicidal, Bai Hao?!”

“Dammit, you just said you forfeited! And now this!? You're dead!!”

“Kill him! That's the only way to get rid of that restrictive spell. Otherwise, we're all defeated for sure!!”

As countless angry shouts filled the air, it was like a huge target came to fall on Bai Xiaochun. Then, people began to draw on the powers of their cultivation base to shoot in his direction.

“You've got it all wrong!” he shouted angrily. “Wait, let me explain--” Before he could finish speaking, a burly man suddenly appeared in front of him, who was none other than Zhao Dongshan.

“Hear me out, Fellow Daoist--” Bai Xiaochun shouted.

However, that was when Zhao Dongshan let out a vicious bellow: “Die!”

Three more people were right behind Zhao Dongshan, all of whom unleashed powerful magical techniques against him.

“Giant Ghost King, you bastard!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, preparing to back up. However, that was when he noticed eight people behind him, killing intent raging with such intensity that he gasped. He knew that he couldn't hesitate here; if he did, he would give these people a chance to surround him. Therefore, he didn't hesitate to use the Mountain Shaking Bash.

It was with explosive speed that he accelerated toward Zhao Dongshan, who wore a vicious grin as he raised his wolf tooth club up to deliver a killing blow.

Rumbling sounds echoed out in all directions that caused shocked expressions to fill the faces of all the surrounding Wildlander chosen. That was especially true of those who were closer to him; their eyes went completely wide.

Zhao Dongshan, within whose veins ran the blood of savage giants, was sent tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut, blood spraying out of his mouth. As for Bai Xiaochun, who everyone had expected would be rebuffed by Zhao Dongshan's burly frame, he was now fleeing at top speed.

“How is this possible?!?!”

“Nobody among us has stronger fleshly body power than Zhao Dongshan, except for that [termagant](#) Xu Shan! I can’t believe he got sent flying by that blow!!”

“This Bai Hao... his fleshly body power has reached an absurd level!”

Despite being shocked, there were still numerous individuals who were chasing after Bai Xiaochun, who was so jittery that tears could be seen welling up in his eyes.

“This is beyond outrageous, Giant Ghost King! All I did was slap you across the side of the head a few times and use you like a shield. I’m the one who saved you! I can’t believe you’re screwing me over! Things aren’t going to turn out good for you if I die!!!” Feeling incredibly wronged, he checked the restrictive spell inside of him and confirmed that it was still there. Unfortunately, because of how things had changed, Bai Xiaochun could tell that if he died, the Giant Ghost King wouldn’t die; he would only receive some serious injuries.

Clearly, the Giant Ghost King was forcing his hand, but at the same time, he was also gambling.... He was gambling that Bai Xiaochun would be able to hold out until the flower bloomed. Then Bai Xiaochun thought about the medicinal pills he had been given, and the spear, and the pieces clicked together.

“Those medicinal pills can only be consumed nine times in one’s life, and he gave me nine of them.... As for that spear, it’s probably the most powerful magical item he possesses that I could use....”

**

In Bai Xiaochun's moment of crisis, the Giant Ghost King stood in a building in his royal palace in Giant Ghost City, various expressions flashing across his face. He was currently looking in the direction of the Necromancer Kettle, his heart pounding with

anxiety.

The ghost king fruit was of critical importance to him, and it was just as Bai Xiaochun had just been thinking; he had given him nine precious medicinal pills, and a spear with a sixteenfold spirit enhancement, which was the best possible magical item he could have given him. The truth was that everything which had happened so far was part of the plan he had begun to devise once the variable of Bai Xiaochun had been added to the picture, and the Giant Ghost King got his cultivation base back.

He was gambling... on Bai Xiaochun's ability to flee for his life. That was something that the Giant Ghost King was actually very confident in. When he thought back to how Bai Xiaochun had fled with him from three devas and countless Nascent Soul experts, he felt much more confident.

"I've never met anyone as good at running away as this Bai Hao...." he murmured. "I just hope he can last for long enough.... Bai Hao, as long as you get that ghost king fruit for me, then I'll treat you like my own son! From then on, I'll never let anything or anyone hurt you!"

Hey everyone, I know that termagant is a very uncommon word, but it's the perfect term to use here. It means "a violent, turbulent, or brawling woman." I don't think there could be a better word, and it's exactly what the Chinese term means.

Chapter 691: No, I Want Revenge!

Booms filled the interior of the Necromancer Kettle, causing the mists which filled it to seethe and dance. Countless evil ghosts could be seen, their eyes flickering with greed at the sight of all of the chosen, as though the qi and blood inside of them were the most nourishing thing they had ever seen.

Bai Xiaochun felt more wronged than ever as he attempted to break free of the crowd of chosen. However, his cultivation base was being greatly weakened by the restrictive spell, making it much more difficult than it should have been. It only took a moment for about eight of the chosen to be rushing toward him.

Bai Xiaochun's eyelids twitched as he realized that one of these new opponents was none other than Zhou Hong, who was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage!

Zhou Hong's eyes flickered with killing intent, as though he were facing a mere insect as an opponent. As for Bai Xiaochun, his breath came in ragged pants, and his eyes were completely bloodshot as he shot forward like an angry dragon, unhesitatingly bashing into the entire group.

When everyone collided, a massive boom filled heaven and earth, and the chosen all flew backward, qi and blood surging. Zhou Hong's expression flickered slightly in response to the ferocity on display by Bai Xiaochun. The other chosen were equally shocked, and were now coming to the conclusion that they had misjudged his speed, and would be unable to prevent him from fleeing.

Bai Xiaochun's momentum was only growing. His fleshly body power erupted with incredible force, and his cultivation base surged with the power of his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul. He was like a celestial warrior, the likes of which nobody could impede in the slightest.

Of course, he didn't dare to slow down. There were numerous

opponents behind him ready to batter him with divine abilities if he paused for even a second. Heart racing, he could do nothing other than speed forward. As he did, he waved his hand, summoning his sixteenfold spirit enhanced spear. That, coupled with his incredible speed, made him almost superhumanly valiant.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Just when it seemed that he would break free of all the chosen, a cold snort echoed out in front of him. It was none other than Gongsun Yi!

As he hovered here in front of Bai Xiaochun, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and then waved his finger out. Instantly, a sealing power erupted forth, causing innumerable illusory magical symbols to appear and rush toward Bai Xiaochun. Within moments, they had formed into a gigantic net which began to rapidly shrink down around him!

There was no way for Bai Xiaochun to get out of the way in time. Instead, he slammed directly into the net. Unfortunately, his cultivation base was too weak at the moment, and he couldn't break through. The only thing that happened was that cracks spread out on the surface of the net.

That in itself was shocking to Gongsun Yi. Just when he was about to attempt to strengthen the sealing power of the net, the dozens of chosen who had been following Bai Xiaochun appeared.

Without the slightest hesitation, all of them attacked, unleashing divine abilities and magical techniques that appeared to be at the level of trump cards. One of the chosen in that group was Zhou Hong, who sent a shocking beam of sword light slashing down toward Bai Xiaochun!

Little Wolfgod was also present, who howled as he transformed into something that looked half-wolf, half-human. That in turn gave him a huge burst of speed that he used to close in on Bai Xiaochun!

As for the sinister Li Tiansheng, he chuckled coldly as he waved his right index finger, causing a five-colored toxic gas to billow out. The gas rapidly transformed into five skulls which cackled evilly as they shot forward using minor teleportations.

These were all Nascent Soul cultivators, and although many were in the early stage, not a few were in the mid stage. There were even some like Li Tiansheng and Little Wolfgod who were late Nascent Soul stage experts. One, Zhou Hong, was even in the great circle. Each and every one of them was a chosen with powerful techniques, and when they pooled their strength, it was enough to cause even a deva to be shocked.

An intense sensation of deadly crisis rose up in Bai Xiaochun; despite having mentally prepared for something like this, the sudden and unexpected turn of events was difficult to take in.

“You big bullies!” Heart filled with bitterness, he threw his head back and roared as he produced the Eternal Parasol. After snapping it open, he used all the power he could muster to defend himself against the attack from behind. However, even as he did, a shout from the side could be heard as Xu Shan barrelled toward him with a fist strike.

“You’re not going anywhere!” Xu Shan shouted in an iron voice. Her fist strike was backed by the full power of her fleshly body, causing rumbling sounds to fill the air that surpassed heavenly thunder. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was rendered immobile by the sealing net. Shouting angrily, he kept the Eternal Parasol behind him as a shield as he also unleashed a fist strike.

Despite being on different sides of the net, their fists met, and at the same time, numerous divine abilities and magical techniques slammed into the Eternal Parasol.

Booms rose up into the heavens, along with dazzling light. The sealing net instantly shattered, and Xu Shan was blown backward in retreat. Gongsun Yi’s face fell as he too retreated in the face of

the wave of powerful attacks.

Blood oozed out of the corners of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he and the Eternal Parasol were sent tumbling forward toward the black mist.

The mere sight of that left everyone present completely flabbergasted. Never could any of them have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would escape their combined attack with only some injuries!

It was at this point that Miao Lin'er's lips moved, causing a ripple to spread out into the air from her mouth. It was a ripple that could destabilize the mind of anyone it encountered, and it immediately sped directly toward the fleeing Bai Xiaochun.

It was a sound that defied the ability to defend against it, and as soon as it reached Bai Xiaochun's ears, his mind trembled, and all of his injuries flared up. Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he immediately began to stagger forward.

In response, cold light flickered in Zhou Hong's eyes. Waving his right hand, he summoned a black, glowing light that pulsed with a deva aura. Even as everyone looked over in shock, he sent the glowing light shooting toward Bai Xiaochun.

The black light moved so quickly it seemed capable of piercing through the air, and was soon right in front of Bai Xiaochun. And yet, before it could reach him, a different type of black light shot out from inside of Bai Xiaochun.

It was none other than his turtle-wok. A boom rang out, and the black glow shattered, while the turtle-wok was sent spinning back to Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun borrowed the force of the blow to keep moving, simultaneously taking out a Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill, which ensured that he didn't slow down at all.

“We can't let him get away!!”

“If Bai Hao doesn't die, that restrictive spell will never unravel!!”

The entire group of chosen was starting to get nervous. Gongsun Yi, Zhou Hong, Xu Shan, Little Wolfgod, and all of the other cultivators gritted their teeth and gave chase.

Before long, everyone was inside of the mist. The second prince wore a cold smile as he joined in the pursuit, and even Chen Manyao could be seen chasing after Bai Xiaochun. However, there was an odd glint in her eye; she hadn't noticed at first, but gradually, had come to the realization that there seemed to be something very familiar about the way this Bai Hao was fighting....

As Bai Xiaochun sped through the mist, burning heat spread through him, healing all of his wounds. Within the space of a few breaths of time, he was completely recovered, which left him feeling slightly less irritated than before.

However, his cultivation base was still being weakened, and when he thought about how the Giant Ghost King had screwed him over, his mood sank again. He felt very angry and very wronged, and yet, knew that he couldn't dare to slow down a bit.

Thanks to his incredible speed, his pursuers had no way to catch up to him even if they wanted to. In fact, he was actually putting distance between himself and them. Combined with the fact that the dimension inside of the Necromancer Kettle was filled with dense mist and evil ghosts that needed to be avoided, it made things even more difficult. Before long, the howls of evil ghosts could be heard as many of them began to attack the chosen.

In contrast... not a single one of the evil ghosts or vengeful souls could hinder Bai Xiaochun at all. And there was a reason for that! Although the speed of all the other chosen was hampered by their reduced visibility, Bai Xiaochun could see everything around him completely clearly.

“Hmph! With my mask, you fools might as well stop dreaming of trying to catch me!” Snorting coldly, he continued to accelerate. More than two hours passed, after which Bai Xiaochun couldn't

hear anyone chasing him. At that point, he settled down on top of one of the mountains in the area and consumed another Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill. Finally, his cultivation base was no longer being weakened, and was starting to recover. After consuming another of the pills, he was completely back at his peak. Then he thought back to everything that had happened so far, and felt unsurpassable bitterness in his heart.

“I can’t believe so many people are chasing me! I never did anything to them. What a bunch of bullies. Outrageous! If they were all that good, they would fight me one-on-one!!

“And then there’s you, Giant Ghost King, you old codger. I saved you, you fool. Risked my life! And now you go and do this to me!

“Fudge! I'm not going to let this stand. I want revenge!!” The more he thought about it, the angrier he got, until finally, within his negative emotions, he suddenly felt courage rising up within him, and decided that now was not the time to hold back.

Chapter 692: You Screw Me, I Screw You!

“I want revenge!!” he said, his face a mask of rage. Clenching his hands into fists, his mind began to spin with thoughts of how to do just that.

Of course, he was no fool; he knew that killing everyone wasn't an option. He was in a very precarious position and situation here in the Wildlands. If he killed one or two of these chosen, it might not be a big deal, but if he killed too many, he would end up offending all of the Wildlands. That would be putting himself in far too precarious of a situation.

And yet, merely killing one or two people would not be the revenge he wanted.

“Besides, me killing some people wouldn't be a very big deal to the Giant Ghost King. After all, it's not like he would be directly responsible for their deaths.... In fact, he would probably get super pissed off at me. In the end, I would just be screwing myself by doing that....

“No, I have to think of something better. I have to think of a way to get my revenge, and also make things hard on the Giant Ghost King.” Tugging at his hair in frustration, and eyes completely bloodshot, he continued to ponder the situation for a long moment. Then, his eyes suddenly began to shine, and he gasped.

“I know what to do!!” he thought, instantly perking up. As the moments ticked by, his idea grew clearer.

“I won't kill them, I'll kidnap them! Then I'll hand them all over to the Giant Ghost King. At that point, they'll definitely blame him for everything inside the Necromancer Kettle. Then he'll either have to release all of the chosen, and lose a huge amount of face, or refuse to release them, and give the rest of the Wildlands a good reason to join together and cause problems for him! Heh heh....

“These chosen are going to end up like hot potatoes, and when the time comes, the Giant Ghost King isn’t going to be able to go to anybody to complain about it.... And even if he were more domineering than he already is, it would be difficult for him to try to hold all the chosen hostage. That would get everyone completely pissed off. If Lord Bai did something like that, it probably wouldn't cause too much of a stir, but if the Giant Ghost King tried to, it would lead to all sorts of disasters!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

He really couldn’t help but marvel at how intelligent he was to come up with an idea like this. Feeling more proud of himself than ever, he sighed and then began to put more thought into how to carry out his plan.

“I definitely have to think of every possibility. What will I do if that punk the Giant Ghost King actually just decides to release everybody? That’s not a completely impossible outcome. Hmmmphh! Lord Bai will make sure that even if the Giant Ghost King frees everyone, he’ll still pay a painful price for it all!” Looking very excited at the prospect of getting his revenge this way, he did a bit more planning. Soon, his eyes shone with anticipation.

“This isn’t my fault, Giant Ghost King. You screw me over? Well don’t blame me for screwing you right back. Furthermore, Lord Bai is going to take this opportunity to cultivate his Undying Bones!” Although there were some flaws to his plan, Bai Xiaochun knew that he couldn’t account for every possibility. However, he was certain that his overall strategy was perfect.

“I can’t sit around waiting to take vengeance. I need to start now!” With that, he blurred into motion, speeding out into the mists and using the power of his mask to conceal his aura. Not only did the evil ghosts not see him because of that, but he was able to flit about like a spirit from the underworld, passing here and there

without making a single noise.

The mists in the Necromancer Kettle were filled with evil ghosts and countless hordes of vengeful souls. To pass by so many of the things left him feeling a bit jumpy.

That was especially true when he realized that the evil ghosts here all had solitary horns jutting out of their foreheads. Furthermore, they seemed to occasionally take corporeal form, which was even more shocking.

“This Necromancer Kettle is a very strange place, and the vengeful souls here are completely bizarre!”

These vengeful souls and evil ghosts were much more brutal than the type outside, and some of them could even utilize magical techniques and divine abilities that drew upon their auras of death. Furthermore, if they saw living beings, they would pounce on them and, if they caught them, immediately begin to extract their life force. Before long, the life force flames of such victims would even begin to flicker unstably.

If cultivators from the Heavenspan River region ran into vengeful souls like this, they would flee in terror. But the chosen here were Wildlanders, people who were well-equipped to deal with hordes of souls. Furthermore, all of them were necromancers of some skill. Despite the fact that the souls and ghosts in the Necromancer Kettle were more brutal than those on the outside, and more fear-inspiring, the chosen could deal with them if they were careful.

The chosen knew that the Necromancer Kettle was a special place, and that although the evil ghosts and vengeful souls there could be taken away, they would be especially hard to subjugate. The best thing to do when running into them was either to destroy them, or flee.

Because of the attacking souls and ghosts, the chosen who had been chasing Bai Xiaochun had already scattered, and were all

fighting their own battles. Although, none of them had given up on the search for their quarry either.

All of them were prepared to instantly raise the alarm if they found him, and get everyone to join forces to eradicate him!

“Damned Bai Hao. If he doesn’t die, then none of us will have a chance to get that ghost king fruit!”

“Time is running out!” Everyone pulsed with the desire to kill Bai Hao, especially one young man in a blue robe, who had a very grim expression on his face as he sped through the mists. He was currently being chased by a trail of vengeful souls, and yet, they couldn’t catch up, and were soon left behind.

He was none other than Little Wolfgod, who because of his late Nascent Soul stage cultivation base, was free to move about unless he encountered a huge horde of souls, or perhaps a particularly powerful evil ghost.

“This Bai Hao is fast, but I refuse to believe that he’ll be able to evade so many of us!” Little Wolfgod had originally intended to rely on the power of his cultivation base to help one of the heirs apparent get the ghost king fruit. That was the mission from his clan, and if he accomplished it, he would be handsomely rewarded when he got home.

But Bai Hao had ruined everything. With the restrictive spell in place, nobody could get to the fruit. Both Little Wolfgod and everyone else present got the distinct sensation that this Bai Hao was toying with them.

“There are no grudges between us, but you still have to die!” Chuckling coldly, Little Wolfgod pushed forward with greater speed, sending his divine sense out in all directions to search for his quarry. An hour later, he was still speeding through the mists when he saw a group of several hundred vengeful souls. The vengeful souls caught sight of him in almost the same moment, and began to speed in his direction, eyes glowing with

netherworldly light.

Little Wolfgod ignored them; a group of a few hundred vengeful souls wasn't even worthy of his attention. With a burst of speed, he shot through them. However, even as he emerged on the other side, his face fell as a sensation of profound crisis rose up inside of him. A very strange feeling had just washed through him, making him feel like he had lost thirty percent of his cultivation base power. His cultivation base felt sore, and even sluggish in response.

“What’s going on?!” Before he could ponder the situation, he lurched to a stop, and then backed up. But even as he did so, a cold chuckle could be heard next to him.

“Too late!” A figure blurred toward him from within the vengeful souls, moving as quickly as a lightning bolt, so fast that neither the naked eye nor divine sense could track it. Before Little Wolfgod could react, the figure was right in front of him, where it combined both fleshly body strength and cultivation base power into a powerful fist strike.

Little Wolfgod let out a shout, and drew on all the power he could muster to transform into a half-wolf, half-man. However, before the transformation could be completed, Bai Xiaochun’s fist strike landed.

A rumbling sound could be heard, and a shockwave spread out in all directions. The vengeful souls were shoved away, and the shocked Little Wolfgod had no time to dodge or block, or even unleash his own blow to defend himself. Bai Xiaochun’s fist was like a mountain that slammed into his chest with indescribable force. Little Wolfgod was crushed like a twig, suffering severe internal injuries that caused him to cough up mouthful after mouthful of blood. His cultivation base nearly shattered, and numerous bones in his body were broken.

“Bai Hao!!” He shrieked, scalp tingling with shock. The fist which

had struck him contained the violent force of a thunderstorm, and was something Little Wolfgod had never even seen before. Shock and terror rose up in him as blood spilled out of his mouth. This Bai Hao seemed completely different from before, more powerful to an unbelievable degree.

One fist strike had nearly destroyed Little Wolfgod. His injuries were so severe that he could barely see straight, and his nascent soul had nearly been knocked out from inside of him. As for his divine ability of transformation, it was completely interrupted and defeated! Furthermore, the force of the blow sent him tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut, until he was fully 300 meters away.

Snorting coldly, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward to appear right in front of him. “Change shape! You had a lot of fun hitting me with your wolf form, didn’t you? So, change shape! I want to hit the transformed version of you!”

Little Wolfgod was so weak that he had lost all of his will to fight. Seeing that Bai Hao was closing in on him, his eyes turned bloodshot, and despite the wounds he had suffered, he cried, “Bai Hao is right--”

However, before the words could leave his mouth, Bai Hao sealed him and tossed him into his bag of holding, then sped off into the mists.

Chapter 693: An Eagle Catching Baby Chickens....

Almost as soon as Bai Xiaochun took to motion, seven or eight figures appeared in the spot where he had tangled with Little Wolfgod. The fluctuations of the magical techniques used were still in the air, as was the blood. The faces of the newcomers flickered, and they transmitted a short conversation before scattering.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun sped through the mists at high speed, licking his lips, his eyes flickering with madness. Little Wolfgod was not the first chosen he had captured, but rather, the eighth.

“That’ll teach you to change shape before attacking me!” he thought with a cold snort. All of the other chosen he had captured, including Little Wolfgod, had been taken out with a single fist strike. For all intents and purposes, this was Bai Xiaochun’s first time truly fighting people since he had stepped into the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage. As he did, he was learning about some of the amazing aspects of his new cultivation base.

“My Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul seems powerful enough to suppress all other types of nascent souls.... All of the other chosen I attacked nearly had their cultivation bases destroyed.” After reviewing the past few fights, he was even more certain than ever that Little Wolfgod’s cultivation base had also been unstable. With that, he decided to go confirm his theory.

He hurried along for a bit until suddenly, his expression flickered, and he changed direction. Off to the right, he had just caught sight of two Wildlander chosen being chased by a large group of vengeful souls.

“I’ll do a little test with these two.” Chuckling, he accelerated toward the two chosen, who caught sight of him only moments later. Their faces fell, and they were about to open their mouths

when Bai Xiaochun flicked his sleeve, sending a burst of wind out. Both of them had mid Nascent Soul stage cultivation bases, which they drew upon to defend themselves, and yet, how could they possibly be a match for Bai Xiaochun? When facing his magical techniques, their cultivation bases were suppressed, making it difficult for them to rotate them properly.

Before either of them could do anything, they were sent tumbling backward, blood spraying out of their mouths. Then, Bai Xiaochun shot forward, reached out, and grabbed them.

After sealing them and tossing them into his bag of holding, he smiled broadly. Just now, he had been closely observing their cultivation bases, and was now sure that his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul cultivation base truly could emit crushing pressure onto other types of nascent souls.

“Heavens! Who would have thought that I was this strong!?!?” Excitedly, he turned and headed off in a different direction.

By now, the other Wildlander chosen in the Necromancer Kettle were the prey, and Bai Xiaochun, the hunter. One after another, he captured chosen, almost as if he were an eagle swooping down onto baby chickens.

When he encountered larger groups, he would avoid them, preferring to prey on solitary targets. When he found such targets, rumbling sounds would fill the air that attracted a lot of attention. But he won each battle so quickly, and fled with such speed, that no one else was able to even come close to surrounding him.

“Dammit, how come this Bai Hao can move about so freely in this mist?!?!?”

“There are already more than ten people missing....”

“Notify everyone that they need to stick together. Form groups of at least five!” Virtually all of the chosen in the Necromancer Kettle were taking orders from either Gongsun Yi, Zhou Hong or Xu

Shan, so as the messages were sent out, everyone became more cautious than ever.

When that started happening, Bai Xiaochun got nervous. Although it was possible to kidnap five people at a time, it would take a lot longer. At the moment, he was speeding through the mists, wondering if he should change his appearance with his mask to fool people, when suddenly his face lit up.

“A straggler!” Off in the distance, he could see a burly fellow striding along, slaughtering vengeful souls left and right. It was none other than... Zhao Dongshan.

“He’s pretty far away. If he tried to use a minor teleportation, it would definitely drag things out too long...” With that, he produced a greatbow from his bag of holding.

In almost the same moment that Bai Xiaochun caught sight of Zhao Dongshan, Zhao Dongshan caught sight of him.

Zhao Dongshan was shocked; he had heard that quite a few people were missing, and as such, immediately turned to head toward some of his fellows. However, even as he tried to break out from the tide of souls that had surrounded him, a sensation of profound crisis rose up within him. That sense of crisis didn’t come because of his divine sense, but rather, the special technique he cultivated, a fleshly body danger sense!

Looking back in fear at Bai Xiaochun, he didn't hesitate for even a moment to utilize a minor teleportation. However, before he could complete it, an arrow appeared, shooting toward him at high speed and with shocking energy. Then, before it even reached him, it detonated.

The massive force of the explosion instantly threw the air in the area into chaos.

“A spirit enhanced arrow!!” Blood oozed out of the corners of Zhao Dongshan’s mouth as he realized that this spirit enhanced

arrow had reached the tenfold level or higher. Only arrows like that could create spatial distortions that would interfere with teleportations

A look of despair appeared in his eyes as he tried to back up. As he watched in terror, Bai Xiaochun used his greatbow to shoot seven more arrows, all of which whistled toward him with incredible speed.

“Bai Hao!!” Zhao Dongshan shouted, urgently speeding away physically because he was unable to teleport.

Earlier, he had looked down on this supposed Bai Hao. But then he ended up being the first one struck when the chosen attempted to surround him. His chest still hurt from where he had been bashed into, and because of that, he had no intention of getting into a fight right now. And yet, before he could truly begin to retreat, the arrows were upon him, and exploded.

The explosions cast the area into further chaos, and caused blood to spray out of Zhao Dongshan’s mouth. Throwing all caution to the wind, he attempted to flee at top speed. And yet, compared to Bai Xiaochun, he was too slow. Already, Bai Xiaochun was closing in on him in utterly aggressive fashion.

The mere thought of how Zhao Dongshan had been the first one to attack him got Bai Xiaochun very angry. “Think you’re tough stuff? Fudge! How dare you be the first one to attack Lord Bai! Lord Bai is gonna beat you to death!”

Without any hesitation, he unleashed a devastating fist strike, which caused deafening rumbling sounds to echo out in all directions. After the proverbial dust cleared, Zhao Dongshan was kidnapped, and Bai Xiaochun was speeding away.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding with excitement by this point. He was definitely having a lot of fun with this cat-and-mouse game.

“What a bunch of dolts! All they know how to do is gang up on people. Hmmmphh! Which of them would dare to fight Lord Bai one-on-one!?” Feeling truly unparalleled under heaven, he flicked his sleeve and proceeded onward proudly. Before long, he encountered a large group of shrieking vengeful souls, from within which could be heard the sounds of fighting.

“Another windfall. The eagle catches more baby chickens....” Licking his lips, he approached carefully until he could see five Wildlander chosen surrounded by vengeful souls. At the moment, they were just on the verge of breaking out into the open. Of the five, four were in the mid Nascent Soul stage, and one was in the late stage. Their combined power was incredible, and obviously, it was only a matter of time before they would be free of the vengeful souls.

“What a pity I can’t control the vengeful souls here. That would make things a whole lot simpler!” He sighed, then thought for a moment before producing a fifteen-colored flame. Eyes flickering, and chuckling darkly, he flew forward, concealing the fluctuations of his cultivation base as he got closer and closer to the group of chosen.

Before long, intense rumbling sounds could be heard as red clouds appeared in the sky. Then, fire began to fall like rain. It was none other than the special divine ability Bai Xiaochun had come up with in the Bai Clan. He had assumed that after reaching the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, he would lose that ability, and yet, unexpectedly, the opposite had happened. It actually got easier to use. As the sea of flames appeared, the vengeful souls began to scatter. As for the five chosen, their faces fell as they saw the endlessly destructive fire bearing down on them. They immediately turned to flee, which was the exact same moment that Bai Xiaochun appeared among them, long spear in hand, battle prowess surging as he danced in and out of the raining fire....

Booms filled the air, and after ten breaths of time, Bai Xiaochun was gone, along with the five chosen. Even after he left, the rain of fire continued to fall with destructive force.

The entire dimension inside the Necromancer Kettle had been thrown into chaos. The Wildlander Chosen were all shocked to the core, and by now, everyone knew that nearly thirty among their number were missing.

Bai Hao was simply too quick. Nobody ever had a chance to try to surround him, and furthermore, it was to the shock of all present that they realized the evil ghosts didn't even notice him.

Everyone was frustrated, enraged, and also shocked. As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun's revenge was being carried out very smoothly.

By now, the remaining chosen had separated into four main groups, led respectively by Gongsun Yi, Zhou Hong, Xu Shan, and the second prince.

Of course, it wasn't a long-term strategy. After all, they had to track Bai Xiaochun down. If they didn't, and the deadlock lasted for too long, nobody would get the ghost king fruit.

Eventually, they realized they had to split up. Unfortunately, spreading out into a net-like formation wasn't very suitable in the Necromancer Kettle. There were simply too many evil ghosts and vengeful souls in the place. As such, they had to stick together, even if just to fight off the occasional evil ghost.

Of the four main groups, each had their own separate way of doing things. The second prince had a group of several dozen with him, including Chen Manyao, who stuck together closely as they searched.

Although Gongsun Yi, Zhou Hong and Xu Shan were all very confident in general, they also kept three or four people with them as they searched. The rest of the cultivators stayed in groups of

roughly ten. It was in this way that everyone felt confident enough to tackle Bai Xiaochun if they encountered him.

Chapter 694: A Soul!

Everyone in the Necromancer Kettle was feeling incredibly jumpy. By this point, all of them realized how powerful Bai Xiaochun was, and yet, there were no other options than to try to deal him. After all, they couldn't leave the Necromancer Kettle early. They could only follow the orders of Gongsun Yi and the others, and try to track Bai Xiaochun down.

One by one, they gritted their teeth and continued to search, their main hope being that they could find Bai Hao, surround him, and join forces to kill him.

The Ghost King Orchid was blooming rapidly, and that was their only shot at being able to win it in the end.

As everyone methodically searched for him, Bai Xiaochun was in a valley between two mountains, chest puffed with pride as he looked at the roughly thirty chosen who were all sitting in front of him, glaring at him angrily. He had sealed both their cultivation bases and their limbs, making it impossible for them to do anything other than look at him threateningly.

“If you’re that tough, then just kill us!”

“Hmph! You’ve brought a heaven-level disaster upon yourself, Bai Hao. Not even the Giant Ghost King will be able to keep you safe!”

The eyes of Zhao Dongshan and Little Wolfgod were particularly bloodshot. If looks could kill, then their eyes would long since have reduced Bai Xiaochun to crumbling bone and ash.

“Trying to scare me? You people just wait!” After glaring at the group of thirty, he proudly patted his bag of holding to produce the Eternal Parasol. Then he walked over to one particular young man whose voice had been more threatening than any of the others.

Startled, the young man stared angrily at Bai Xiaochun and said,

“What do you think you’re going to do with that?!”

“Oh nothing. Heh heh. The technique I cultivate requires life force, so I’m going to borrow a bit from you....” Clearing his throat, and yet not hesitating for a moment, he... stabbed the Eternal Parasol into the young man’s chest.

The young man let out a bloodcurdling scream that caused the faces of the other chosen to flicker with various emotions. Many of them even began to pant. Shocked, they watched as the young man’s body began to visibly wither. After ten breaths of time passed, his hair had turned white, and he appeared to be little more than skin and bones. At this point, their hearts were starting to pound, and they were looking at Bai Xiaochun with terrified eyes.

The Eternal Parasol exerted a bizarre, almost demonic gravitational force that greedily gobbled up all life force.

That life force in turn poured into Bai Xiaochun, causing him to tremble inwardly. When he decided enough was enough, he retracted the Eternal Parasol. Then, face slightly flush, he ignored everyone else present and sat down cross-legged to meditate and work on the fourth level of the Undying Codex, the Undying Bones!

The life force which had just poured into him rapidly vanished, soaked into his bones as surely as water would soak into parched earth. At the same time, a comfortable expression appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face.

The scene which was playing out caused Little Wolfgod, Zhao Dongshan, and everyone else to gasp in shock. Their faces drained of blood, and expressions of terror appeared. As for the young man whose life force had just been drained away, he seemed like he was gasping his last breaths. Although he wasn’t dead, his vital energy had been badly damaged.

“What kind of devilish technique does this Bai Hao cultivate?!?!”

“Heavens! He directly extracted that life force to use in cultivation....”

“Now I get why he kidnapped all of us. He wants to use us to further his cultivation!!”

As everyone trembled in fear, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes snapped open, and they brimmed with spirit and joy. “Hahaha! It’s exactly as I predicted. As long as I have enough life force, I can cultivate my Undying Bones at will. Hmmmphh! I’m not going to kill these people, I’m going to suck their life force dry, toss them over to the Giant Ghost King, and then let him deal with the headache!”

Chuckling to himself, he looked around at the flustered chosen, and before any of them could say anything, he rose to his feet and approached one of them.

“Hi there! I sure hope you can cooperate. Don’t worry, it doesn’t hurt....” Beaming from ear to ear, he stabbed the Eternal Parasol into the chest of the terrified chosen....

It didn’t take long before he moved from the second chosen to the third, and then the fourth.... It took eight hours to extract the life force from everyone present. As for his bones, thanks to the influx of life force and the cultivation of his technique, they soon reached the point where two thunderous booms spread out inside of him.

At that point, his entire body emitted a black glow that slowly faded away. Then he opened his eyes and expelled a mouthful of impure vital energy. As of this moment, his bones were much more resilient than before.

“The second stratum of Tempered Bones!” Eyes shining with anticipation, he contemplated how all he had to do was reach the next stratum, and he would be able to use the Undying Emperor’s Fist.

“The life force requirements of the Undying Bones are terrifying.

Even with all these people, all I could do was reach the second stratum.... Ridiculous. However, at least now I know that it was the right decision to come to the Necromancer Kettle. Having all these chosen here is like having my choice of a whole bunch of high-level medicine!” Radiating health and vigor, he looked at the thirty emaciated and listless chosen, and then quickly threw them back into his bag of holding. Then, he flew back out into the mists.

Bai Xiaochun proceeded along carefully, making sure to stay hidden as he went. Before long, a frown could be seen on his face as he realized that most of the chosen weren't in groups of five, but rather, ten.

Considering that, it wasn't likely that he could end a fight quickly. If he got wrapped up in a protracted fight, he would end up getting surrounded like he had in the beginning.

“Hmph! Groups of ten? Well, I can still attack them. Maybe I won't be able to catch all of them in one shot, but I'm in no hurry. Slow and steady!” After putting a moment of thought into planning, he snorted coldly and melted into the mists. Before long, he had found his target, a group of ten chosen who were doing nothing to conceal the power of their cultivation bases. Although the occasional vengeful soul would appear to harry them, they handled them with ease.

As Bai Xiaochun got closer, his pupils constricted when he realized that one of the chosen in this group was none other than... Miao Lin'er.

He remembered the mystical magical technique she had used during their initial encounter, which had caused all of his injuries to flare up. It was that sudden increase in the severity of his wounds that gave Zhou Hong a chance to hit him with a dangerous attack.

“What a vicious woman! Although my current physical appearance doesn't quite measure up to what I really look like, I'm

still handsome! I never did anything to offend her, and yet she went so far as to attack with complete venom!” Narrowing his eyes, he studied Miao Lin’er a bit more closely. Then he made a few calculations, after which his eyes shone with determination. Without the slightest hesitation, he burst into motion with all the speed he could muster.

In the blink of an eye, he became a streak of light that shot with lightning-like speed that bordered on teleportation. Before anyone could react, he was right on top of Miao Lin’er’s group, where he unleashed a fist strike.

That fist strike became a tempest that descended onto the group with impunity. As for Miao Lin’er and the other chosen, their expressions flickered at the sight of Bai Xiaochun. Some even coughed up blood. However, all of them immediately spread out in specific directions. As for Miao Lin’er, she chuckled and said, “You fell into our trap, Bai Hao! Into formation, everyone!”

Strange gleams appeared in the eyes of the surrounding chosen. At the same time, magical symbols began to pour off of all of them. In the blink of an eye, the symbols linked together to make a spell formation!

Rumbling sounds filled the 300-meter area around them, creating something like a prison that had Bai Xiaochun completely locked down inside of it.

This was the secret plan devised by Gongsun Yi and the other top chosen. All of the groups that were out in the mists were prepared to instantly create spell formations if Bai Xiaochun dared to show his face.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun ended up in the spell formation, the news was passed to Gongsun Yi, Zhou Hong and Xu Shan, all of whom began to rush toward the area.

Zhou Hong was the nearest, and had three people with him, one of whom was Li Tiansheng. Considering the speed they were

capable of, it would only take them about ten breaths of time to reach the location where Bai Xiaochun had been caught.

Drastic developments were underway inside of the Necromancer Kettle as all of the chosen raced at top speed toward Bai Xiaochun.

Even as Miao Lin'er's laughter echoed out, her face suddenly turned pale, and her eyes widened. Despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun was right there in the middle of the spell formation, he didn't seem flustered at all. In fact, he even had a bit of a scornful look in his eyes. Taking a step toward Miao Lin'er, he quickly utilized his Undying Hex.

Rumbling could be heard as he vanished from within the spell formation, to appear right in front of her.

"Impossible!" Miao Lin'er's face fell as she tried to fall back. However, before she could, Bai Xiaochun bashed into her like a wild animal. An old saying talked about tender, protective feelings for the fairer sex, but there was none of that in his actions. He unleashed devastating force that caused blood to spray out of her mouth. Her cultivation base was instantly thrown into chaos, and many of her bones shattered. Her nascent soul was on the verge of flying out into the open. Before she could even consider fleeing, Bai Xiaochun reached out and grabbed her arm, sending cultivation base power inside of her to seal her.

It all happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. The fact that Miao Lin'er had been captured struck fear into the hearts of the other surrounding chosen, and even Zhou Hong and the other who were rushing over were taken completely by surprise.

Many of the vengeful souls in the surrounding mist were startled, and then turned their bloodthirsty, voracious eyes upon the nearby chosen....

Feeling very proud of himself, Bai Xiaochun took the sensual, voluptuous Miao Lin'er with him as he turned to flee. However,

even as he did that, his eyes happened to fall onto one particular vengeful soul within the hordes in the area!!

He suddenly stopped in place, trembling, an expression of complete disbelief on his face. He almost felt like he were being struck by countless bolts of lightning.

Although this vengeful soul looked slightly different from the living person it had come from, it was still easy to tell who it was. Furthermore, it was someone that Bai Xiaochun was very familiar with!

It was a struggle to hold back from shouting the name out loud. “Bai Hao!!!”

Chapter 695: Crushing Everyone!

Bai Xiaochun was well aware of that special characteristic of the world he lived in. After people died, their souls would enter the Underworld River and then emerge somewhere in the Wildlands.

He had even wondered about where exactly in the Wildlands Bai Hao's soul might have ended up.... However, the thought of finding him had seemed like an impossibility. It would be like finding a needle in an ocean, and was something that not even a demigod could do.

The idea of retrieving Bai Hao's soul could only occasionally flash through his mind and quickly transform into a sigh of regret.

How could he ever have imagined that in a completely unexpected turn of events, he would actually encounter Bai Hao's soul in the Necromancer Kettle!?!?

He was a vengeful soul, filled with madness and greed, not completely the same in appearance as he had been in life, and bursting with an aura of sinister death. However, Bai Xiaochun recognized at first glance that it was Bai Hao!

Bai Xiaochun was more familiar with Bai Hao than anyone else in the world. Not only was Bai Hao his apprentice, he had also used his identity to reach his current position and status in the Wildlands.

Bai Xiaochun was stunned. He hadn't forgotten that people were rushing toward him, and that if he slowed down for a moment, it was possible he could end up getting surrounded.

And yet, he stopped in place. He could not pass up this opportunity. After all, even knowing that Bai Hao's soul was in the Necromancer Kettle wouldn't necessarily do much good. Even going to search for him in that one particular area would be difficult. Furthermore, if Bai Hao's soul were to die, then Bai

Xiaochun would feel regret over the matter for the rest of his life.

Of course, he also knew that Bai Hao's soul represented incredible danger. If anyone else found out the truth, and exposed his identity, the fact that the Bai Hao that everyone knew was really Bai Xiaochun would be extremely problematic.

The best choice would probably have been to leave, and completely ignore Bai Hao's soul. After all, despite the fact that it was possible someone might notice him, it was very unlikely.

Another option would have been to destroy his soul. That would ensure that there were no cracks in Bai Xiaochun's story. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't even consider that option.

There was only one thought in his mind at the moment.... This was his apprentice! The first apprentice he had ever taken in his life! Now that he had encountered him, there was no way he could shrink back from trying to save him!

Therefore, he didn't hesitate at all to spin in place and then leap over to the location where Bai Hao's soul was within the horde of souls. Of course, the souls didn't notice him, and therefore, he didn't cause a stir by entering their midst. Instead, the souls were looking greedily at the Wildlander chosen, toward whom they began to fly, Bai Hao included.

However, before Bai Hao's soul could pick up any speed, Bai Xiaochun reached out, grabbed him, and threw him into a soulhoarding pagoda.

Just as nervous as ever, he then turned to face two beams of light which were approaching at rapid speed.

They were none other than Zhou Hong and Li Tiansheng!

“Bai Hao!!” Zhou Hong roared, his cultivation base surging with the power of the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, sending devastating fluctuations out in all directions. Then he crushed the jade slip he had been holding in his hand, instantly throwing the

surrounding area into chaos, and making all teleportations impossible.

His actions were performed with practiced fluidity, and were accomplished even as his voice rumbled out like heavenly thunder.

Within moments, he was right in front of Bai Xiaochun, striding forward with black streams of light whipping about around him. Those streams of light then began to swirl through the air toward Bai Xiaochun, radiating the fearsome aura of a deva. Clearly, this was a trump card that had been given to him by his father, the Nine Serenities King.

Behind him, a sinister cold look could be seen in the eyes of Li Tiansheng, who had intentionally slowed down. Waving his sleeve, he sent a five-colored toxic gas out which caused even the souls it touched to emit agonized screams and dissolve into nothing.

The rest of the cultivators in the area seemed excited to see Zhou Hong, and quickly began to fan out to prevent Bai Xiaochun from escaping. They knew that all they had to do was delay him for a short time, and as long as enough of the other chosen hurried over, they would be able to kill him.

Even if he were stronger than he had already proved to be, it wouldn't matter. With numbers on their side, not even a deva would take them on casually.

Bai Xiaochun understood that just as well as them. Looking over at Zhou Hong, he glanced at the streams of light he was using as a weapon, which seemed extremely dangerous. Then he unleashed a fist strike, drawing upon both the explosive power of his fleshly body power, and also his cultivation base. A tempest sprang up, causing everything in the area to tremble, and Zhou Hong's expression to flicker. Instantly, he sent the black streams of light whipping back to defend himself. A boom rang out, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood as an expression of disbelief filled

his face.

“How could he be so strong!?” Zhou Hong’s eyes were completely bloodshot, and filled with a look of defiant madness. More black strands of light shot out, filled with a netherworldly glow as they sliced toward Bai Xiaochun. However, this time, Bai Xiaochun sidestepped, speeding past Zhou Hong toward some of the mid Nascent Soul stage chosen beyond him.

At the same time, he pulled out the Eternal Parasol and unhesitatingly stabbed it into Miao Lin’er’s side.

She screamed as her life force was sucked away, and her beautiful face withered up. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun’s Undying Bones emitted rumbling sounds as they used the new life force to push almost completely into the great circle of the second stratum of the Tempered Bones.

Miao Lin’er alone was enough to do that, much to Bai Xiaochun’s shock. Clearly, Miao Lin’er’s life force far surpassed that of others.

“What technique does this little wench cultivate to have so much life force?” he murmured to himself. “Considering how revealing and smuttily she dresses, it must be some evil technique!”

Of course, everything that occurred happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. After tossing Miao Lin’er into his bag of holding, he accelerated toward the mid Nascent Soul stage cultivators. As they unleashed a bombardment of divine abilities, he snapped the Eternal Parasol open to defend himself, then stabbed it into one of the cultivators.

The cultivator screamed as his body withered up, and he was then thrown into Bai Xiaochun’s bag of holding. Then Bai Xiaochun turned and shot toward his next target. Zhou Hong’s fury burned as he gave chase, and yet, he was not nearly as fast as Bai Xiaochun. However, after Bai Xiaochun sucked away the life force from four cultivators, Zhou Hong performed an incantation gesture, causing all of the black streams of light to form together

into a huge spike which shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

The black spike clearly contained the aura of a deva, causing Bai Xiaochun to gasp and pull out his turtle-wok to defend himself. A boom could be heard as Bai Xiaochun fell back by several dozen meters, after which he stabbed the Eternal Parasol into another nearby chosen who had been too slow to evade him.

As the chosen screamed and withered up, life force poured into Bai Xiaochun's Undying Bones, pushing them all the way to the great circle of the Tempered Bones.

It all happened so quickly that the other surrounding chosen didn't even have time to gasp. Furthermore, none of them dared to get anywhere near Bai Xiaochun, and were all backing away. Bai Xiaochun's unique battle methods had them all feeling completely shaken.

“Do you dare to fight me one-on-one, Bai Hao?!?!” Zhou Hong shouted in rage, closing in on him. As for Li Tiansheng, his face was ashen, and he was backing away, cowed by Bai Xiaochun's bizarre parasol.

“Calm down. I'm leaving you for last so that I can test out my most powerful fist strike.” Ignoring Zhou Hong, Bai Xiaochun turned his attention on the retreating Li Tiansheng. Lips turning up into a grin, he lifted his foot and prepared to move. Although he couldn't use his Undying Hex because of the jade slip Zhou Hong had crushed earlier, his fleshly body itself was capable of teleportation-level speed. As soon as his foot touched down, he transformed into a series of afterimages that shot directly toward Li Tiansheng!

That smile caused Li Tiansheng's scalp to prickle with fear. Mind reeling, he began to back up even faster, simultaneously waving his hands through the air and spitting out even more toxic gas. The toxic gas immediately transformed into a seven-colored skull which shot toward Bai Xiaochun as if to consume him.

Bai Xiaochun completely ignored the seven-colored skull, and in fact just pierced right through it with the help of a handful of fourteenfold spirit enhanced items. Then, he was right in front of Li Tiansheng.

“Is playing with poison really that fun...?” he said as he thrust the Eternal Parasol toward Li Tiansheng’s chest. Li Tiansheng let out a shout, causing a red glow to explode out from inside of him. Numerous defensive magical items also appeared. However, it was in that moment that a colorful light appeared in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, which cast Li Tiansheng’s cultivation base into chaos. Li Tiansheng suddenly slowed down, and to his terror... the Eternal Parasol stabbed into him.

Li Tiansheng began to wither up as his life force poured out of him and into Bai Xiaochun. As it entered Bai Xiaochun’s bones, he shivered, and rumbling sounds echoed out inside of him. Furthermore, deep within his eyes, a golden light could be seen. His Undying Bones... had broken through into the third stratum of the Tempered Bones!!

A warm, comfortable feeling filled him, and he could instantly sense that the defensive level of his fleshly body had increased. Even more exciting to him was that he now met the minimum requirements to use the Undying Emperor’s Fist!

Meanwhile, whistling sounds could be heard as Gongsun Yi, Xu Shan, the second prince and Chen Manyao arrived with even more chosen.

“Stop him, Zhou Hong!!”

“Don’t let him get away!!”

Zhou Hong watched as Li Tiansheng was captured, and then heard the cries of the approaching cultivators, and it caused his anger to burn hotter. Throwing his head back, he howled, sending more streams of black light flying out around him. At this point, he was so angry that he was finally resorting to one of his trump

cards.

Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as the black streams all began to shoot toward Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and clenched his hands into fists. Then his eyes began to shine with bright light as his aura began to retract. It was almost as if all signs of life in his body were fading away. At the same time, a black vortex could be seen spinning around his fist.

Within that vortex were indescribably terrifying fluctuations that caused anyone who could see them to blanch in fear!

He was assuming the opening stance of the Undying Emperor's Fist!

Chapter 696: Undying Emperor's Fist!

The fourth level of the Undying Codex, the Undying Bones, had a secret magic known as the Undying Emperor's Fist, and this was Bai Xiaochun's first time using it. As he did, his aura, his flesh and blood, and even his soul and life force, seemed to be compressing down to the ultimate level.

Cracking sounds could be heard from his bones as the foundation of his heaven-shaking, earth-shattering fist strike was prepared. Within moments, Bai Xiaochun pulsed with explosive power.

That power soon turned into a wild tempest that coursed through him with such power that, if his bones weren't imbued with such incredible defensive power, it would have crushed him out of existence!

His skeleton was the foundation of it all. The power of his flesh and blood was madly compressed, until finally... it exploded out through his skin.

This was a crucial moment, and a unique aspect to the Undying Emperor's Fist. Under normal circumstances, the power would have erupted from his skin in explosive fashion and dissipated in all directions. But instead, ninety-nine percent of the locations where that power would normally have vented, were now sealed up! The only place for the power to go... was the fist formed by his right hand!

All of a sudden, a black hole appeared inside of him that seemed capable of crushing everything in existence. As for his right fist, the black vortex that had formed around it emanated an aura that could shake heaven and earth, an aura that seemed impossible to constrict or restrain!

It seemed so powerful that if it were to strike out, Bai Xiaochun's entire body would be hit by a backlash from the Undying Emperor's Fist, and destroyed!

Behind Bai Xiaochun, a shadowy figure appeared. It was a man in imperial robes, with an imperial crown. Although his facial features were impossible to make out, there was something domineering about him, as though his imperial will were superior to all creation!

Everything around Bai Xiaochun shattered and twisted. Off in the distance, Gongsun Yi, Xu Shan, the second prince, Chen Manyao, and everyone else all gasped in shock!

Zhou Hong was the closest to Bai Xiaochun, and as soon as he sensed that something strange was going on, a feeling of imminent, deadly crisis rose up within him.

However, before Zhou Hong could do anything, Bai Xiaochun grinned... looked at Zhou Hong and his black streaks of light... and unleashed a fist strike!!

The shadowy emperor behind Bai Xiaochun merged into his fist, causing it to thrum with a domineering, imperial will!

Wild colors flashed in heaven and earth, and a screaming wind kicked up. It was as if an enormous giant were unleashing all of the power in its body! At the same time, a boundless gravitational force sprang up, and the black vortex grew rapidly in size until it was fully 30 meters across. As it did, it sucked in all of the color in the world, becoming the focus of all attention, as if that fist and that vortex were the only things that existed in the world!

As the fist strike rocketed through the air, Zhou Hong let out a miserable shriek. Eyes filling with panic and terror, and heart pounding painfully, he sent streams of green light flowing out of himself to form a long sword. Gripping the sword tightly, he slashed it toward the incoming fist.

“Nine Serenities Slash!!” The mad slash of his sword shook heaven and earth. Green sword light spilled out, shredding the air, and was joined by the black streams of light, which were like a sword rain that shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

The witnesses to the event were reeling in shock at the ferocious scene playing out in front of them. Never before had any of them seen a fight like this between two members of their own generation.

However, it only lasted for the briefest of moments. When the green sword light contacted the black vortex of Bai Xiaochun's fist strike, a massive boom filled the area!!

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

As the deafening sound rolled out, Zhou Hong's green sword light shattered, and the black streams of light writhed as they were wiped out of existence. A torrent of blood sprayed out of Zhou Hong's mouth as virtually all the bones in his body were broken. His flesh was instantly lacerated into a mangled mass of bloody strips, and his nascent soul flew out into the open. Immediately rendered unconscious, he was sent tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut.

The debut of the Undying Emperor's Fist was shocking to everyone who could observe it!

Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun hadn't even used the full power of the fist strike, only about thirty percent. Aware of how devastating it was, he had actually been holding back for fear of killing Zhou Hong.

And yet, even that thirty percent was completely and utterly astonishing.

Just as the description of the fist strike had indicated, it could shake heaven and rock the earth. Its power vastly surpassed the Throat Crushing Grasp and the Mountain Shaking Bash! It was a domineering power that could shake one to the depths of their psyche!

Everyone present felt like they were being struck by heavenly lightning, and only began to gasp after a long moment of shock.

Even Gongsun Yi and the second prince were stunned, and subconsciously tried to calculate how they would have fared if struck. It only took a moment for them to come to the conclusion... that only someone far stronger than Zhou Hong would be able to stand up to that domineering imperial will!

Nobody in the Necromancer Kettle could possibly stand up to it!

None of the chosen would ever have been able to guess that Bai Xiaochun had a technique like this at his disposal. It was a fist strike so powerful that it didn't even seem like something from the Nascent Soul level....

Taking advantage of the fact that Zhou Hong had been knocked unconscious, Bai Xiaochun sped forward, grabbed his fleshly body and nascent soul, and then transformed into a beam of light that shot away with lightning-like speed.

The shocked bystanders all prepared to start chasing him, and yet, even before they could take a single step, a haughty voice rang in their ears.

“Don't provoke me, fools! I can use that same fist strike a hundred more times if I want!”

Because of the haughty and domineering tone, everyone, without exception, stopped moving.... Not a single person dared to give chase!

Even Gongsun Yi was left trembling, a very unsightly expression on his face. There he stood, panting a bit, his leg still hovering above the ground as he stared at Bai Xiaochun fleeing into the distance.

As of this moment, Gongsun Yi's pride had suffered a major blow.

Then there was the termagant Xu Shan, who was equally stunned as she watched Bai Xiaochun leaving. There was a look in her eyes which was rarely seen... fervent adoration!

The second prince's eyes flickered as countless conflicting emotions appeared in his heart. As for Chen Manyao, she stood next to the second prince, a mixture of suspicion and astonishment mingling deep in her eyes.

After a long moment, however, people finally began to react.

“There's absolutely no way he can use a fist strike like that more than a few times!!”

“That's right. If he could, why would he run away? If he really is the type who seeks revenge over the smallest grievance, then why wouldn't he take advantage of how shocked we were to simply attack us!?”

Gongsun Yi and the other top chosen didn't say anything, but considering their level and status, they obviously saw through Bai Xiaochun's ruse.

And yet, even if it was a bluff, the images of what had just occurred were burned into their minds, filling them with fear.

Another moment passed. Finally, Xu Shan took a deep breath and then began to give chase. Next was the second prince, and then Chen Manyao. However, none of those three were interested in fighting Bai Xiaochun. Rather, they had other intentions. Although most of the chosen present couldn't tell that, Gongsun Yi could.

He stood there quietly for a moment, eyes bloodshot as his desire to do battle slowly grew. “I cannot allow anyone to surpass me. As of this moment, Bai Hao... you have my attention!!”

At that point his cultivation base surged with power as he headed, not after Bai Xiaochun... but toward the Ghost King Orchid! “That's where you'll end up eventually, and that's where I'll be waiting... to fight you!”

Determination shone in Gongsun Yi's eyes, as well as the desire to do battle.

Everyone else exchanged awkward glances, and all of them regretted having provoked someone as inhuman as this. And yet, none of them could ever have predicted what had just occurred, that a person they all assumed they could easily crush would actually turn out to be a vicious and dangerous beast.

Chapter 697: Get Back Here, Bai Hao

“Dammit, I can’t believe this Bai Hao is so strong! If he had used that fist strike from the beginning, then of course we wouldn’t have provoked him!!”

“Yeah, exactly! If he had shown such spectacular battle prowess early on, we would have tried to make friends with him, not attack him! There really wasn’t a need to let things reach this point!”

Everyone was grumbling about the situation, but nobody could do a single thing about it. Instead, they banded together into three groups and scattered in different directions. None of them had any plans to try to kill Bai Xiaochun. Neither did any of them harbor any aspirations of getting the ghost king fruit. All of them were thinking the same thing....

It didn’t matter who ended up with the ghost king fruit; their current goal was to get out of the Necromancer Kettle as quickly as possible....

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun sped along through the mists, his face ashen. Even he had been shocked to see the Undying Emperor’s Fist in action. At the moment, his fleshly body power was severely drained, and his blood, bones, muscles, and tendons all burned with pain.

Thankfully, he had only used thirty percent of the power of the fist strike, and had been able to rely on the power of his cultivation base to flee. Otherwise, he would have been in big trouble.

“The Undying Emperor’s Fist is incredible. If I had used it at full strength, then even a deva would have been shaken.” The mere thought of how things had played out left him excited. He had begun to cultivate the Undying Live Forever Technique from the moment he stepped into the cultivation world, and had spent a huge amount of resources on it throughout the years.

After seeing that spectacular fist strike, he decided that it had all been worth it. Furthermore, now that he had reached the third stratum of the Tempered Bones level, his bones constantly radiated a pleasant warmth into him. Clearly, his fleshly body's defensive capabilities were now far beyond what they had been before.

In addition, he could recover from injuries much more quickly.

“When I made my exit earlier, everyone was clearly terrified. Hmmmphh! I guess there was no reason to be so frightened earlier on!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun realized that his ability to crush everyone else in the Necromancer Kettle meant that he didn't need to be nervous at all. In fact, it was with great anticipation that he pulled the unconscious Zhou Hong out of his bag of holding. After putting his nascent soul back into his fleshly body, he pulled out the Eternal Parasol and stabbed it into his chest.

The pain caused Zhou Hong's eyes to snap open.

“What do you think you're doing, Bai Hao?!?!” he shouted angrily. However, before he could do anything else, his life force began to drain out, provoking a scream of pain. In the blink of an eye, he was withered up, his life force absorbed by Bai Xiaochun, who used it to help restore his fleshly body power. As for Zhou Hong, because of his serious injuries and the pain, he quickly passed out again.

Bai Xiaochun pulled the Eternal Parasol back, and then glared at Zhou Hong angrily.

“Useless! Not even Li Tiansheng was this weak. How can you have so little life force? Are you really an heir apparent? You look like silver, but you're really pewter!” Grumbling angrily, he put Zhou Hong back into his bag of holding and then shot onward through the mists.

An entire day went by, and Bai Xiaochun continued to rock the

Necromancer Kettle. With his incredible battle prowess, his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, and his incredible fleshly body power, he was a force to be reckoned with among the Wildlander chosen. He was like a hungry wolf thrown into a flock of sheep....

Well, perhaps to put it that way would be a bit of an exaggeration, but not by much. Early on, he had not been drawing on the full potential of his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, but now he was. Other than some individuals who were already half a step out of the Nascent Soul stage, those powerful experts who had already gained some enlightenment of heaven and earth and were almost devas, few people could possibly be a match for him.

Not even Zhou Hong, who was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, came close. Therefore, there was no need to even mention all of the other chosen. Besides, Bai Xiaochun was actually confident that the power of his Undying Emperor's Fist would be enough to cause a deva to back down.

During the day which passed, Bai Xiaochun appeared inside of the Necromancer Kettle on numerous occasions. Because there were no solitary stragglers, and not even any groups with five people, he had no choice but to target the groups with dozens of people in them.

He truly was like a starving wolf, stalking about madly. When he attacked, he would grab a few people and then flee before anyone could do anything. Because of that, no one could defend against him, and everyone was slipping into even greater depths of fear.

After a day passed, he had kidnapped more than thirty chosen, which meant that more than sixty percent of the total group of Wildlanders had fallen into his hands.

As for the final group of thirty or so, they trembled with fear, especially because of the strange parasol that he used, which consumed life force.

The survivors were now split into two groups. One group went

with the second prince and Chen Manyao to regroup with Gongsun Yi near the Ghost King Orchid. The other group headed back in the direction they knew to be the mouth of the Necromancer Kettle, and the exit. Clearly, they were admitting defeat, and didn't want to contend with Bai Xiaochun. They wanted to get out of this place at the earliest possible moment.

Other than those two groups, there was a single person who continued to search for Bai Xiaochun within the mists. It was none other than Princess Xu Shan, daughter of the Spirit Advent King.

A strange light could be seen flickering in her eyes as she attempted to track Bai Xiaochun down.

“I'll definitely find you eventually, Bai Hao. You're mine!” Half a day before, she had run into him, and they had begun to fight. However, after only fighting for a short time, he knocked her several hundred meters away with a fist strike, then turned and fled. Xu Shan was not happy with that outcome at all.

Bai Xiaochun's numerous victories over so many chosen had him feeling very, very confident in how intrepid and valiant he was. He currently had more than seventy people captive in his bag of holding, all of them sucked so dry of life force that they were little more than skin and bones.

With so much life force, his Tempered Bones had long since passed from the third stratum to the fifth. The defensive capabilities of his fleshly body were such that divine abilities belonging to the early Nascent Soul stage would still hurt slightly if they hit him, but wouldn't significantly injure him.

“It won't be long now before I reach the sixth stratum....” he thought excitedly as he sped through the mists. After searching here and there for a couple hours, he came to find that the remaining chosen had split into two groups.

“What bullies, forcing me to work so hard!” Sighing at how impressive he was, he looked in the direction of the group which

had already admitted defeat.

“Ah, whatever. Since they’ve admitted the error of their ways, Lord Bai will let them go for now. However, as for all the people who are waiting by the Ghost King Orchid, they can’t blame Lord Bai for teaching them a lesson!” Licking his lips, he began to fly toward the Ghost King Orchid. However, even as he took to motion, a beam of light appeared behind him in the mists.

Within it was a young woman, who after catching sight of Bai Xiaochun, suddenly shouted, “Get back here, Bai Hao...!”

As soon as he saw the shadowy figure approaching, Bai Xiaochun’s self-confidence vanished. Frowning, he accelerated with all the speed he could muster, moving in the opposite direction.

During his fight with Xu Shan half a day earlier, he had been put in a very bad position. It wasn’t that she was particularly powerful; she actually had about the same battle prowess as Zhou Hong. However, she had a jade pendant that had been given to her by her father the Spirit Advent King, which gave her a defensive shield that Bai Xiaochun couldn’t penetrate.

The Nine Serenities King and the War Champion King had not given special magical items to Zhou Hong and Gongsun Yi, their reasoning being that they didn’t believe anyone in the Wildlands would go so far as to try to kill their sons. Considering that Zhou Hong and Gongsun Yi were both heirs apparent who would be kings in the future, giving them defensive treasures could actually do more harm than good.

They wanted their sons to be sharpened on the grindstone of battle!

But the Spirit Advent King did not think in such a way. He had given a special jade pendant to Xu Shan, a magical item whose shield could not be broken, even by a deva. Only a strike from a demigod would be able to pierce through it.

Because of that... Xu Shan was completely and utterly safe. In fact, she could almost be considered to be cheating in the Necromancer Kettle. Not even Bai Xiaochun with his seemingly unvanquishable battle prowess would be able to hurt her....

After fighting back and forth with her, he was stunned to find that he simply couldn't hurt her. Angry and a bit depressed, he had finally sent her flying away with a fist strike, and then fled.

And yet, she didn't seem to want to give up, and kept chasing him. The fact that she kept trying to fight him had him feeling very down, and at the same time, glad that not everyone was like her. Otherwise, the Necromancer Kettle would definitely not be any fun at all.

Chapter 698: Secret Magic Of The Imperial Clan

Bai Xiaochun quickly put quite a distance between himself and Xu Shan, and soon disappeared into the mists.

Further back, Xu Shan stopped in place and stamped her foot onto the ground angrily. "I'm going to catch you eventually, Bai Hao. You're mine! Mine!!"

In response, Bai Xiaochun picked up speed. The fact that this princess from Spirit Advent City seemed dead set on fighting him was a big headache.

"How can I fight this wench when she has that jade pendant...?" The more he thought about it, the more annoying he found her to be. And yet, there was nothing he could do about the situation. Worried that she was still following him, he zigged and zagged a bit before heading in the direction of the Ghost King Orchid.

Some distance away from the valley containing the Ghost King Orchid, Gongsun Yi sat on a low-lying hilltop, doing breathing exercises. His goal was to keep himself in top condition for the coming fight, which he was burning to get into.

He was still completely and utterly confident that Bai Hao would show up soon.

Not too far away were the second prince and Chen Manyao, surrounded by a dozen or so chosen from the various noble clans. All of them had very unsightly expressions on their faces because of everything that had occurred in the Necromancer Kettle.

Nobody had even considered that something so unexpected could take place. First was the nascent divinity void restrictive spell, which caught everyone off guard, and then there was the fact that Bai Hao had turned out to be shockingly powerful. It was occasionally possible to catch sight of the group who had already

given up, sitting in their location near the mouth of the enormous kettle.

Many in the group near the Ghost King Orchid had also thought of giving up, but simply couldn't bring themselves to do it. Even though they knew Bai Xiaochun was incredibly strong, some of them still hoped that there was another chance left. After all... the second prince was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, and they also had the matchless Junior Champion King Gongsun Yi on their side. Plus, there was the Grand Heavenmaster's apprentice Chen Manyao. With those three, they still hoped that they could defeat Bai Hao.

Many thoughts passed through the minds of the waiting chosen as they calculated what there was to gain and lose by taking a stand. At the same time, they kept looking around vigilantly.

As for the second prince, his eyes flickered as he contemplated a train of thought quite different from most of the others. He was intrigued by Bai Hao; after all, it seemed obvious that the Giant Ghost King had actually cruelly abandoned Bai Hao in the Necromancer Kettle....

“Perhaps I can win this Bai Hao over to my side.... Although, considering the high level of his cultivation base, he must surely have aspirations of his own. If I want to win him over, I'll need to give him a good reason to do so!” Off to the side sat Chen Manyao, her brow furrowed as she thought back to what she had seen of Bai Hao. There was definitely something about him that seemed familiar, although she still hadn't been able to come up with any concrete clues to work with.

Even as everyone sat wrapped up in their thoughts, Gongsun Yi suddenly looked up. The second prince and Chen Manyao also turned their heads, and the hearts of everyone else lurched as they looked over in the same direction.

Off in the distance, the mists churned as a figure sped through

them like a whizzing arrow. And that figure was heading in their direction.

His hair whipped about him, and his clothes flapped in the wind. His eyes shone with bright light, and he radiated a domineering and proud air.

“Bai Hao!!”

“He’s here!!” Everyone was immediately shaken. The desire to do battle exploded in Gongsun Yi’s heart, but he suppressed it for the moment. Remaining there cross-legged, he closed his eyes and went back to meditating; his aura was currently not stable enough, and he wanted to be completely calm.

“The time to fight has not yet come....” he murmured. He wanted to wait until his battle spirit was like a raging torrent.

“Bai Hao, you will be the grindstone that makes me an even sharper blade than before!!”

The atmosphere of the group by the Ghost King Orchid immediately grew very stifled upon the appearance of Bai Xiaochun. The second prince’s eyes flickered, and he took a step forward, turning into a blur of afterimages as he shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

That immediately got the other chosen excited, many of whom flew to join the second prince.

Only Gongsun Yi and Chen Manyao didn’t move. Unlike Gongsun Yi, Chen Manyao’s eyes were shining brightly as she stared at Bai Xiaochun, imprinting his every move and action into her mind.

Also paying close attention was the group of a dozen or so who were near the mouth of the Necromancer Kettle. Although they had already admitted defeat, it was a begrudging action at best, and they were all eager to see how things would play out.

Everyone paid close attention as Bai Xiaochun and the second prince shot toward each other and then collided.

The second prince drew fully upon the power of the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, performing a double-handed incantation gesture that summoned seven shadowy figures, each of them fully 300 meters tall.

Each shadowy figure wore imperial robes, had an imperial crown, and radiated an ancient air. The figures seemed to lock the entire area down, creating something like a domain in which the second prince radiated the aura of an emperor!

This was the first time he had summoned such an energy, which despite not being the power of a deva, was very close to it, and actually seemed to provoke a reaction from all heaven and earth.

Then, rumbling could be heard as a golden dragon appeared, which shot roaring through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered at the shocking sight of the second prince's divine ability. It actually seemed very similar to his own Undying Emperor's Fist, although the two were clearly different on a fundamental nature. The Undying Emperor's Fist drew upon the power of his own body and then blessed it with explosive might. In contrast, the second prince's technique was clearly drawing on outside power.

The fact that the second prince could command a qi flow that agitated the energy of heaven and earth left Bai Xiaochun feeling as if he were witnessing something that all of the people of the Arch-Emperor in the Wildlands would bow down and offer worship to.

However, what was most shocking of all was the fact that any one of the seven shadowy figures was filled with so much power that it caused Bai Xiaochun's scalp to tingle.

Unexpectedly, the second prince could clearly use only this one divine ability to counter multiple fist strikes from Bai Xiaochun!

"What divine ability is this?!" he thought, shocked. As for everyone else who was watching, they started to get very excited.

“That’s Arch-Emperor magic! It’s the imperial clan’s secret magic!!”

“It’s been a long time since I’ve seen the imperial clan’s secret magic. The second prince definitely deserves his reputation. After the grand prince, he’s next in line to earn the imperial title!!”

The rumbling sounds of the fighting which filled the air soon drowned out the noise of the chattering crowd.

“He’s a lot stronger than Zhou Hong!” Bai Xiaochun thought, his pupils constricted. With that, he extended his right hand, within which appeared the sixteenfold spirit enhanced black spear.

An unsightly expression could be seen on the second prince’s face as he fell back. He was actually not having as easy of a time as he was making it look. To his astonishment, he found that his cultivation base was actually being suppressed, and was difficult to rotate. Were it not for the fact that he was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage and was using the imperial clan’s secret magic, he would already have been seriously wounded by the fighting. By this point, he couldn’t hold out any longer, and coughed up a mouthful of blood. Shock and terror could be seen in his eyes as he realized that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t even used his trump card, that fist attack.

“This Bai Hao is too strong! Not even my imperial clan secret magic is strong enough to get him under control....” With that, he threw his hands into the air, causing yellow light to spill off of the seven shadowy figures. Immediately, the entire area shone as if with gold, and then, two golden dragons appeared, which shot roaring toward Bai Xiaochun.

The audience of chosen watched with sparkling eyes as the battle played out. From the look of things, these two opponents were actually evenly matched. Eventually, some of them even flew out to join the fighting. Before long, divine abilities and magical techniques were flying here and there, causing dazzling light to

shine everywhere.

Even the people who had congregated near the exit were now hesitating. After exchanging glances, many of them flew out, defiantly choosing to change their mind and take advantage of the opportunity which had presented itself.

Bai Xiaochun noticed what was happening immediately, and his eyes flickered with cold light. Aware that the second prince was not by any means weak, and that his seven statues were incredibly strong, he suddenly put away his spear, ignored the incoming divine abilities, and punched his hand down toward the ground.

The land quaked, and then, Bai Xiaochun softly spoke a word that was protected by the power of his mask!

“Waterswamp!”

The entire area filled with water vapor, creating something like a huge swamp. However, the powers of Bai Xiaochun’s mask concealed that fact, and ensured that everyone saw nothing but Bai Xiaochun, and the brutal aura which radiated off of him.

That was when Bai Xiaochun quietly spoke another word.

“Kingdom!”

Chapter 699: Whos The Grindstone!?

After speaking those words, Bai Xiaochun looked up, and an energy erupted out in all directions, sending his hair whipping about. Although no one could see it, a watery swamp now filled the entire 500-kilometer area around them. Simultaneously, numerous spikes appeared, rising up and then curling around themselves as a gigantic beast claw appeared!

Heaven and earth seemed to teeter on the verge of complete collapse. The two golden dragons let out miserable shrieks as they slammed into the claw. To the claw, it was as if they were tiny bugs that were instantly crushed out of existence. Blood sprayed out of the mouth of the second prince as he was sent flying backward. As for the other chosen who had been charging into battle, their faces fell, and they also began to cough up blood. It was almost as if a mountain had slammed into them, sending them tumbling backward.

Further off in the distance, the dozen or so chosen who had previously given up, but had changed their minds and begun flying toward the fighting, now stopped in midair, looks of blank shock on their faces.

That was the only possible reaction. A moment before, Bai Xiaochun and the second prince had been evenly matched, but in the blink of an eye, the second prince was grievously injured, and everyone else was sent spinning off to the side. A single attack left everyone gasping in shock.

Those chosen who had begun to fly over from the mouth of the kettle were left hanging in midair, jaws agape, eyelids twitching, their hearts filled with intense regret. As of this moment, they could neither advance nor retreat. They exchanged dismayed glances, and then suddenly scattered. They did not head toward the Ghost King Orchid, nor toward the mouth of the Necromancer Kettle. In their fear, they hoped to go hide alone somewhere in the

world around them. It was a large place, after all, and even if Bai Xiaochun searched high and low, he couldn't find all of them.

Bai Xiaochun ignored them. At the moment, his heart was pounding with excitement. This was his first time using his Waterswamp Kingdom after breaking through to the Nascent Soul stage. The entire claw of the beast beneath could fit through the 500-kilometer area it could now open up, which had been shocking to behold.

“So strong.... Not even my Undying Emperor’s Fist measures up....” Swallowing hard, he contemplated how that fact must have something to do with his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul. Yet again, he sighed inwardly, convinced that everything he had done to reach the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage had been worth it.

He also had the lingering feeling that the clawed hand he had just seen was actually not the complete hand.... He was fairly certain it had only been a portion of the whole.

“My life essence spirit....” he murmured, eyes glittering. Then he burst into motion, capturing all of the chosen who had just been injured by his Waterswamp Kingdom, sealing them, and tossing them into his bag of holding. As for the second prince, he tried to interject and say something, but Bai Xiaochun wasn’t in the mood, and quickly sealed and captured him.

Having accomplished these things, Bai Xiaochun looked at the only two people left in the area. One was Gongsun Yi, who sat there cross-legged, meditating. He hadn't opened his eyes the entire time, not even when Bai Xiaochun delivered the astonishing blow to all the chosen just now. There was an energy building up in Gongsun Yi; from the look of things, when he finally did open his eyes, he would be powered up to a level that he had never yet reached in his life up to this moment.

Bai Xiaochun looked at him briefly, and could tell that there was something odd going on. Then he turned to look at the second

person who remained behind, who was... Chen Manyao.

Chen Manyao stood there, her brow furrowed as she looked back at him. Bai Xiaochun couldn't tell whether or not she recognized him, and that realization made him very nervous. However, he didn't let such feelings show on his face. Trying to look just as icy as ever, he coolly said, "You haven't attacked me this entire time. Therefore, I won't cause any problems for you. Why don't you leave?"

His words were uttered with profound aloofness and pride, and after speaking them, he turned and headed toward Gongsun Yi. Of course, secretly, he kept his eye on Chen Manyao to gauge her reaction.

Gongsun Yi's eyelids flickered. Apparently, he was taking advantage of the pressure weighing down from Bai Xiaochun to further temper his own desire to do battle.

When Bai Xiaochun was only about 300 meters away from Gongsun Yi, Chen Manyao's eyes glittered, and she unexpectedly performed an incantation gesture with her right hand. Snowflakes sprang out around her, swirling together to form a mirror made of ice, which she pointed at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered, and he immediately shot backward. As he did, light from the mirror landed in the spot he had just occupied, causing cracking sounds to fill the air as it was turned into ice.

At the same time, frigid qi swirled about everywhere. To Bai Xiaochun's shock, that frigid qi was stimulating the magic of his frigid domain, to the point where it seemed like it might leap out into the open beyond his control. Thankfully, a mere thought on his part sent his cultivation base rotating to suppress the frigid domain. Afterward, he turned to look at Chen Manyao, his heart filled with mixed emotions, but his eyes showing only anger.

"What do you think you're doing?!" he said. Ignoring him, Chen

Manyao performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, causing the freezing ice to become the opposite of what it had been moments ago. Now it was a sea of flames! Instantly, the flames bore down on Bai Xiaochun as if to consume him. From what he could tell, this was all a test to see if he had the power of a frigid domain!

These flames were designed to cause a cultivator to react on an instinctive level. Someone who had cultivated with frigid qi for long periods of time, but then unexpectedly encountered a fire-type power, would definitely reveal some weaknesses.

Beads of sweat popped out on Bai Xiaochun's forehead; the purpose of this probing attack was obvious, and he knew that if things kept going on the way they were, then it was definitely possible that he might reveal something. There was no time to think about the matter at the moment, so he blurred into motion, appearing right in front of Chen Manyao.

“Are you looking to die?!” he said, a vicious expression on his face. The rumbling sounds echoed out as he unleashed a fist strike. However, instead of dodging or defending, a strange look appeared on her face, and she simply remained in place, looking Bai Xiaochun in the eye, apparently waiting for his fist to strike her.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide. If his strike landed on her, and she didn't resist, then she would die, or at the very least, be seriously injured. Before he could even think about the situation, he aborted his fist strike. At that point, a faint smile could be seen in Chen Manyao's eyes... and Bai Xiaochun realized that he had been fooled. Chen Manyao had taken a gamble by putting herself up as bait....

“Very crafty!” he thought, wanting to cry but finding no tears to do so. As the saying goes, it does no good to mend the pen after the sheep are lost. And yet, Bai Xiaochun continued with his attack. Although he didn't strike with a fist, he did strike her with his palm, instantly sealing her. Before she could say anything, he

grabbed her and threw her into his bag of holding, averting his eyes so he couldn't see the expression on her face....

“What was that all about...?” he thought. By now, he was almost completely convinced that Chen Manyao had guessed who he was. However, he couldn't for the life of him think of how she had done it. After all, his disguise was perfect!

He was of a mind to ask directly, but at the moment, didn't dare to face her, for fear of revealing more secrets.

Sighing and shaking his head, he looked over at the final person remaining, Gongsun Yi. As soon as he did, Gongsun Yi's eyelids flickered even more dramatically than before.

“Well isn't this amusing,” Bai Xiaochun thought. “He's using the pressure emanating from me as a sort of grindstone to polish his battle spirit.... But what's the point?” Snorting coldly, and feeling very irritated that Chen Manyao probably had figured out his secret identity, he simply charged toward Gongsun Yi.

He still remembered how it was a huge sealing net thrown out by Gongsun Yi that had entrapped him early on, and ended up allowing countless chosen to hit him with divine abilities. Just thinking about that moment of crisis got Bai Xiaochun feeling irritated.

When he was roughly 30 meters away, Gongsun Yi's eyes snapped open, revealing brightness like that of twin suns. At this point, his battle spirit was at its peak, and it was with explosive speed that he shot forward.

“Bai Hao!!” he roared, instantly summoning 100,000 magical symbols, which swirled around him, casting golden light everywhere, making it seem like he was surrounded by a golden hurricane.

Rumbling sounds filled the air, and blinding light spread out in all directions. In the face of the golden light, Bai Xiaochun seemed

like a dandelion that could be crushed in an instant. The magical symbols quickly turned into razor-sharp blades that slashed toward him through the air.

Chapter 700: I Can Still Break Through!

A golden hurricane of countless blades descended onto Bai Xiaochun. However, his fleshly body defenses were already at a shocking level, and he also possessed numerous spirit enhanced treasures. Although he wasn't a complete wild beast when it came to battle, the hurricane was still not enough to stop him.

Cracking sounds rang out as the golden magical symbols slammed into him, and yet, not much happened as a result. In the blink of an eye, he was right in front of Gongsun Yi, where he clenched his hand into a fist and unleashed a fist strike!

Before the strike could land, though, golden light shone in Gongsun Yi's eyes as he called all of the magical symbols back, which then transformed into a huge wall.

A rumbling boom could be heard, and Bai Xiaochun was stopped in place. The golden wall trembled, and cracks spread out across its surface, but it held fast. Behind it, Gongsun Yi coughed up a huge mouthful of blood, and then took a step toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Is that all you've got, Bai Hao?!” he growled. However, inwardly, he was actually shocked; his cultivation base was under massive pressure, and although he wasn't sure exactly how this Bai Hao could be so strong, he was convinced that it was because of some strange magical technique.

However, there was no time to think about the matter at the moment. Relying on his surging battle spirit to suppress the instabilities inside of him, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then waved his finger at Bai Xiaochun. Instantly, the golden wall collapsed back into 100,000 magical symbols, which then formed together into the shape of a golden phoenix, which shot toward Bai Xiaochun with a piercing cry.

“This Junior Champion King's divine ability is incredible. It must have been given to him by the War Champion King.... I don't

have any Nascent Soul techniques, and the powerful techniques I do have take a lot of spiritual power, otherwise I could crush this Junior Champion King with ease.” Snorting coldly, he assessed Gongsun Yi’s cultivation base, which was beyond the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, and was approaching the point of being half a step into the Deva Realm

However, that last gap was not easily bridged, and would require the right set of opportunities to do so, as well as tenacious perseverance. As the golden phoenix bore down on Bai Xiaochun, he reached out into the air and made a grasping motion, summoning his black spear with its sixteenfold spirit enhancement. Not hesitating for a moment, he stabbed it toward the golden phoenix!

The spear shot forth with heaven-rending, earth-crushing power, causing a string of sonic booms to echo out. Then it stabbed into the phoenix, unleashing a massive detonation. The resulting shockwave sent Gongsun Yi tumbling backward in the opposite direction.

Then, Bai Xiaochun burst into motion, becoming like a black shooting star that crushed everything in its path as it headed toward Gongsun Yi.

Gongsun Yi finally shuddered to a stop about 300 meters away, unable to prevent blood from spilling out of his mouth. Then he looked up at Bai Xiaochun, and the desire to do battle that existed in his eyes grew even more intense. Howling, he instantly began to charge back in Bai Xiaochun’s direction.

“I’m the Junior Champion King. How could I possibly lose to you!?” Eyes bright red, he threw his hands out in front of him, causing the 100,000 magical symbols to form together into the shape of a golden battle-axe. Grabbing it by the haft, he hurled it violently toward Bai Xiaochun.

Rumbling shook the area as Bai Xiaochun destroyed the battle-

axe, causing the 100,000 magical symbols to collapse layer by layer. Although he was shaken, he didn't slow down at all, and continued on toward Gongsun Yi in a streak of black light!

As a result of the backlash, blood gushed out of Gongsun Yi's mouth, and he was flung backward head over heels. Although a bitter chuckle escaped his throat, his desire to do battle had not been reduced in the least bit. Seemingly disregarding any fear of dying, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture to call back all of his 100,000 magical symbols. Dazzling golden light flickered as they teleported into the space in front of him, taking the form of a long golden staff!

Gongsun Yi gripped the staff and then swung it with all his might, using both the power of his cultivation base and his impressive fleshly body to send something like a golden tempest toward Bai Xiaochun.

“This Gongsun Yi's divine ability is really remarkable!” Bai Xiaochun thought, shocked. At the same time, he felt a bit envious about the 100,000 magical symbols. Obviously, though, it was a secret magic of the War Champion King, something that could not be used outside of his organization. The golden staff descended upon him with mountain-toppling, sea-draining power. Abandoning his stabbing attack with his spear, he brandished it in front of him, causing the air to distort as he backed it with both cultivation base and fleshly body power.

BOOOOOOOOMMM!

The resulting collision surpassed anything from before. A waterfall of blood erupted from Gongsun Yi's mouth, and yet he seemed mad with the desire to do battle. It didn't matter what injuries he received, he kept on fighting, and refused to retreat.

This time, instead of forming a staff with his 100,000 magical symbols, he formed them into a hundred separate magical items!

There were sabers, spears, swords, halberds, hatchets, battle-

axes, hooks, tridents, and weapons of every other type. And not a single defensive item could be seen among them. Each and every one radiated an intense, murderous aura, and as Gongsun Yi waved his hand, they all shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Use your trump cards, Bai Hao. Either I die in this battle, or you die!”

Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered. This Gongsun Yi possessed an intense desire to do battle, and a bizarre divine ability. He didn't even seem to be afraid of dying either. All of it left Bai Xiaochun feeling very shaken.

By now, he was finally starting to understand what the true chosen in the Wildlands were like. Of course, all of the people he had captured so easily didn’t count.

But Gongsun Yi, and even Zhou Hong, despite their flaws, could go berserk in battle, and show tenacious brutality. It was something that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t seen very often back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

“He’s no match for me, but he still won’t surrender. Now that I think about it, it seems like he really is using me like a grindstone, to temper himself in that precarious location right between life and death....” A gleam of admiration appeared in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, and he suddenly felt as if he owed some respect to this opponent. As Gongsun Yi closed in with a hundred magical items, all bursting with murderous auras, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and waved his hand to get rid of the black spear.

His decision was to forgo the use of magical items. As he stood there, cracking sounds could be heard from within him as his aura shrank down. His energy and even his soul did the same thing.

Then, a black vortex appeared around his right hand, which emanated terrifying fluctuations. Simultaneously, a shadowy figure appeared, domineering to the extreme, clad in imperial robes and wearing an imperial crown on his head. Considering the

look in his eyes, he clearly felt scorn for everything in heaven and earth.

“Want to find enlightenment in that spot between life and death? Well I’ll give you the chance!” Bai Xiaochun felt particularly impressed by how awe-inspiring his words were. Clenching his right hand into a fist, he stabilized his aura and then unleashed a fist strike onto Gongsun Yi!

He didn’t use full power, instead limiting it to roughly fifty percent. But even still, the sky faded, and the mists in the area seethed. The black vortex around his hand expanded, becoming a black hole that shot directly toward Gongsun Yi!

At the same time, the eyes of the shadowy emperor behind him distorted, causing a domineering air to erupt out as he merged into the fist, and the vortex. This was Bai Xiaochun’s trump card...

The Undying Emperor’s Fist!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The fist strike made everything in the world seem to slow down. All eyes came to focus on it, and it became the only thing in existence!

A piercing howl rang out from Gongsun Yi, and his eyes were crimson as he watched the fist approaching, and the black hole. Then he waved both hands out in front of him.

“Day of the War Champion!” As his voice echoed out like thunder, his one hundred magical items sped up toward Bai Xiaochun’s Undying Emperor’s Fist.

The instant the two made contact, all of the magical items shattered and were sucked up into the black, incapable of offering any resistance. Then the black hole continued on toward Gongsun Yi as if to swallow him up. Immediately, a sensation of imminent and deadly crisis filled him, battering his heart and mind like an enormous wave.

However, in that dramatic moment between life and death, Gongsun Yi's battle spirit did not grow weaker. Quite the opposite; it grew more intense! As it did, rumbling and cracking sounds suddenly echoed out inside of him.

It was almost as if some sort of shackle within him had been broken; in that moment, a terrifying energy suddenly erupted.

Countless clouds suddenly appeared up above him, which quickly formed into a face. Gongsun Yi's face!

Although it only appeared for a moment, the immense energy that came along with it indicated that he had just achieved a cultivation base breakthrough!!

He was now half a step into the Deva Realm!!

Chapter 701: Putting A Half-Deva In His Place!

“Many thanks for being my grindstone, Bai Hao. I've finally achieved my cultivation base breakthrough, and am a half-deva. I've been stuck in place for far too long now, and have you to thank. Therefore, in recompense, I will simply cripple your cultivation base, and won't kill you!” Gongsun Yi looked both excited and proud. Throwing his head back, he laughed maniacally. As he had said, he had been waiting for this day for a very, very long time.

The pressure he had felt from Bai Xiaochun during their fight had been incredible. Upon seeing the Undying Emperor's Fist in action the first time, he had been aware that he couldn't defeat it. But he was proud and confident, and thus couldn't accept that. Furthermore, there had also been the possibility that he could take the situation and use it to achieve a breakthrough!

It was in that moment that he decided to use Bai Xiaochun as his grindstone, to use the pressure to not only ramp up his battle spirit to the ultimate degree, but to achieve a breakthrough during that critical moment between life and death.

The first possibility was that he would step halfway into the Deva Realm, and wait until a later date to acquire a magical item with a fifteenfold spirit enhancement or higher, which he could then use to gain enlightenment of heaven and earth and become a true deva!

The second possibility was that he would fail, and lose the fight. However, even if he ended up losing... he was confident that Bai Xiaochun wouldn't kill him. Although such a loss would be a bitter pill to swallow, it was a cost he could afford to pay. And right now, he was laughing maniacally as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, rumbling sounds could be heard

around him as 200,000 golden magical symbols appeared, transforming into a massive vortex that moved forward to meet the Undying Emperor's Fist.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were nearly popping out of his skull; never could he have imagined that Gongsun Yi would actually achieve a breakthrough right here and now....

“Well that way of doing things really worked out for him....” he thought, taking a deep breath, and also feeling a bit envious. When he thought about how he had suffered untold hardships to reach the mid Nascent Soul stage, it was really grating that his opponent had used a moment of life or death crisis to break through and become a half-deva.

That fact in and of itself left Bai Xiaochun feeling a bit irritated, but then Gongsun Yi went so far as to laugh maniacally, and that got him really mad.

“You thankless wretch!” he shouted. “Just like the Giant Ghost King! I was the one who helped you make your breakthrough, and now you say you're gonna cripple my cultivation base!? Really the type who bites the hand that feeds you, huh...?” Bai Xiaochun was of the mind that it wouldn't be good to let Gongsun Yi continue to show off. He needed to teach him a good lesson, and make sure he understood the old saying if you receive a water drop of kindness, repay it with a flowing spring!

“Who cares if you made a breakthrough? Lord Bai is going to kidnap you anyway!” Eyes bloodshot, he loosened his hand briefly, shook it out, and then clenched it down into another fist!

He wasn't unleashing a second Undying Emperor's Fist; instead, he was taking some of the power he had held back before and adding it into the current fist strike! Before, he had used only fifty percent of what was at his disposal. but now, he added in an extra thirty percent.

The black vortex of the Undying Emperor's Fist began to emit a

shocking black glow, and also began to grow larger than before as it rumbled toward Gongsun Yi in incredibly domineering fashion!

“Who said you could act so aggressive!?” he shouted. “Time to cut you down to size!” Bai Xiaochun’s thunderous voice caused Gongsun Yi’s previous excited expression to freeze. Then, his face was overtaken by an expression of utter disbelief.

When his golden vortex made contact with the black hole, all 200,000 golden magical symbols shattered. Then, in the blink of an eye, the enormous fist-like black hole was right in front of Gongsun Yi.

“Impossible! I’m a half-deva! I can’t lose!!” Gongsun Yi snarled as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, rotating his cultivation base to defend himself.

“Half-deva? Ha! Lord Bai has already defeated four real devas! Who do you think you are? Back down, you hear me? Back down! Your ass is mine, you ingrate!” Howling, he shot forward, propelling the black hole forward with explosive might. As he did, the divine glow of the five elements could be seen within his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul.

Booming rumbles filled the air!

The entire Necromancer Kettle seemed to fill with ear-splitting, deafening booms. Cascades of blood shot out of Gongsun Yi’s mouth as he was sent tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut. His chest was a mass of gore, and all his limbs were bent at odd angles. Even his nascent soul seemed in poor condition. However, what had been struck most deeply was his pride.

“How is this possible...?” He had gone from wild elation because of his breakthrough, to being grievously injured. In his confusion, his vision began to fade as he started to lose consciousness. And yet, before he could, and before he could even stop moving, Bai Xiaochun shot to his side, lifted his right hand, and slapped him viciously.

Whack! Gongsun Yi was sealed and then tossed into Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding.

Huffing and puffing, Bai Xiaochun landed onto a hilltop in the basin, where he sat down cross-legged, his face pale. Using eighty percent of the power of the Undying Emperor's Fist had taken his fleshly body power down to the very minimum. He was also filled with prickles of stinging pain.

Thankfully, although his fleshly body had been weakened, his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul cultivation base was still fine, and was in fact the reason he had dared to unleash the power he had.

“You bunch of bullies. Well, when Lord Bai gets angry, he frightens even himself! Do you really think the Undying body I've worked so hard on, and my Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, are so weak?!” Grumbling to himself, he thought back to everything that had occurred so far in the Necromancer Kettle, and the sheer unbelievable nature of it all left him admiring himself.

“I really have gotten pretty brave lately....” he murmured. First there was the adventure in the Bai Clan. Then he had kidnapped the clan chief, which was what had really gotten him addicted. Afterward, he went so far as to kidnap the Giant Ghost King, and now here he had gone and kidnapped virtually all of the so-called chosen of the Wildlands.

Once word of this got out, he would definitely become even more famous throughout the Wildlands....

“It's all the fault of that bastard the Giant Ghost King!” he thought, feeling very annoyed. Then he looked over at the Ghost King Orchid, protected by the white shield of the restrictive spell. By now, it was getting very close to the time when the flower would fully bloom. It was also possible to see a fruit growing in the middle of the flower, rapidly reaching the point of being ripe.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the flower and grumbled to himself morosely for a bit, thinking about his plan to get revenge on the

Giant Ghost King. Then he snorted coldly and pulled the second prince, Gongsun Yi, and all the other recently captured chosen out of his bag of holding.

They were nearly unconscious, but were still capable of groggily looking over at Bai Xiaochun. Immediately, their faces went pale, and their eyes shone with terror. As for the second prince, he seemed like he wanted to say something, but before he could, Bai Xiaochun glared and brandished the Eternal Parasol. “Don’t even think about talking to me. I have germaphobia...”

“Bai Hao, listen to me, I--” Before he could say anything else, the second prince’s face fell. Shivering, he let out a miserable scream as his life force was drained by the Eternal Parasol, turning him into skin and bones.

Then Bai Xiaochun went on to the rest of the chosen, all of whom screamed and cursed him as the Eternal Parasol extracted their life force.

“How dare you, Bai Hao!!”

“My father won't let you get away with this!!”

“You’ll never escape with your life after this, Bai Hao!!”

However, the more lividly people cursed, the more life force Bai Xiaochun would take away. Soon the others realized this, and the clever ones among them would simply look at him quietly. Feeling bad, Bai Xiaochun would take a bit less life force from them.

In the end, he got to Gongsun Yi, who looked up at Bai Xiaochun with mixed emotions in his eyes. However, his desire to do battle could still be seen in his eyes.

Bai Xiaochun actually felt some respect for Gongsun Yi, and was going back and forth about whether to take his life force.

“Next time we meet, are you going to attack me again?” he asked.

Eyes brimming with battle spirit, and murderous aura surging,

Gongsun Yi said, "Of course I will! We'll meet again one day, and then I'll personally crush you beneath my feet!"

"Well fudge!" Bai Xiaochun shot back. "Can't you say anything that sounds nice? What's with all the fighting and killing all the time!?" Glaring, he shoved the Eternal Parasol into his chest.

After harvesting the life force from everyone, he put his "battle trophies" back into his bag of holding, then sat down cross-legged and sent some divine sense out to form a defensive barrier. Then he began to cultivate his Undying Bones.

Six hours later, cracking sounds could be heard from inside of him. His eyes opened, and they shone with golden light. At the same time, warmth filled him. His fleshly body power was not fully recovered, and yet, his defensive capabilities had increased another notch!

"Seventh stratum of the Tempered Bones...." he murmured excitedly. Just when he was about to test out his newfound power, his expression flickered, and he looked over to the Ghost King Orchid in the restrictive spell.

From the black glow rising up from the flower, it was clear that it was about to bloom!

Chapter 702: Dropped Onto The Ground....

There were numerous mountain ranges and rivers in the Necromancer Kettle, and all of them eventually led to the basin that was home to the Ghost King Orchid. As of this moment, it was fully in bloom, its petals gracefully curved, and a fragrant aroma wafting off of it. It was a fragrance that actually caused the shadowy evening light to grow even darker.

In the blink of an eye, the entire sky turned black!

At the same time, a strong aura of death spilled out from the flower, spreading out to fill the entire world of the Necromancer Kettle. Within the mists, the vengeful souls and evil ghosts trembled, and then began to kowtow in the direction of the Ghost King Orchid.

Respectful, even reverent expressions could be seen on their faces, as though they were prostrating to some sort of king!

As the flower fully bloomed, the previously greenish fruit in the middle of the flower began to turn black. It was even possible to see the face of a ghost on it!

Bai Xiaochun recognized that face! It looked exactly like the face on the giant ghost statue in the middle of Giant Ghost City!

Clearly, the reason why this fruit was so crucial to the Giant Ghost King was that it was somehow connected to the special technique he cultivated, although Bai Xiaochun had no way to know the specific details.

Even as he watched, the petals of the Ghost King Orchid began to fall off and transform into mist, one by one. As they did, the fruit on the Ghost King Orchid turned more and more black!

At the same time, a shocking gravitational force sprang up from the white restrictive spell. As it did, the fruit began to rise up toward the vortex created by the spell.

In that instant, it was as if the white restrictive spell knew it had completed its mission, and transformed into countless motes of light that, instead of returning to Bai Xiaochun, dissipated into the surroundings.

To see that happen so suddenly provoked a long sigh from Bai Xiaochun. Depressed, he realized that the Giant Ghost King's plan had worked exactly as intended, with the only downside being that Bai Xiaochun had been sacrificed in the process....

“Things aren't over yet!” Although he had come out completely victorious in all of his battles with the chosen, he was still left with lingering fear about the whole situation. It was actually infuriating that the Giant Ghost King hadn't just directly explained what was going on.

“It's obvious that he doesn't trust me. He was worried that if he told the truth, I would refuse to come! Hmph! Am I really that kind of person? Does he think I'd really be scared of something as non-dangerous as this place?! What kind of a person does he think I am!?” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun immediately began to feel a twinge of guilt. Therefore, he dispelled all inner questions about whether or not he really would have come if he'd known the truth. Turning, he headed toward the mouth of the Necromancer Kettle.

Around that time, the entire world of the Necromancer Kettle trembled, and the area near the mouth slowly began to open!

“There are still a dozen or so people who escaped. They're probably out there hiding somewhere, and there's still about two hours left. Ah, whatever. Since they fled, I'll let them off the hook this time.” It was only at this point that Bai Xiaochun started to get nervous. Looking down at his bag of holding, he realized that he really had done something monumental here.

His bag of holding was now a scalding hot potato, and he had no desire whatsoever to hold onto it for any longer than necessary. He

needed to get back as soon as possible to hand it over to the Giant Ghost King....

With that, he picked up speed as he headed toward the mouth of the Necromancer Kettle. However, even as he neared the exit, he saw another beam of light shoot toward it from a different direction, and reach it before him.

It was none other than Princess Xu Shan from Spirit Advent City. Within moments, she was hovering in front of the enormous vortex that was the exit of the Necromancer Kettle. By stepping through that vortex, one could leave the kettle!

However, Xu Shan didn't step into the exit. Instead, she stood there as if to bar the way. When she turned to look at Bai Xiaochun, his heart sank as he saw the glittering light of her jade pendant rising to surround her.

“How are you gonna try to get away this time, Bai Hao!?” Xu Shan said, sounding very proud of herself.

Bai Xiaochun was scowling on the verge of tears; the sight of Xu Shan immediately caused him to feel a headache coming on. Earlier, he had thought that Chen Manyao would be the biggest thorn in his side, and had completely forgotten about the annoying Xu Shan.

Even if he tried to fight her, it would do no good. There she stood in front of the exit, clearly having no intention of moving. Obviously, he was going to have to pay the price to get past her.

“Just what exactly do you want, huh?!” Bai Xiaochun said.

“What do I want?” she said angrily, glaring at him. “I want to know why you ran away every time you saw me!”

Bai Xiaochun sighed. Deciding it would be better to save his breath and just tell the truth, he said, “With that jade pendant your father gave you, there's no way I can beat you. It would be a waste of time fighting, so I just ran.”

“Waste of time?” she shot back. Then, eyes flashing, she asked, “Hmph! Well why did you go and kidnap everyone!?”

Looking as though he felt very wronged, he explained, “Those were the Giant Ghost King’s orders. A nobody like me couldn’t defy the Dharmic decree of the Giant Ghost King, could he?”

“Really?” she asked suspiciously.

“Absolutely. Positively! It’s true from many points of view!” After swearing up and down, he hesitated for a moment and then added, “Um, hey, why don’t we skip the fight this time? Just let me out of here, okay...?”

Xu Shan didn’t respond at first, and simply looked at him, trying to decide if what he said was true or not. Normally speaking, she wouldn’t be so easily convinced. And yet, for some reason, she just felt like trusting him. Suddenly, she smacked her bag of holding, causing more than a dozen soul cultivators to spill out into the open.

They were all chosen from the various important clans, and all of them had clearly been beaten badly in fights. Their cultivation bases were sealed, and as soon as they began to pile up outside of her bag of holding, they began to curse in their hearts, and yet didn’t dare to give voice to any of that. Instead, they looked fearfully at Xu Shan, and then over at Bai Xiaochun.

As for Bai Xiaochun, his jaw dropped. These were all of the people who had previously given up, the ones he had assumed had fled to hide wherever they could find places to hole up. Never could he have imagined that they would all have been captured by the fiendish deviless Xu Shan.

“Um....” he said, staring a bit blankly at Xu Shan, and wondering why the termagant would possibly be doing something like this.

“Since you’re acting under the orders of the Giant Ghost King, then take these ones with you.” When she spoke, her gaze didn’t

seem as sharp as before, and she wasn't speaking so loudly. In fact, there was something very strange about the look in her eyes.

Bai Xiaochun was even more taken aback. However, based on the strange look in her eyes, he suddenly came to an outrageous conclusion, something that he initially almost couldn't believe was true.... "Aha! I get it!" he thought. "She's one of the people the Giant Ghost King said would help me!!"

Eyes sparkling, he blurted out that very thought, "You work for the Giant Ghost King too!"

And yet, for some unknown reason, Xu Shan seemed to suddenly get very irritated. Stomping her foot, she suddenly launched herself into the air toward Bai Xiaochun, clenching both hands into fists as she prepared to attack.

"One slip of the tongue and she wants to fight? This Xu Shan is crazy!"

Smiling bitterly inside, he took a breath, stepped forward, and shouted, "If you've got what it takes, then fight without that jade pendant!" Clenching his hand into a fist, he unleashed a fist strike.

"Fine, I won't use it!" Xu Shan said crossly. The light of the pendant winked out as she continued to barrel toward Bai Xiaochun.

A boom rang out, and ripples spread out in all directions. Xu Shan had an incredibly tough fleshly body, but after being struck by Bai Xiaochun, blood sprayed out of her mouth, and cracking sounds rang out as she suffered a grievous injury. And yet, that strange look in her eye only grew stronger, and she spun to attack him again.

"This Xu Shan has a screw loose, but she's definitely hot. She's trying to use that look in her eye to mess with my emotions!" Hesitant and on guard, he unleashed another attack, causing Xu Shan to tumble backward, blood spraying out of her mouth.

Considering the fact that she really wasn't using that jade pendant of hers, Bai Xiaochun was more convinced than ever that there was something wrong with her mentally. With that, he lunged forward, and instead of striking her with a fist, used a palm, hitting her in the back and sealing her instantly.

The smoothness of it all actually seemed strange to Bai Xiaochun. Grabbing her, and heart pounding, he contemplated how he had really hooked a big fish this time.

“With her life force, I can reach the eighth stratum of the Tempered Bones!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he took out his Eternal Parasol and prepared to stab it into her.

However, it was at that point that Xu Shan completely ignored the parasol and, her eyes shining with that strange light, loudly said, “I love you, Bai Hao!”

“Huh?” Startled, Bai Xiaochun dropped Xu Shan onto the ground with a thump.

Chapter 703: RUN!

Xu Shan's words struck Bai Xiaochun's ears like a thunderbolt, nearly striking him senseless. Although he had had his suspicions about the strange look in her eyes, it had seemed so improbable that she harbored romantic feelings that he had simply dismissed the notion.

After all, they had only met a few days before, and had been enemies the entire time. Bai Xiaochun really couldn't think of anything he had done to attract the interest of the termagant Xu Shan....

Shocked, he couldn't help but take a moment to examine Xu Shan's face a bit more closely, and then his gaze slid down the rest of her body. The truth was that, despite her violent tendencies, she was actually very attractive. However, he quickly realized that he shouldn't be thinking that way.

"No. This Xu Shan has a screw loose, and is very violent. She's definitely not my type.... I have my boo, and Big Sis Junwan, and Xiaomei. Plus, there are the hundreds of thousands of girls who like me back in the River-Defying Sect.... Ai. I really am just too outstanding. No matter where I go, all of the girls chase me. What a headache." Sighing inwardly, but simultaneously savoring the moment, he suddenly felt more confident and proud than ever. That was especially true when he thought about the countless love letters he had received all those years ago, which proved how dashing he was, and that he was truly unparalleled under heaven.

The dozen or so chosen nearby who had been sealed and immobilized were also staring in mute shock, their minds reeling with so much disbelief that they almost couldn't recover.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and put his Eternal Parasol away. He was in no mood for stabbing people with it now. Sighing, he grabbed Xu Shan and put her into his bag of holding. Considering how the

termagant was an admirer, though, he put her in a special, more private part of the bag of holding

The only other person in that special location was Chen Manyao....

As for the other Wildlander chosen, he also stashed them in his bag of holding. Having accomplished these things, he got his breathing under control and then looked at the exit vortex, heart pounding. After thinking for a moment to come up with a plan, he suddenly reached down and tore his robe up. However, that didn't seem like enough, so he then slapped himself in the face, and even sent some blood oozing out of his mouth. At that point, he stepped through the exit.

**

Outside of the Necromancer Kettle, more than a hundred people were quietly waiting. Whether it was the cloudy-eyed old man who had escorted Zhou Hong, or the old woman who was Xu Shan's Dao protector, all of them had calm expressions. Apparently, they had utmost confidence that there was nothing dangerous in the Necromancer Kettle that could harm the various heirs apparent, princesses, and princes.

Therefore, few people had even thought much about Bai Xiaochun, nor even considered the possibility that he might accomplish anything in the Necromancer Kettle.

Even the middle-aged man who had escorted the second prince seemed to have the same attitude. His expression was placid as he looked at the Necromancer Kettle and waited for everyone to emerge from inside.

It was almost unnecessary to mention how the other chosen and Dao protectors were reacting. All of them seemed very relaxed, and many were even chatting and laughing with each other. Clearly, no one was worried about the situation. After all, considering that all three of the other heavenly kings were working together, there

was no doubt in their mind that the Giant Ghost King would come out as the loser.

In fact, there was literally no chance of him prevailing. As for Bai Hao... although most of them had heard some stories about him, they still discounted him immediately. In fact, many people had already assumed that he would perish.

The only thing they were wondering was which of the other heavenly kings would end up with the ghost king fruit. A few of the people present were even making friendly wagers.

“Unless something unexpected happens, the Junior Champion King will surely acquire the flower....”

“Not necessarily. Princess Xu Shan is not the type to casually admit defeat. If she gets stubborn, she could cause a real headache for him.”

“Prince Zhou Hong is an ambitious and ruthless character. All of the other chosen of the generation have been completely won over by him. I'd say that Zhou Hong definitely has a better chance than the others. After all, it's not all just about battle prowess.”

When Duke Deathcrier heard the various conversations going on, he sighed inwardly. At the moment, he didn't have much hope at all, and still couldn't figure out what the Giant Ghost King was thinking. Considering how important the matter was, if Duke Deathcrier had been in charge, he definitely wouldn't have sent Bai Hao in alone. He would have sent in as many people as possible, and would have called on every clan connected to the Giant Ghost King to try to secure the greatest chance of victory.

Even he had to admit that Bai Hao on his own would be unable to come out on top. Duke Deathcrier knew Bai Hao better than anyone else here, and was aware of how brave and fierce he could be, but the matter of fleeing from three devas was very different than what would be going on in the Necromancer Kettle.

“I just have to trust in his highness the king....” Duke Deathcrier thought, taking a deep breath. Then he thought of how everything had played out with the rebellion of the three devas, and all of the things the Giant Ghost King had done, and it left him with a bit of anticipation regarding how everything would turn out.

Even as everyone discussed the matter, the Necromancer Kettle suddenly began to vibrate, and then rumbling sounds echoed out from inside of it. Mist began to pour out from the mouth of the kettle, drawing the attention of everyone in the area.

The old man from Nine Serenities City, the old woman from Spirit Advent City, and the middle-aged man from Arch-Emperor City all turned their flickering gazes to the exit.

“Who’s going to come out first...?” That was what everyone was thinking.

As for Duke Deathcrier, he shook his head, convinced that Bai Hao wouldn’t even be coming out. However, he still looked over at the exit.

As everyone watched intently, a bedraggled figure appeared, flying at top speed out of the Necromancer Kettle.

“It’s him!”

“How could he be the first person to come out!?”

“Bai Hao... didn't die in there?”

Everyone was stunned, even Duke Deathcrier, whose eyes shone with disbelief....

Bai Xiaochun’s hair was a mess, and his clothing was ripped and torn. His aura seemed weak, and an unsightly expression could be seen on his face. He was frowning, and clearly irritated. To everyone present, it was very obvious that he was in a foul mood that bordered on madness.

“Outrageous! Ridiculous!” he shouted angrily. As soon as he was

out in the open, he headed at top speed toward Duke Deathcrier.

“Let’s go!” he said, sounding wronged. He seemed discouraged and downhearted, as though all of his hopes and dreams had been turned into dust. In fact, he didn’t even wait for a response from Duke Deathcrier. He simply flew away angrily. Of course, inside he was bursting with nervousness. At the same time, the feeling of pulling a fast one on members of the older generation was very exciting. However... if anyone caught on to the act and looked closely at him, they would surely devolve into madness....

Still surprised, Duke Deathcrier sighed, contemplating what must have gone on inside of the Necromancer Kettle. Clearly, Bai Hao had been bullied to no end, and thus, it was with the shake of a head that he turned and left along with him.

As they left, many in the crowd began to chuckle derisively.

“Now I know why Bai Hao was the first to come out. He definitely got bullied inside, and didn't dare to fight anyone. All he could do was wait until the mouth of the Necromancer Kettle opened to make his escape.”

“Although, you have to admit that Bai Hao certainly has some extraordinary qualities. The fact that he didn’t get killed is amazing. However, the lesson he learned inside will probably force him to keep his head bowed forever. It must have been a bitter lesson indeed.”

“I'd say the only reason he made it out alive was that the heirs apparent didn't want to provoke the Giant Ghost King too deeply. However, I'm sure they taught some harsh and probably even humiliating lessons to this Bai Hao. Well, they'll all be coming out in a moment, and we can hear the whole story.” As they waited, the various Dao protectors continued to joke and chat.

Actually, it was happening this way, not because of the flawless performance Bai Xiaochun had just put on, but because an error in their thinking. None of them could possibly imagine how a single

person could take on more than a hundred. Those odds... were just too high.

Not even the Dao protectors from Nine Serenities City, Spirit Advent City, and Arch-Emperor City spared much thought for Bai Hao...

And so they continued to wait, calmly watching the exit and waiting for people to come out. Before long, enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, but they still weren't worried. After all, it was only to be expected that the fierce fighting inside would take some time to end.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was speeding away from the area as quickly as possible. Duke Deathcrier was next to him. He looked over, and was about to say something, when Bai Xiaochun urgently said, "Deathcrier, old pal, bring out the giant ghost battleship!!"

The way that his voice seemed to tremble with nervousness left Duke Deathcrier feeling very taken aback.

"What's going on...?" he replied, quickly pulling out the battleship.

Bai Xiaochun leaped onto the deck and then urgently said, "RUN!!"

Duke Deathcrier's eyes went wide, and all of a sudden, his heart started pounding. He suddenly thought back to all the disastrous things that had occurred in Giant Ghost City, and a chill ran down his spine. However, a moment later, his expression brightened, and then, without the slightest hesitation, he drew upon the power of his cultivation base to send the giant ghost battleship zooming off into the distance!

Chapter 704: I'm Back!

Along the way, Duke Deathcrier was inclined on a few occasions to simply ask about the situation. However, the ill premonition in his heart that continued to grow stronger prevented him from doing so.

Bai Xiaochun stood next to him, face pale, anxious and doubtful as he continuously looked over their shoulders. Apparently worried that they were going too slowly, he gave constant reminders to pick up speed.

Everything that was going on got Duke Deathcrier's heart pounding harder and harder....

“Just what did this guy do?” he thought, pouring all of the power he could into the giant ghost battleship to keep it moving as quickly as possible.

After a long moment passed, he finally couldn't hold it in any longer

“What did you do?” he asked.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. Although he was already starting to regret his actions, he was still very proud of what he had accomplished. Sounding very casual, he said, “Oh nothing. I just kidnapped everybody else, and have them here in my bag of holding.”

“What!?!? Everybody...? You kidnapped them?!” Despite being a deva, Duke Deathcrier's mind began to spin as though it had been struck with a sledgehammer. Face filled with a look of incredulity, he looked, first at Bai Xiaochun, and then at his bag of holding. Then his cheek twitched.

“You... you....” He actually couldn't say anything other than that. However, he knew that the ramifications of what had been done were almost too monumental to calculate. Without even

thinking about it, he drew upon one-hundred-twenty percent of his cultivation base to send the giant ghost battleship shooting at top speed through the air.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as they proceeded along toward their destination....

**

As Duke Deathcrier and Bai Xiaochun got closer and closer to Giant Ghost City, the Dao protectors back at the Necromancer Kettle were starting to get a bit impatient.

That was especially true of the old man from Nine Serenities City, who had a distinct glint in his eyes as he looked at the Necromancer Kettle. Despite being a deva cultivator, the bizarre nature of the Necromancer Kettle made it impossible for him to see what was happening inside.

Next to him was the old woman who had come with Xu Shan. She was also starting to get more and more nervous, and occasionally turned to look in the direction Bai Xiaochun had fled in.

“More than half the time has passed. Soon the exit will close. Something seems off....”

“Even if they continued fighting after the exit opened, an entire hour has passed. After another hour, the exit will close, and then it will be very difficult for them to come out!”

“Did something unexpected occur inside? No, there’s no way....”

It wasn’t just the devas who were starting to get suspicious. The other Dao protectors were starting to feel uneasy. All eyes were focused on the Necromancer Kettle as more time ticked by. Anxiety mounted. After all, the chosen who were inside the kettle were all very important people.

They were all sons and daughters of influential clans and families. Not only were they important in terms of status, their

latent talent and cultivation bases were all beyond ordinary. There were even some whose names were on the Hell-Emperor Stele.

These were the best of the best in their generation in the Wildlands, all of whom were destined to be powerful people in the future. There were some who were already certain to become devas, and it was even very likely that some would become demigods.

If an accident occurred with even one of those people, it would be major news in the Wildlands. If something unexpected happened to more than ten of them, it would be ten times more shocking of an event....

Not even the three heavenly kings would be willing to accept responsibility if something like that happened. An accident of that nature would be a blow to the soft spot that existed in all parties involved....

Now that everyone was thinking along these lines, their unease grew more intense. Furthermore, because the second prince and Chen Manyao were also still inside, the middle-aged man from Arch-Emperor City was also starting to look very nervous.

Eventually, the Dao protectors got so nervous that they began to cry out in anxious voices. “Time is almost up!! We can’t wait any longer!!”

The old man from Nine Serenities City looked over at the Dao protector from Arch-Emperor City. Eyes flashing, he said, “Brother Lin, something happened in here!”

“That’s right, Brother Lin,” the old woman from Spirit Advent City said, her voice grating and eerie. “It’s a critical situation. The Necromancer Kettle belongs to the imperial clan. The Grand Heavenmaster must have a way to see inside of it!”

Before long, almost all eyes had come to rest on that middle-aged man.

It was quite a bit of pressure for him to deal with. Furthermore, he knew what those gazes represented: nearly eighty percent of the most important groups in the entire Wildlands.... This collection of cultivators was backed by many devas, and three demigods.

“I’ll need to contact the Grand Heavenmaster and let him make the decision.” He quickly produced a jade slip and sent an urgent message. Moments later, the jade slip glowed with dazzling light, after which he crushed it.

As the jade slip fell apart, it became flying ash that spread out in all directions, then rose up above them and created a fist-sized vortex. Blue light shone out from the vortex, which shot toward the middle-aged man. When he reached out and grabbed it... it turned into a fist-sized blue mirror!

The mirror was clearly from ancient times, and was covered with countless faintly-glimmering magical symbols. Despite how old it seemed, it still radiated a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering aura!

“The Grand Heavenmaster used a secret magic to deliver this mirror to me. I can’t use it on my own.” Taking a deep breath, he looked at the old man from Nine Serenities City and the old woman from Spirit Advent City. “Would the two of you mind providing some assistance?”

They didn’t hesitate to fly over and unleash the power of their cultivation bases, sending deva auras out that caused heaven and earth to flash with colors.

As their power entered the mirror, it shone with dazzling light that caused the other Dao protectors in the area to back up nervously. The three cultivators powering the mirror let out hoarse shouts as the blue light transformed into a column that shot directly toward the Necromancer Kettle!

The air distorted around the blue column of light, which could pass through all restrictive spells and all manner of defenses. Ripples spread out on the surface of the Necromancer Kettle as it

slowly... became transparent! Before long, everyone could see everything inside as clear as day.... And then, faces began to fall.

“There’s nobody there!!”

“Everyone’s gone!!”

“How is this possible? There were more than a hundred of them.... Where did they go?!?!” Shouts of alarm could be heard in all directions. The old man from Nine Serenities City and the old woman from Spirit Advent City were so shocked that their cultivation base fluctuations reflected their astonishment.

Worried that they were seeing things, they sent more power into the mirror, sending its light sweeping back and forth through the lands inside the Necromancer Kettle. Under the power of that light, even the densest of mists were dispersed. And yet... they still couldn’t find a trace of a single one of the chosen!

The middle-aged man from Arch-Emperor City was shaking, and his mind spun with disbelief.

“Wait,” someone said. “I can detect the aura of the Giant Ghost King!”

As everyone began to reach the same conclusion, their eyes turned completely bloodshot, and their hearts began to burn with rage.

“Everybody went missing, and Bai Hao was the only one to come out. This is definitely the handiwork of the Giant Ghost King!”

“That Bai Hao is a mere Nascent Soul cultivator. How could he possibly dare to do something like this? It was definitely the Giant Ghost King’s doing!!”

“Remember how Bai Hao looked when he came out? That must have been an act! Dammit!” Shouts of rage began to ring out. As for the old man from Nine Serenities City and the old woman from Spirit Advent City, both of them resorted to teleportations to rush in the direction Bai Xiaochun had left in.

Enraged, everyone else began to follow!

These people were no fools, and they all came to the conclusion that the chosen of their various organizations had been kidnapped by Bai Hao at the behest of the Giant Ghost King. Even more humiliating was the shocking fact that he had escaped from under their very noses.

However, they didn't dare to offend the Giant Ghost King, so they had no choice but to vent their anger on Bai Xiaochun.

Rumbling sounds could be heard, and dazzling light flashed in the sky as more than a hundred powerful experts shot through the air in pursuit.

Unfortunately for them, they had delayed for far too long. Bai Xiaochun and Duke Deathcrier were on the giant ghost battleship, which Duke Deathcrier was fueling with all the power he could muster. It was a bright beam of light, shooting through the air, closing in on Giant Ghost City!

When Bai Xiaochun finally caught sight of the city off in the distance, he breathed a sigh of relief. He even started to get a bit excited.

“Giant Ghost King, you fudge-licking prick. I'm back!!”

Chapter 705: What Exactly Did You Do...?

As Bai Xiaochun and Duke Deathcrier were still closing in on the city, the Giant Ghost King was in his royal palace, a very excited expression on his face as he looked at the ghost king fruit which he held in his hand!

The way that he had acquired the fruit by means of the restrictive spell was a violation of certain rules, and yet, the fruit was simply too important to him. How could he possibly allow it to be acquired by others and then used to threaten him?

He had really had no other choice than to grit his teeth and proceed with his plan.

“I finally have all five of the ghost king fruits, and at long last I can remove the five elements flaw from my technique. By being able to switch back and forth between the five elements at will, I will no longer be subjected to the potentially deadly decay period!” With that, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously, his heart filled with intense levels of joy. After years and years of waiting, he had won out, despite being opposed by the united front of all his opponents. The fact that all of his plans and schemes had worked left him feeling very pleased.

“The Nine Serenities King, War Champion King and Spirit Advent King were all scheming against me, the bastards. I might have broken the rules, but it was only after their plotting. Now I just need to lay low for a while and not give them any reason to cause me any problems. After some time passes, all of the issues can be resolved.” A faint smile could be seen on his face, and a bright gleam passed through his eyes. It was wonderful to have all matters under his control.

Of course, he had no idea what exactly had occurred in the Necromancer Kettle. The restrictive spell on Bai Xiaochun didn't give him the ability to see what was happening from afar. It was

specifically designed to be used the way it had with the Ghost King Orchid. But he wasn't worried.

Chuckling, he put the ghost king fruit away and prepared to go into secluded meditation to merge all five of the fruits into his body. Just when he was rising to his feet, his expression flickered, and he looked off into the sky.

He immediately caught sight of the giant ghost battleship. As soon as it got close enough, two figures leapt off of its deck and flew toward his royal palace.

Mixed emotions could be seen playing out on Duke Deathcrier's face, and as for Bai Xiaochun, he seemed both grim and angry.

"Bai Hao sure got back quickly," the Giant Ghost King thought. "And he doesn't seem injured at all." He cleared his throat awkwardly. He knew that he was in the wrong in the matter that had just occurred, and felt like simply avoiding Bai Hao. However, avoiding him wouldn't resolve the situation, so therefore, he put a somber expression onto his face and then settled back down into his throne to wait.

Bai Xiaochun shot at top speed toward the giant ghost statue, followed by a hesitant Duke Deathcrier. After reaching the royal palace, Duke Deathcrier clasped hands to Bai Xiaochun, then hurried back to his own residence, not interested at all in participating in the irksome events which were sure to follow.

"This Bai Hao has got some guts, but I simply can't believe that he would do something like this unless he was acting on the orders of his highness the king.... Just what is his highness thinking? Is he really going to go up against all of the nobility and aristocracy in the Wildlands?" Duke Deathcrier sighed, truly unable to wrap his mind around what was going on.

As Duke Deathcrier left, Bai Xiaochun hurried onward to the main entrance. At the moment, he was still very angry. After all, were it not for the fact that he was so incredible, his trip to the

Necromancer Kettle would have been one of almost certain death.

And the reason for that was because the Giant Ghost King had screwed him over.

Gritting his teeth, he took a deep breath and buried his anger inside him, then snorted coldly in his heart and walked into the palace's main hall.

Trying to look very maligned, he loudly said, "Bai Hao offers greetings, Your Highness!"

As soon as he saw Bai Xiaochun, the Giant Ghost King rose from his throne and said, "Ah, you're back, Hao'er. Hahaha! You really performed a meritorious service this time!"

He no longer looked somber like before, and even wore a kind smile. He did nothing to hide the praise in his eyes, and seemed like he truly was delighted to see Bai Xiaochun.

It was also his first time ever addressing him as Hao'er....

A strange expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face, and he was just about to say something when the Giant Ghost King waved his hand dismissively.

Stepping down off of the throne dais, it was with caring emotion that he said, "Not hurt at all, I see. Hao'er, you really did a huge favor for me this time. Son, I've already issued orders to throw a spirit banquet for the both of us. Now, tell me what it is you want. As long as it's in my power, I'll grant you any favor!"

That only made Bai Xiaochun angrier though. Raising his voice, he said, "I don't want any gifts. Those people really bullied me, you hear?! You have no idea, Your Highness. They all ganged up on me, and were clearly trying to kill me. I had no choice but to do something to protect myself. I may have offended some important people, but it was all in your service, Your Highness!"

Obviously, the Giant Ghost King knew that in a situation in which more than a hundred people were chasing Bai Hao, it would

be difficult for him to survive without injuring or even killing a few people. And yet, the Giant Ghost King was confident in being able to resolve any issues that had cropped up. “Ah, don’t worry about it. Everything you did was for me. Fear not. I won’t let anything bad happen to you.”

The maligned expression remained on Bai Xiaochun’s face, but inwardly, he was starting to feel very pleased with himself. Giant Ghost King, oh Giant Ghost King, you screwed me over first, so you can’t blame me for screwing you right back!

Bai Xiaochun was about to say something more when a buzzing sound could be heard from within the Giant Ghost King’s bag of holding.

“They’re coming after you so quickly?” The Giant Ghost King’s eyes glittered, and a faint smile could be seen on his face as he produced a transmission jade slip from his bag of holding. He had been aware all along that, whatever Bai Xiaochun did in the Necromancer Kettle, it wouldn’t be possible to keep it a secret for very long. Therefore, he had long since prepared for the aftermath. With that, he poured some divine sense into the jade slip to power it up.

Sounding very calm and composed, he said, “Nine Serenities King--”

However, before he could even finish speaking, the enraged voice of the Nine Serenities King roared out like a volcano to fill the palace hall. “How shameless of you, Giant Ghost King!!”

Assuming that the Nine Serenities King was talking about the matter of the ghost king fruit, the Giant Ghost King cleared his throat and said, “Nine Serenities King, let me expl--”

Before he could say anything else, the Nine Serenities King responded in a voice that echoed like destructive thunder. It even caused the air around the Giant Ghost King to distort.

“I couldn't care less about how you got that fruit, Giant Ghost King. We plotted against you, so we have no right to complain about you fighting back. But considering your status, how could you possibly do something to my son Zhou Hong? You listen to me, Giant Ghost King. The enmity between Nine Serenities City and Giant Ghost City is not over!!” With that, the Nine Serenities King severed the communication.

The Giant Ghost King's eyes widened. Thinking back to what Bai Xiaochun had just said, he looked over and said, “You fought with Zhou Hong? Is he dead?”

Looking like the picture of righteous indignation, Bai Xiaochun replied, “Yeah, I fought with him, that big bully. Hmph! I left him with his poor little life, though.”

Breathing a sigh of relief, the Giant Ghost King said, “As long as he's not dead, then it's fine.”

At this point, the Giant Ghost King couldn't help but muse that Bai Hao's battle prowess really was incredible. Despite being chased by so many people, he still managed to injure Zhou Hong. Just when he was about to continue speaking, his jade slip once again began to vibrate. This time, it shook even more violently than before, and then, even more angry voices could be heard, many of them sounding like they wished to do battle, although not all.

“Giant Ghost King, my son has always been stubborn and mischievous. He had this tribulation coming! I'll be there in person shortly to express my gratitude!!”

“War Champion King!?” The Giant Ghost King's pupils constricted; of all of the other three heavenly kings, the one he feared the most was the War Champion King. Therefore, he was a bit confused by this latest message, and even more confused about what was going on. Heart thumping, he suddenly had a very bad feeling, and looked over again at Bai Xiaochun.

“You fought with the Junior Champion King? He’s not dead either?”

“Oh him?” Bai Xiaochun flicked his hand as if in disgust. Gritting his teeth, he said, “No, he’s not dead. That bastard was a really tough cookie, though.”

A strange expression could be seen on the Giant Ghost King’s face, but before he could do anything else, his jade slip vibrated again. This time it was the Spirit Advent King, who seemed even angrier than the Nine Serenities King had been.

“That mysterious daughter of yours is in Arch-Emperor City, isn’t she Giant Ghost King? Nobody else knows, but I do! Well, I think I know where I’m going next! I need to be more like you, you old bastard. Bullying people younger and weaker than you!” As the voice echoed out in the hall, the Giant Ghost King began to pant. Everything was happening too quickly, catching him completely unawares.

Looking over at Bai Xiaochun, he was just about to ask a certain question when Bai Xiaochun took the initiative to say, “Don't worry, Xu Shan isn’t dead.”

As the Giant Ghost King looked at Bai Xiaochun, his ill premonition grew more intense. And yet, before he could say anything, the jade slip in his hand began to vibrate over and over again. Countless messages poured in, some bitter, some pleading, some angry.

The Giant Ghost King’s mind began to spin. Despite being a demigod, the current turn of events had him reeling in shock. Although most of the people who were sending the messages weren’t on the same level as him in terms of cultivation base, there were simply too many of them. It seemed like just about all of the nobility and aristocracy in the lands of the Arch-Emperor were reaching out to him.

And that wasn’t even mentioning the fact that the other three

heavenly kings were involved, and they were on the same level as him.

Even the imperial clan messaged him, saying that the second prince was missing. The Giant Ghost King was dumbstruck by what was happening. Finally, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, and weakly asked, “W-what... what exactly did you do in the Necromancer Kettle?”

Chapter 706: Stupefied Giant Ghost King

“Oh, I didn’t do anything...!” Bai Xiaochun said, looking like the picture of innocence. Inside, he was feeling extremely pleased with himself, and couldn’t have been happier. The Giant Ghost King had screwed him, and therefore he had screwed him right back.... Therefore, the more shocked the Giant Ghost King looked right now, the more worth it it all was.

“Although, you know how loyal and devoted I am to you, Your Highness, and how much I worry about you constantly. That, coupled with how well you’ve treated me over the years, left me no choice other than to put my life in the greatest danger, to go through countless trials and tribulations, to be spattered head to toe with blood, to come perilously close to the gates of hell, to reject all fear of suffering, of exhaustion, and even death for you. Because of all the favor you have shown me, I subdued all of them!” He slapped his chest to emphasize his words, making it look like he was the type of person who would live or die for the Giant Ghost King, and would face death without blinking for him.

“You... you ‘subdued’ them all?” The Giant Ghost King almost felt like fainting. In the short time in which they had just been conversing, a dozen more messages had come into his transmission jade slip.

Looking very impassioned, Bai Xiaochun loudly continued, “Yeah, I subdued every last one of them. The other three demigod heavenly kings were planning to blackmail you, right? They even sent people to try to steal what was yours! Therefore, I kidnapped all of their children and chosen, and brought them here, just for you, Your Highness. And now, you can take them into custody!

“Come, come, let me introduce you to everyone, Your Highness. We’ll start with the Junior Champion King from War Champion City!” Getting more excited, he smacked his bag of holding to bring out the gasping Junior Champion King.

The Junior Champion King was currently little more than skin and bones, and his life force had been seriously damaged. He seemed to be struggling on the verge of death.

“And here’s Prince Zhou Hong from Nine Serenities City.” With that, he produced Zhou Hong....

“Oh, and this one here is, wait, what did they call him? Oh right. Little Wolfgod!

“And this is Li Tiansheng.

“And here’s Miao Lin’er. She’s pretty incredible, and is actually much more suitable for you than Mrs. Chen. I brought her here especially for you, Your Highness.” With that, he cast a very knowing wink at the Giant Ghost King.

“Right, there’s also Princess Xu Shan from Spirit Advent City. This girl is a bit of a nutjob. What a pity.

“Oh, this guy. I think he's pretty special, actually. I heard people calling him second prince. I guess he must have a pretty high status. You definitely need to make good use of him, Your Highness. It took a lot out of me to kidnap him.” Clearly in very high spirits, Bai Xiaochun went on to patiently introduce everyone to the Giant Ghost King as he pulled them out of his bag of holding one by one. Before long, the Giant Ghost King was as flabbergasted as a wooden chicken as he watched more than a hundred people fill his palace hall.

Virtually all of them were skinny and emaciated, some of them so weak that they simply lay on the floor, unmoving....

“It was all for you, Your Highness, that I captured these people and brought them here!” Looking like he was ready to go through hell or high water for the king, Bai Xiaochun clasped hands and bowed deeply.

The Giant Ghost King felt like his mind was being struck by countless lightning bolts. However, considering the level of his

cultivation base and willpower, after sitting there in a daze for a moment, he managed to recover. By this point, he realized what had occurred, and understood why he was getting so many messages via jade slip. He also felt like he was slipping into a nightmare....

In all of his complicating plotting and scheming, the one thing he hadn't accounted for was how powerful Bai Xiaochun actually was. He was so strong that he had kidnapped all of these people.... The sight of Bai Xiaochun solemnly producing all of the chosen caused bitter laughter to rise up in the heart of the Giant Ghost King, and his face even began to twitch.

"I underestimated this Bai Hao," he thought. "First, he kidnapped his father. Then he kidnapped me. He's obviously addicted to kidnapping. I can't believe that in one fell swoop... he kidnapped over a hundred people.

"This sly bugger was obviously pissed off, and believes that I screwed him over. Therefore, he used this method to screw me back.... Furthermore, he didn't kill anyone. No matter how you look at it, it really is a meritorious service...." His heart was pounding, and he could feel a massive headache coming on. Obviously, this was a very important matter, and it was clear that Bai Xiaochun was intentionally doing it to cause problems for him.

Under any other circumstances, it might not have mattered. But the Giant Ghost King had also broken the rules regarding the Necromancer Kettle. He had wanted to keep things low key, to forestall any problems. Never could he have imagined that something like this would unexpectedly occur....

The three heavenly kings, and the vast majority of the nobility and aristocracy, would definitely use this opportunity to cause problems for him. Furthermore, he was in a very precarious position. If he simply let all of the captives go, it would send the message that the supposedly majestic Giant Ghost King was actually scared. But not releasing the captives wasn't an option

either. He was a demigod, and one of the four heavenly kings, but he couldn't tackle all of the Wildlands at the same time.

Despite feeling extremely annoyed, there wasn't anything he could do at the moment. Ultimately, he was in the wrong in this matter. He had been the one to screw Bai Xiaochun over, and had even made plans that would have ensured success even if he died.

If Bai Xiaochun had ended up dying, it probably wouldn't have mattered. But here he was alive, and despite how vicious the Giant Ghost King was in general, when he thought about their history together, and the fact that he was a demigod king, if he went and bit the hand that fed him, his reputation would suffer irreparable damage.

Most importantly, Bai Xiaochun hadn't killed anyone, a shrewd and ruthless move that left the Giant Ghost King with almost no wiggle room. Had he killed all the other chosen, it would have been a simple matter to deal with. The Giant Ghost King could have put all the onus on Bai Xiaochun. But instead, Bai Xiaochun had delivered everyone to him alive. No matter what action the Giant Ghost King took, he would be in a very difficult situation.

“This Bai Hao is completely ruthless!” The Giant Ghost King looked over the crowd of emaciated chosen in the hall, and noticed how their life force had been damaged. Clearly, that was a method Bai Xiaochun was using to make sure the Giant Ghost King didn't just casually let all the captives free.

“If I do let them go, it's going to cost me dearly....” he thought with a long sigh. Then he looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a bitter smile. He had to admit that Bai Xiaochun had played his hand perfectly. When he thought about the price he would have to pay to calm everyone down, he was so depressed that his internal organs hurt.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was actually feeling very nervous. This matter of screwing over the Giant Ghost King wasn't a conspiracy,

it was an open attack! Therefore, he had to be very careful not to push the Giant Ghost King past his bottom line. Seeing that the man was sighing bitterly, Bai Xiaochun realized that his revenge had been had. Blinking a few times, he said, “Your humble servant will take his leave now. When it comes time for the spirit banquet, Your Highness... I’ll be back.”

The Giant Ghost King glared back at him and waved his hand. “What spirit banquet!? There’s no spirit banquet! Get the hell out of here!”

“How stingy....” Bai Xiaochun thought. Rubbing his nose a bit in embarrassment, he reluctantly turned and left the royal palace. Once he was out in the open, his face lit up with joy, and he became a beam of light that shot toward his residence.

As soon as he was back home, he went into his secluded meditation chamber, where he sat down cross-legged, took a deep breath, and then looked at his bag of holding.

There was still one person in there that he hadn’t handed over to the king. It was none other than... Chen Manyao.

“I think there’s a 50/50 chance that Chen Manyao has figured out who I am. So what am I supposed to do...?” All of the wonderful feelings that had come from successfully screwing over the Giant Ghost King disappeared, replaced by a frown.

He thought about bringing her out to just talk the matter over, but wasn’t sure if that was the right thing to do. After all, there was still the possibility that she didn’t know who he was. In that case, if he tried to openly discuss things with her, it would only be giving her more chances to do just that.

And yet, not bringing her out left him in a bit of a deadlock. He really wasn’t sure what to do....

“Ah, whatever. I’ll just put the matter out of mind and do some meditating.” Burying the matter in his heart, he thought back to

everything which had occurred in the Necromancer Kettle, and as he did, his eyes began to shine brightly.

“My Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul really is shockingly effective. With all of the five elements backing it, I can basically crush any other cultivator in the same level as me....

“Without my Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, it would have been really difficult to kidnap all of those people....” Pursing his lips to suppress his laughter, he examined the five-colored glow coming off of his nascent soul, and his enthusiasm grew deeper.

“Hahaha! I'm so strong already....” As of this moment, he felt more than ever that all the work he had put into forming his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul had been worth it.

Then he thought back to the events of the Necromancer Kettle, and how he had used the Eternal Parasol to absorb the life force of so many cultivators. Although he hadn't absorbed Xu Shan's life force, he had surreptitiously done so to the dozen or so captives she had given him. As a result, his Undying Bones were now in the eighth stratum of the Tempered Bones level.

“The eighth stratum!” Although his cultivation of the Undying Bones seemed to be going slow in some respects, he was actually going more quickly than he had with the other parts of the Undying Codex. Furthermore, it was propelling him to almost unbelievable heights.

“Once I break through to the ninth stratum, my Undying Emperor's Fist will double in power!!

“Compared to all my cultivation progress though, the most important thing I got in the Necromancer Kettle... was my apprentice! I got... Bai Hao's soul!” Eyes shining brightly, he looked into the soulhoarding pagoda in his bag of holding, within which was a solitary vengeful soul.... Bai Hao!

Eyes flickering with various memories, he murmured, “It's time

to restore your mind, my apprentice!”

Chapter 707: Destiny Brought Us Together....

Restoring Bai Hao's mind was of the utmost importance to Bai Xiaochun. Bai Hao was his apprentice, and if he had never been able to locate his soul, it might have been a different story. But after recovering it, there was no hesitation on his part about what to do.

If this had happened back when he had first arrived in the Wildlands, it would have been very difficult for him to accomplish what he was now setting out to do. But now, he was a celestial necromancer, and had a vast amount of valuable treasures from the three great clans. Most importantly, he had two secret treasures from those great clans, the lotus seed pod, and the drop of blood.

Those two secret treasures were specifically designed for use with souls. That was especially true of the blood drop, which was the secret treasure from the reserve savings of the Chen Clan. It could restore all of the memories that existed in the previous life of a soul, and turn that soul into something like a ghost cultivator.

As for the lotus seed pod, it could be used to form a brand new body. Although he wasn't sure if it would work as well on dead ghosts as it could on living beings, he was determined to try. Despite that, he didn't take action blithely. The lotus seed pod only had two seeds in it, and there was only one drop of blood. Therefore, he wanted to make sure he was thoroughly prepared before he began.

In the end... he would only have one chance to succeed.

In fact, he even paid a visit to the Chen Clan and had a meeting with their new clan chief. After talking the man up, and even offering a bit of compensation, he won him over with his sincerity, and acquired more detailed information on how to use the blood

drop.

After getting all the information he needed and returning, he only felt more nervous than before. “This drop of blood has some mystical powers. It can actually restore the memories of a soul’s previous life.... However, the process is very dangerous, and is very draining on the soul. Perhaps it would be a more certain process if it were a deva soul, but Bai Hao was only in Foundation Establishment when he died.... It’s hard to say whether or not I’ll be able to make it work....”

However, there was nothing he could do about the matter. Bai Hao's soul was now a vicious entity, nothing more than a soul body that couldn't practice any form of cultivation.

Even if he restored his memories, it seemed he would be stuck for all eternity as a Foundation Establishment soul, unable to make any progress.

“The only thing I can do is use a whole bunch of soul medicine during the blood fusion process.... It will be difficult to pull it off, but the results will definitely be better.” Eyes flashing with determination, he immediately made arrangements to buy up all of the soul medicine in Giant Ghost City.

After becoming the city’s majordomo, he had been the recipient of numerous gifts, and had also ransacked the three great clans. As a result, he could certainly be considered well off. However, for Bai Hao’s sake, he didn’t hesitate to spend massive amounts of wealth on soul medicine.

He had already built up a bit from ransacking the three great clans, and now that he spent so much money to acquire more, his stockpile began growing to terrifying proportions.

As Bai Xiaochun began gobbling up all of the soul medicine in the city, terrifying things were shaking the hearts of all residents.

More than a hundred powerful experts had come to visit the city,

including three devas. All of them had been spitting mad, and yet, kept their anger under control. Instead of charging into the city itself, they settled down cross-legged outside, effectively encircling the whole place.

And that had only been the beginning.... Afterward, numerous people appeared in the city via its teleportation portal. All of them were the type who had numerous followers, and didn't bother to even reign in their surging energy as they headed to the royal palace to talk with the Giant Ghost King.

Before even the first of such meetings concluded, the teleportation portal shone brightly again as more people arrived.

A steady stream of dozens of people showed up every day. By this point, more than ten devas had entered the city. Of course, even a single deva was the type of monumental figure who could shake heaven and earth with the mere stomp of a foot. In fact, in the entire [world](#), there weren't even a total of fifty devas in existence.

But now, more than ten were in Giant Ghost City, which left Duke Deathcrier with a very sinking feeling. Thankfully the Giant Ghost King hadn't ordered him to go deal with these people, but had instead invited them to the royal palace to discuss matters.

When he sent a group away, another would come to replace it. And thus, in a short period of only a few days, everyone in Giant Ghost City slowly grew numb to what was happening. Then guesses and speculations began to run wild. In the end, it was virtually impossible to keep the matter a secret.

“What? Bai Hao acted on the orders of his highness the king to kidnap all of the chosen and heirs apparent of almost all of the nobility and aristocracy in the Wildlands!?!?”

“Heavens! Is this Bai Hao addicted to kidnapping, or what?!?! First it was his father, then his highness the king, and now he kidnapped over a hundred chosen in one fell swoop!?”

“His highness the king is playing a big, complicated game.... I really don’t understand what exactly he's doing.”

As word spread, countless gasps could be heard in all corners of the city. By now, it was impossible to relate exactly how bold and powerful people took Bai Hao to be.

Another three days went by, whereupon an intense roar shook heaven and earth in all directions. An enormous battle-axe appeared in the air above Bai Xiaochun’s residence, upon which stood a mighty figure who seemed capable of propping up all creation.

“Nine Serenities King!” The Giant Ghost King immediately emerged from his royal palace and flew up to confer with the Nine Serenities King. After a moment, the Nine Serenities King’s face turned grim, and he followed the Giant Ghost King into the palace for a time before leaving.

Soon after came the enormous mountain of flesh that was the Spirit Advent King. After that was the War Champion King. The things which the people of Giant Ghost City were seeing left all of them gaping in shock.

Seven days passed. Gradually, things at the teleportation portal calmed down a bit. Of course, Bai Xiaochun tried to stay as out-of-sight as possible, and didn’t even dare to make inquiries to find out exactly what had resulted. He knew that the Giant Ghost King was obviously in a horrific mood.

“Well, you can’t blame me! If you hadn’t screwed me, I wouldn’t have screwed you.” Despite feeling himself to be in the right, he knew who between the two of them was the most powerful. Muttering to himself, he remained in secluded meditation, and continued to buy up soul medicine. At one point, he also secretly took a trip to confer with Mrs. Chen.

Just as Bai Xiaochun had guessed, the Giant Ghost King was in a foul mood. During the seven days of meetings with various groups, he had sent away all of the various chosen that Bai Xiaochun had kidnapped. Some of the people who had come to retrieve their chosen were the type that the Giant Ghost King could completely disregard. There were even some he could intimidate with a mere look. But there were others who could force him to pay a bit of a price.

For example, the Spirit Advent King and War Champion King. First, the Giant Ghost King broke the rules of the Necromancer Kettle, and then, due to a freak combination of other factors, had both of their heirs beaten half to death.

The Nine Serenities King was even harder to calm down. In fact, the smile on his face only grew colder as their discussion proceeded. The Nine Serenities King had attacked the Giant Ghost King during his decay period, and had also broken certain rules himself, which showed his attitude and what he was capable of. Therefore, they were not able to get anywhere in their negotiation. Eventually, the Giant Ghost King called in the War Champion King and the Spirit Advent King to join the discussion, and in the end, the Nine Serenities King had no choice but to grit his teeth angrily and leave.

The biggest headache of all came when dealing with the second prince. There was simply no way to work around the fact that he was part of the imperial clan. Although that clan was currently in decline, with most of the power being held by the Grand Heavenmaster, the second prince was still a prince. The imperial clan was still not the kind who would brook humiliation, and thus, it was to the Giant Ghost King's great rancor that he paid a significant price to work everything out.

The Giant Ghost King was currently standing in a pagoda in the royal palace. Kneading the bridge of his nose, he sighed and murmured, "Finally managed to send them all away."

During the process, he had schemed, he had formed alliances, he had used every trick in his book to minimize his losses as much as possible. In the end, he was left feeling exhausted.

“It’s all the fault of that bastard brat!” The mere thought of Bai Xiaochun caused his eyes to widen angrily. However, it was at that point that he felt two warm arms wrapping around him from behind. It was none other than Mrs. Chen....

The Giant Ghost King turned to look at her, and his gaze softened. She took the opportunity to say some nice things about Bai Hao, and as a result, the Giant Ghost King’s anger faded a bit. He also began to think about all the good things Bai Hao had done for him.

“Well, it certainly cost me, but at least I got the ghost king fruit. I guess it was all worth it! Without Bai Hao on my side, the ghost king fruit would likely have been taken by one of the other three kings. If that had happened, I would have ended up paying ten times the price that I did.” In the end, things did seem to have worked out fairly. Snorting, the Giant Ghost King decided not to worry about the matter anymore.

**

Bai Xiaochun waited for a few more days, and when it seemed that the Giant Ghost King wasn't going to be coming for him, he finally started to feel confident about the whole situation. With that, he put even more effort into buying soul medicine, and soon, had the stockpile he needed.

With that, he gritted his teeth and started his work to restore Bai Hao’s mind!

Of course, the matter was too sensitive, so he didn't dare to do his work in Giant Ghost City. If any mistakes occurred, the ramifications could be too severe. Therefore, he found a remote location outside of the city where he set up plenty of restrictive spells to make sure no one could see him. His preparations having

been made, he settled his mind, pulled his soulhoarding pagoda out of his bag of holding, and then took out Bai Hao's soul.

A glowing halo of light surrounded the soul as it floated in Bai Xiaochun's hand. It seemed confused at first, but quickly came to its senses, looked at Bai Xiaochun and then let loose a soundless howl of rage.

Then it lunged at the halo as if to break past it and attack him. As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked at Bai Hao's soul, and many complicated emotions filled his heart. Within moments, Bai Hao's eyes began to shine with madness and greed, until Bai Xiaochun finally sighed and unleashed some of the pressure of his cultivation base.

Instantly, the soul body in the halo shivered and backed down, instinctively fearful of him.

“It is destiny that brought us together....” Bai Xiaochun murmured.

To be clear, the text uses the generic word for “world”, which could be interpreted in different ways. Considering the context, it could mean the Wildlands, but more broadly, it could also mean the “world” that includes the Heavenspan region. There is no way to tell definitively from the context.

Chapter 708: I'm Your Master!

Eventually, the pressure rolling out from Bai Xiaochun onto Bai Hao's soul became so intense that the surface of the shield rippled. Then Bai Hao's soul let out a piercing scream, and he shied away. However, it was with vicious determination that Bai Xiaochun then waved his left index finger toward the shield.

The shield distorted even more dramatically, and then Bai Hao's soul shivered as though it had been struck by a powerful attack. Then, it collapsed and remained motionless.

According to the information Bai Xiaochun had gained from the Chen Clan, in order to use the blood drop, one had to render the soul body in question completely incapable of resistance. If it resisted in the least bit, the operation would fail, and the soul would be completely destroyed.

In its state moments ago, Bai Hao's soul had been completely incapable of fighting against Bai Xiaochun. All it had taken was a bit of pressure to not only cow the soul, but to knock it unconscious. Now, it was time to move on to the next step.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and looked a bit more closely at Bai Hao's soul. A moment later, his eyes began to shine with determination.

“Well Bai Hao, whether or not this works is all up to your own good fortune....” With that, he waved his right hand, causing the shield of light to vanish. For the first time, Bai Hao's soul appeared out in the open!

Next, Bai Xiaochun slapped his bag of holding, producing a jade bottle that he gingerly opened. Inside was a drop of blood that he let fall onto Bai Hao's soul.

As soon as it touched the soul, it shattered to create a blood-colored mist that poured into the soul. In the blink of an eye, the

soul began to shiver, as though it were about to regain consciousness because of the intense pain it was feeling. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun was paying close attention, and made sure to keep enough pressure on the soul to keep it unconscious.

It was a delicate balance to maintain, but he succeeded. Soon, the blood mist was fully absorbed into Bai Hao's soul, which was beginning to thrash around so much it seemed it might begin to fade away. Apparently, there was some corrosive power within the drop of blood that was draining Bai Hao's soul, making it weak to the point where it might not be able to sustain the wastage.

Bai Xiaochun knew that a critical moment had arrived. Maintaining full focus, he waved his left hand to produce a large quantity of soul medicine. He crushed it without hesitation, which caused numerous streams of soul power to spring out and then flow into Bai Hao's soul body, replenishing what was being drained away.

However, the soul was being drained at a very rapid rate. Bai Xiaochun had just sent out one hundred portions of soul medicine, but it was only able to counteract the wastage for a few breaths of time. Therefore, he produced more soul medicine. Time passed, and eventually he lost track of how much soul medicine he had used.

With the soul medicine keeping him going, Bai Hao in soul form continued to merge with the blood. However, his soul body continued to twitch and distort as if in pain. Despite being unconscious, he could clearly feel what was happening.

The process continued for a full three days. Despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun was in the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, he was still starting to feel the exhaustion creeping up. During that time, he had to watch carefully every moment to make sure that Bai Hao didn't awaken at the wrong time. Simultaneously, he had to make sure he didn't exert too much pressure on him. It was a very delicate balance to maintain.

Another task was to continuously feed soul medicine to Bai Hao. Any other type of Nascent Soul cultivator would probably have already reached the limit of their abilities. But Bai Xiaochun had spent years concocting medicine, and had razor-sharp focus. Despite being tired, he didn't let that interfere with his work.

“According to the information from the Chen Clan, it takes seven days to absorb the blood... we're almost half done at this point.” He didn't grow lax in the least bit. When the third day passed, and the fourth day arrived, a gold design suddenly appeared on Bai Hao's soul.

The sight of that golden design instantly lifted Bai Xiaochun's spirits. Based on what he had learned from the Chen Clan, he knew that the main factor playing into whether or not the soul body recovered memories from its previous life was that very golden design. It was like evidence of the soul's fate, and once it appeared, it meant that the soul could once again appear in the world as it had in the past.

However, in the moment that the golden design appeared, it seemed that the pain Bai Hao's soul was enduring suddenly grew more intense. He let out a miserable shriek, and his eyes snapped open. In that instant, Bai Xiaochun could tell that his soul body was just about to fall apart; cracks even began to spread out on its surface.

Bai Xiaochun's face fell at this sudden, unexpected development, and he instantly got extremely nervous. He knew that exerting more pressure wouldn't resolve the issue, and therefore, he poured more soul medicine into Bai Hao's soul body. However, that did nothing to forestall the imminent collapse of the soul body. More cracks spread out on its surface; clearly, a very critical moment had arrived.

“Hang in there, Bai Hao!!” Bai Xiaochun said through gritted teeth. With that, he produced a lotus seed, crushed it, and dropped the resulting powder onto Bai Hao's soul. Although he couldn't be

certain that this method would work, his previous analysis and augury of the seed had left him sixty percent certain that it would help restore a soul.

The moment the powder of the crushed lotus seed landed onto Bai Hao's soul, gentle light began to spread out in all directions. At the same time, the cracks on the surface of his soul body vanished. Within the space of a few breaths of time, he recovered completely. The excitement in Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone brightly as he adjusted the pressure he was emitting, and then brought out more soul medicine to feed to Bai Hao.

“Three more days to go!!” Although Bai Xiaochun managed to keep calm and focused, he was still panting a bit, and his eyes were completely bloodshot. Now that the golden design had appeared, it took much more soul medicine than before to keep him stabilized. But Bai Xiaochun was well-prepared. He crushed soul medicine as if it were the least valuable thing in the world, spending amounts that would cause most people to stare in complete and utter shock. The wealth vanishing here was enough to drive entire clans bankrupt.

And yet, Bai Xiaochun didn't feel the slightest prickle of pain in his heart. No material possessions were worth more to him than Bai Hao. Bai Hao was his apprentice, and the first person he had encountered after being teleported to the Wildlands. Furthermore, he had used Bai Hao's identity to accomplish many, many things. The feelings that had built up for Bai Hao because of all that were not those which could be measured in terms of soul medicine.

Soon the fourth day had passed, and the fifth day arrived. After that was the sixth day.... As time marched on, Bai Xiaochun's eyes grew more and more bloodshot, and his exhaustion mounted. Because of the mounting pressure, his expression became one of pure vigilance and concentration. It lasted all the way until... the seventh day came!

“The final twenty-four hours!” he murmured. By this point he

was a bit wan, and his eyes were crimson. All of his energy was focused on maintaining balance. As time passed, Bai Hao's soul grew more and more stable, and the golden design that covered his soul body grew more and more dazzling.

With every pulse of golden light, Bai Hao's soul seemed to grow more calm and thoughtful, and less violent. As these things occurred, Bai Xiaochun continued to sigh emotionally.

“The final two hours!” he murmured. In his excitement, he couldn't help but imagine what it would be like when he succeeded, and Bai Hao got all of his memories back. How would he tell him about everything that had occurred after his death?

“I feel like I know you so well, but to you, I'm a complete stranger....” Bai Xiaochun shook his head and put such thoughts aside for the moment. Instead, he focused fully on Bai Hao's soul. Soon, the final moments were ticking down, and Bai Hao's soul seemed to have lost all of its previous viciousness and violence, and was now completely calm. Eventually, he sat up in place, a blank look on his face....

That was when the crackle of thunder could be heard in the sky above. Black clouds converged, and a violet bolt of lightning suddenly shot down toward Bai Xiaochun, catching him completely off-guard.

“Is that tribulation lightning? How could there be tribulation lightning?!?” The lightning instantly shot down through the mountain until it was right above Bai Xiaochun's head. As it did, he anxiously reached up with his right hand, drawing on the full power of his cultivation base to fight back.

A boom could be heard, and blood sprayed out of his mouth as he was sent flying backward, where he slammed loudly into the rock wall of the cave. However, he wasn't significantly hurt. Unfortunately, he had only cut down the power of the lightning bolt by about half. The rest of it fell directly onto Bai Hao, who had

just opened his eyes. Immediately, a tremor ran through him, and cracks spread out all over him. He appeared to be right on the verge of falling apart!

“Bai Hao!” Bai Xiaochun roared. Without any hesitation, he threw out his final lotus seed. Although pain and confusion filled the eyes of soul form Bai Hao, they were quickly replaced by lucidity. He looked over at Bai Xiaochun, and saw the lotus seed flying toward him, and without even thinking about it, opened his soul body’s mouth and swallowed it down.

The moment it entered his mouth, it transformed in a soft warmth which spread throughout his entire body. He closed his eyes, shivering a bit as the cracks all healed up. The black clouds in the sky above seemed to be on the verge of building back up again, and yet, for some unknown reason, faded away....

It took a very long moment for Bai Hao’s soul form to restore balance. When all of the cracks on the surface of his body were healed, he slowly opened his eyes and looked around. Then, his eyes came to rest... on a person who looked exactly like him in every aspect, and yet who wore a look of deep concern on his face.

There was a sincerity to that concern that Bai Hao instantly recognized. It was something that, in his entire life, nobody had ever given to him except his mother. This person in front of him... was the second person to ever look at him with an ounce of caring.

“Who are you...?” he asked softly.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered with excitement, and he took a deep breath. He had imagined this moment for a long time, and just as things had gone then, he assumed the mightiest pose he could think of. Lifting his chin slightly, he clasped his hands behind his back and, looking like the picture of a transcendent being, slowly said, “I’m your Master!”

Chapter 709: Masters Name

“Master....” Bai Hao said, staring blankly at the person who looked exactly like himself. He was a bit confused about why this person would call himself his Master. He didn't remember ever having a Master before. If anything, the only ‘Masters’ he had ever had before his death were the handful of secret cultivation texts he had acquired back in his clan.

He had all of his memories up to the moment of his death, but everything after that was mostly blank. All he remembered was a haze of violent madness in which he swam endlessly through blinding fog, consumed with the desire to eat any living thing he encountered.

Those memories of madness caused him to gasp, and filled his heart with indescribable terror.

It was almost as if the moment he closed his eyes in death, he had gone to sleep. Now he was awake, and yet, his heart was filled with more confusion than ever. Then he looked down at himself, and found that his own hands would pass through his body if he tried to touch himself.

“I’m a soul body....” he murmured, a glint of sadness appearing in his eyes. As of this moment, he realized that he really had died. “But if I’ve become nothing more than a soul, then why do I still have all my memories?”

All of the things he was currently experiencing had Bai Hao feeling extremely confused.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he stood there with his hands clasped behind his back, glancing down out of the corner of his eye at Bai Hao, trying to look as profound as possible. He was also secretly measuring him up, and when he realized that he was simply staring off into space, and completely ignoring him, he started to feel a bit awkward, and even a bit miffed. With that, he loudly

cleared his throat to remind Bai Hao that he was standing there.

In response, a strange expression appeared on Bai Hao's face, and he looked up again at Bai Xiaochun. Gradually, his eyes began to flicker thoughtfully, and he said, "Senior, are you the person who appeared beneath that tree right before I died?"

From the way he spoke, it seemed as if he were putting the pieces of the puzzle together even as the words left his mouth.

Each word struck Bai Xiaochun's like lightning, and his eyes flickered at how incredible Bai Hao was. Only a few words had been spoken since he woke up, and he had already deduced Bai Xiaochun's identity.

"The reason you look like me, Senior, is that you must have assumed my identity after I died. As for why we are now able to meet again in person, though... I really can't wrap my mind around that." More confusion appeared in his eyes, as if he almost couldn't believe what was happening.

Bai Xiaochun gave him a profound look. Although he had always known Bai Hao was intelligent, he could never have imagined that he would be this intelligent.

"That's correct. After you died, I looked through your bag of holding, and then took your place in the Bai Clan...." With that, he proceeded to explain to Bai Hao about how he had taken him as an apprentice. Then he went on to recount everything that had occurred during his time in the Bai Clan, with the exception of a few points that were unnecessary to explain.

As Bai Hao listened, it was impossible for him to hide the complex emotions he felt. He could almost visualize all the scenes Bai Xiaochun described, especially the incident in which his father had confronted him in the place where his mother had died. That was when his father had revealed that he was aware of how talented Bai Hao was in flame conjuring, and yet had gone on to talk about him submitting, and had even revealed open killing

intent. At that point, hatred and anger began to burn brightly in Bai Hao's eyes.

Bai Hao was familiar with his clan, especially Madam Cai and the clan chief. As such, he immediately realized... that everything Bai Xiaochun was telling him was true.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun explained how, as Bai Hao, he had killed Bai Qi, turned traitor against the clan, and had later used his power as a follower of the Giant Ghost King to exact harsh punishment upon the clan. He had killed the clan chief, executed Madam Cai, and installed the fifth young lady as the new clan chieftess. Bai Hao's chest heaved, and his mind reeled under the waves of shock that were caused by Bai Xiaochun's words.

The things which Bai Xiaochun had done for him were things he himself could never have done even if he wanted to.

Finally, Bai Xiaochun explained how he had randomly encountered Bai Hao's soul in the Necromancer Kettle. He also went on to describe, without any exaggerations, the dangers which had been involved. In fact, he actually glossed over that danger to some extent, giving mostly just an overview.

However, Bai Hao was smarter than the average person, and realized that within the glossed-over areas of the story, there definitely were moments of profound danger and crisis. Shivering, he looked up at Bai Xiaochun, eyes shining with gratitude.

Although he realized that this person had obviously done many things out of his own self-interest, he had also helped him get the vengeance he deserved, and would have sought for himself if he could....

“Senior, I--”

Before he could complete his sentence, he was interrupted by Bai Xiaochun, who said, “And that's everything that happened. Don't put too much thought into it. You're my apprentice, and I'm your

Master. With me around, people can only dream of bullying you!”

He slapped his chest proudly to emphasize his words.

“Do you want to know who your Master is? I'm the majordomo of Giant Ghost City, and also the inspections commissioner. There is only one person who ranks higher than me, and tens upon tens of thousands who rank below me. Hmmmphh! I even kidnapped the Giant Ghost King once. And in the Necromancer Kettle, I kidnapped the heirs apparent and chosen from almost all of the important clans and organizations in the Wildlands! Crown princes, heirs apparent, princesses? Hah! I defeated each and every one of them! Oh right, there was also some guy everyone called the second prince!” With that he went on to brag a bit more about everything which had occurred in the Necromancer Kettle, and this time he didn't gloss over anything. He actually described everything in vivid detail, the way he normally would.

Bai Hao responded by looking at him with mute astonishment.

“Just stick close to your Master from now on. I already have formulas for everything from one-to seventeen-colored flame. Considering your latent talent in flame conjuring, I want you to start researching the formula for eighteen-colored flame. Later on when I'm powerful enough, I'll form a new body for you. Come, come, hurry up and kowtow to Master. Then I can give you the gifts I owe you for becoming my apprentice!”

With that, he clasped his hands behind his back again, then lifted his chin and tried to look as strict as possible. At the same time, he glanced at Bai Hao out of the corner of his eye, waiting for him to kowtow in formal fashion to become his apprentice.

A complex expression could be seen on Bai Hao's face. As a soul body, he could sense from the soul power fluctuations in the area that a large quantity of soul medicine had recently been used in the surrounding mountains....

And as a necromancer, he knew that restoring the memories of a

soul was a heaven-defying process of incredible difficulty. Clearly, this person who called himself his Master had completely bloodshot eyes, and he was obviously working hard to appear to be in good condition. However, he couldn't cover up how wan he was. It was obvious that he had worked very hard, and paid a huge price, to restore Bai Hao's memories.

“Does he really care about me...?” he thought, a warm feeling building up inside of him. At this point, he recalled how, upon first recovering his memories, this person who called himself his Master had been looking at him with deep concern.

That concern gave rise to emotions that Bai Hao had not felt for a very long time. No one in his life had ever cared about him other than his mother. As a young man in the Bai Clan, he had often been humiliated. As he grew older, he had harbored a deep if ignorant hope that he could gain the approval of his father, and perhaps the entire clan. But in the end, he had been cruelly slaughtered.... As of this point, it was all in the past.

After a long moment, he rose to his feet, walked over to Bai Xiaochun, and dropped to his knees. His expression was serious and sincere. He didn't want to sit around thinking about the past. He knew that this Master of his had already gained vengeance for him, a kindness which filled him with profound gratitude. From the bottom of his heart, he was absolutely willing to be his apprentice.

“Everything from the past ended with my death,” he thought. “Now that I'm awake again, my Master... is my only family!” As he swore this oath in his heart, he thought about the sincere concern Bai Xiaochun had showed for him, and was convinced that he had finally found a second person in his life who cared about him.

Taking a deep breath, he said, “Bai Hao offers formal greetings, Master!”

Then he kowtowed deeply three times. After that he rose to his

feet, then dropped back down to kowtow again.

Three expressions of respect. Nine kowtows!!

Bai Xiaochun was moved by what he was seeing, and his heart trembled with emotion. After silently accepting the kowtows, his gaze softened, and a profound feeling filled him that was a mixture of joy and pity.

Wrestling his emotions under control, he laughed heartily and said, “Stick with Master, my little apprentice, and you will eat the best food and drink the best alcohol. You can do anything your heart desires!”

With that, he waved his hand, sending Bai Hao into a soulhoarding pagoda.

Within that soulhoarding pagoda, Bai Hao would have a large measure of freedom. He could come out into the open at any time he wished, and because of certain special aspects of his soul body, could take virtually any form he wished.

After a moment, Bai Hao hesitated. Despite having taken this man as his Master, he felt like there was something a bit unreliable about him. “Master... would it be possible for me to know your honored name...?”

Sounding extremely high and mighty, Bai Xiaochun responded, “Ahem. Remember, your Master’s true name is one that cannot be divulged to anyone else in the Wildlands. If it became public, it could lead to drastic events that would affect all creation. It would be a calamity for the Wildlands! Your Master’s name... is Bai Xiaochun!”

Chapter 710: Playing Dumb

After taking Bai Hao back with him to Giant Ghost City, the seven days of protracted exhaustion led Bai Xiaochun to go into secluded meditation to recover.

Before closing the door of the meditation chamber, Bai Hao requested that he be allowed to go out and explore a bit. After all, he had been dead for quite some time, and felt like seeing Giant Ghost City and the rest of the outside world. It was a very natural thing.

After a bit of thought, Bai Xiaochun decided there was no reason not to accommodate his wishes, although he did offer a whole slew of warnings before letting him go. After all, Bai Hao's soul body was unique in many ways. Now that his memories were back, he could take almost any form he wished. Furthermore, considering how intelligent he was, as long as he was careful, he shouldn't run into any trouble.

However, just to be on the safe side, he left a branding mark on him. That way, if Bai Hao ran into any trouble, Bai Xiaochun would be able to track him down immediately.

Having accomplished these things, he felt comfortable enough to go into secluded meditation. As for Bai Hao, he changed his appearance and then left.

Bai Hao had long since burned Bai Xiaochun's name into his memory; he would never forget it for the rest of his life. However, even more unforgettable were the things he heard people talking about after leaving Bai Xiaochun's side. Virtually everything he heard... caused his anxiety to build....

“Hey, keep your voice down. Don't let Bai Hao hear you. Bai Hao is completely shameless. He's vicious and merciless, to the point where he killed his own father and reviled his own clan!”

“That’s nothing! I have a good friend who’s a guard at Devil Penitentiary. He told me that back when Bai Hao was a guard there, he was the number one dark inquisitor in Devil Penitentiary! You don’t know what dark inquisitors are? They’re normal inquisitors whose hearts have turned to darkness! The prisoners that Bai Hao interrogated in Devil Penitentiary all ended up screaming with indescribable bitterness!”

“Heh heh. Majordomo Bai? Yeah, he's like a bolt of lightning that can shake heaven and earth. It’s been years since a freak like him has appeared in the world. He had a Core Formation cultivation base, and yet he actually kidnapped his highness the king!”

“Bai Hao is completely vicious! He even likes to take the wives of other men.... In order to get his hands on Mrs. Chen, he killed the chief of the Chen Clan! I heard that he keeps her in his residence even now, and ravishes her a hundred times a day! Completely outrageous!”

“All of that is nothing! The most important thing to know is that Bai Hao is a complete and utter daredevil. Only recently, he kidnapped the chosen and heirs apparent of almost all the nobility and aristocracy in the Wildlands! I saw with my own eyes the horrid state all of those chosen were in. It didn’t matter if they were guys or girls, they had all been tormented to the point of being skin and bones! It was completely terrifying!”

When Bai Hao heard such things, he was at first puzzled, but soon left completely flabbergasted. The realization that his Master had done so many shocking things left him feeling more than a bit jumpy.

He began to make some discreet inquiries of his own about the things which had occurred, and soon learned that it was absolutely true that his Master had kidnapped the Giant Ghost King while only in the Core Formation stage. Plus, there were other things which had occurred. After his rapid rise to prominence in the city, he shook down all three of the great clans. He was so well-known

in the city that his name could be used to stop children from crying!

“How fearless.... I can hardly even imagine it!” Bai Hao eventually reached the point of being speechless. However, during his time making inquiries, he also heard people talking about the Bai Xiaochun whose name was listed on the Hell-Emperor Stele, and soon learned that there was a bounty on his head. It was at that point that he realized that the fact that his Master had revealed his true name to him showed a deep level of trust.

Although Bai Hao was a Wildlander, he had already died once, and didn't care as much about things from his previous life. It wasn't important to him who exactly Bai Xiaochun was; he was his Master to whom he had kowtowed nine times!

Eventually he returned to Bai Xiaochun's secluded meditation chamber. By this point, he was convinced of how incredible his Master was. Smiling wryly, he returned to the soulhoarding pagoda in Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding. At that point, Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, looked down at the bag of holding, and then smiled faintly. The entire reason he had revealed his true name to Bai Hao was because he trusted him. Perhaps such an expression of trust was very sudden, but it came from Bai Xiaochun's heart. Based on everything Bai Hao had said and done so far, Bai Xiaochun truly approved of him.

On the same evening that Bai Hao returned from exploring the city, while Bai Xiaochun was still working on getting back into top shape, the Giant Ghost King sat on his throne in the royal palace, frowning at his transmission jade slip.

He had just received a message from the imperial palace in Arch-Emperor City. The message had not been worded very strongly. In fact, it had taken the form of a single question.

Why hasn't Chen Manyao been returned yet?

It was a simple and calmly worded message, and yet it caused the

Giant Ghost King's mind to reel. After all, the person who had sent the message was none other than... he who controlled the Son of Heaven! He who could issue orders to everyone in creation.... The Grand Heavenmaster!

The Giant Ghost King would rather offend all three of the other kings than provoke the Grand Heavenmaster. Part of that was because the Grand Heavenmaster was in a far higher place in the Demigod Realm than any of the four heavenly kings. But the bigger reason was that the Grand Heavenmaster was a profound schemer, the type that could strike dread into the heart of anyone with whom he dealt.

“Chen Manyao....” the Giant Ghost King murmured. He had heard that name before, and knew that she was one of the Grand Heavenmaster's personal apprentices, and a top rate beauty.

However, Chen Manyao had not been among the chosen whom Bai Xiaochun had handed over to him. It only took the briefest of moments for the Giant Ghost King to come to a conclusion about what was going on. Not sure whether to laugh or cry, he immediately began to curse.

“Brat bastard! I'd bet money that he's entranced with her good looks. Considering his age, it's definitely time for him to have a Daoist partner.... But definitely not Chen Manyao!” Although the Giant Ghost King felt a bit of a headache coming on because of his fear of the Grand Heavenmaster, he actually wasn't angry at all about Bai Xiaochun keeping Chen Manyao in custody. In contrast, he actually felt a bit of admiration. Because of all of the things which had happened between the Giant Ghost King and Bai Xiaochun, the level of formality which might have once existed between them had long since vanished. After all, he had said earlier on that if Bai Xiaochun helped him win the ghost king fruit, he would come to view him as his son and heir.

As far as the Giant Ghost King was concerned, Bai Xiaochun was the most outstanding and daring individual in his generation in

the entire Wildlands. Furthermore, the more he learned about the way Bai Xiaochun thought, the more the wily old fox in him approved! Bai Xiaochun could be daring, crafty, and adaptable, but also knew when to back off. Such a combination in one person was hard to come by!

Were it not for that admiration, he would surely have gone completely mad because of the way Bai Xiaochun kidnapped everyone in order to screw him over.

At the moment, the Giant Ghost King was right in the middle of laughter and tears. Sighing, he realized that Bai Xiaochun was actually acting in much the same way he himself would.... With such thoughts on his mind, he cursed inwardly a few more times, then rose to his feet and vanished from within the royal palace.

When he reappeared, he was outside of Bai Xiaochun's secluded meditation chamber. After looking around, he snorted coldly, but refrained from doing what he had last time and simply entering unannounced.

“Bai Hao!” he said, filling his voice with plenty of cultivation base pressure. Inside, Bai Xiaochun was performing some breathing exercises. Upon hearing the Giant Ghost King's voice, a tremor ran through him, and his eyes widened. Before he could do anything else, though, the Giant Ghost King sensed that he had opened his eyes, and entered the meditation chamber.

A bit shocked, Bai Xiaochun scrambled to his feet to clasp hands in formal greeting.

“Greetings, Your Highness!” Inwardly, he was cursing at how annoying it was that the Giant Ghost King loved to secretly ambush him. This was the second time! How could someone as important as the king be so ignorant regarding manners? However, it was also obvious that, considering how anxious the Giant Ghost King seemed, he would likely not have come for any good purpose.

“Your Highness,” he said quickly, “I was careless in my cultivation and damaged my nascent soul! Considering how badly I’m injured, I definitely can’t go anywhere. Oh, and I already consumed nine Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pills, so those won’t do any good.” In the hopes of not making the same mistake as last time, he claimed to have consumed nine of the pills, instead of the three which he had actually consumed. And of course, he made his statement without blinking a single time.

Glaring, and clearly not very pleased at Bai Xiaochun’s attitude, the Giant Ghost King snorted and said, “Do you have Chen Manyao?!”

The words struck Bai Xiaochun like lightning, and instantly caused his heart to start racing.

He most certainly did have Chen Manyao in his custody. Up to this point, he still wasn’t sure how to deal with her. Worried that she might recognize him, and that that would cause problems, he had decided that he couldn’t let her go.

He quickly shook his head and put a very confused look onto his face.

“Who is Chen Manyao, Your Highness? Sounds kind of like a girl’s name. Oh, don’t tell me you’ve taken a liking to her, Your Highness? Fear not,” he said, thumping his chest with his palm, “your humble servant will definitely be able to get her for you!”

Any person who didn’t know Bai Xiaochun very well would have been easily taken in. After all, his acting skills were top notch, and whether it was his wording or the expression on his face, they were all very convincing. It really seemed as if he didn’t know anyone by the name of Chen Manyao.

But the Giant Ghost King did know Bai Xiaochun, and therefore, his glare intensified, and he growled, “Stop playing dumb! You listen to me, Bai Hao. You can’t touch Chen Manyao! She has a very important background....”

A profoundly serious expression could be seen on the Giant Ghost King's face, and the pressure rolling off of him felt like thunderclouds.

Such tactics would intimidate virtually anyone else, but Bai Xiaochun was familiar with the Giant Ghost King, so he put on a pained expression.

“Your Highness, I really don't know anyone named Chen Manyao!”

“Enough!” the Giant Ghost King said impatiently. “It's only the two of us in here, so stop with the act. I know that you took a liking to Chen Manyao because of her beauty. But she's one of the beloved apprentices of the Grand Heavenmaster! He's already asked about her, so hand her over immediately! She's just a hot girl, right? What's the big deal about that? I'll make up for it with plenty more girls.” As far as he was concerned, it really was a minor matter. It was only a single girl they were talking about, and thus, he really couldn't understand why Bai Xiaochun was acting this way.

Seeing that the Giant Ghost King wasn't going to back down caused Bai Xiaochun's nervousness to mount. He really, really didn't want to let Chen Manyao go. It had to do with his poor little life! However, despite thinking desperately, he couldn't come up with any backup plan. As for the Giant Ghost King, he could see that Bai Xiaochun was hesitating, causing his anger to rise.

In fact, he was so infuriated that intense coldness immediately spread out in all directions.

“Bring Chen Manyao out immediately, Bai Hao. Don't make me use force!” His voice was as cold as winter snow, and his eyes burned with cold fury. The meditation chamber even began to ice over!

Chapter 711: Xiaochun Erupts....

Bai Xiaochun had already been getting nervous. Handing Chen Manyao over was the same as putting his poor little life into the control of other hands. It wasn't that he distrusted Chen Manyao, but when it came to critical matters of life or death, putting trust in other people wasn't an option.

His trust in Bai Hao was unswerving, but... it wasn't the same with Chen Manyao!

The Giant Ghost King was getting extremely angry, so much so that the coldness filling Bai Xiaochun's secluded meditation chamber was tinged with killing intent.

Bai Xiaochun immediately thought back to what the Giant Ghost King had been like right after he had gotten his cultivation base back; he had hovered there with a metal-type deva soul in hand, and had looked at Bai Xiaochun with utter imperiousness as he asked a single question.

Give me one good reason not to kill you!

Those words had scared Bai Xiaochun witless, and the way the Giant Ghost King looked now reminded him of that very day, and those very words.

Then he thought about how he had nearly been killed protecting the Giant Ghost King, and how the restrictive spell had weakened his cultivation base back in the Necromancer Kettle. Without his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, he would likely have been chased down and killed by the more than one hundred chosen who had been his opponents.

All of those things weighed down on his heart, and then combined with both the killing intent and freezing pressure from the Giant Ghost King, and his nervousness about what to do with Chen Manyao. He felt like he was stuck between a vicious wolf and

a hungry tiger, and it caused his eyes to turn completely bloodshot.

In any other situation, he would definitely be terrified in this moment, but right now, he didn't feel like being terrified. Trembling, he glared at the Giant Ghost King and said, "You want to kill me? You want to attack me?"

He wasn't even terrified in the deepest recesses of his heart. He couldn't help but think about all his dealings with the Giant Ghost King up til now, and not only did it destabilize his aura, but it made his eyes turn completely crimson. Blue veins bulged out on his face and neck, and he suddenly erupted!

"Say that again, Giant Ghost King!" he shouted in rage. "What the fudge!? I can't believe you actually want to kill me!!

"You want to attack me? I saved your life, Giant Ghost King!! I nearly died, you fool. I got injured over and over again!! And you? You were just testing me out. Testing, testing, testing. Even after your cultivation base was back, you were still testing me. I very nearly got killed before you finally managed to do something. You know what? Fine. Fine, I can accept all that. But then, after all is said and done, you're still testing me?!?! I bet you'll still try to test me after I'm dead, won't you?!?!" Bai Xiaochun had completely lost his cool, and was yelling so loud that it had the entire meditation chamber shaking.

As for the Giant Ghost King, he was completely taken aback by the sudden outburst. He had only been trying to intimidate this Bai Hao a bit, with the goal of scaring him. He had never imagined that the result would be like this.

"What gall!" he said angrily, glaring at Bai Xiaochun and sending more pressure roiling out.

"Gall? Actually, I usually don't have much gall, but today, you bet I do!!" Bai Xiaochun was so angry he was almost jumping up and down, and his voice only kept getting louder.

“Ever since we got back to the city, my friend, it might have seemed like I was relaxing after a big victory. But the truth is that I did a lot important things for you! When I shook down the three great clans, the best item I recovered was that spiritjade statue. I knew it would help you in your cultivation, so I secretly delivered to you. But nobody knows that! They think I took everything for myself. Lots of people have been sitting around hoping I would mess up so that they could take the chance to kill me!

“And it's not like you didn't know, I told you about how worried I was!!” Bai Xiaochun's yelling had the Giant Ghost King's chest heaving in rage, and yet, there was nothing he could say by means of retort. Back when Bai Xiaochun had shaken down the three clans, the Giant Ghost King had merely reaped the benefits, and hadn't thought much about what pressure Bai Xiaochun might have come under because of it.

“You liked Mrs. Chen, and I didn't hesitate to send her to you. You're the Giant Ghost King, with a big reputation to maintain, and I'm Bai Hao, a nameless nobody. So I became the scapegoat. Do you know how badly people talk about Bai Hao nowadays? I might as well have the plague! People say that I'm a wife-stealer and a husband-killer! When I go out in the city, all of the men hide their wives so that I can't even see them. Pretty much everybody hates me!

“And it's not like you didn't know, I told you about how unfair it all was!!” Bai Xiaochun was physically shaking, not from fear, but because he had thrown caution to the wind. All of the rancor which had built up in him because of the various events connected to the Giant Ghost King had reached the point that he had no choice but to vent his feelings in one big eruption.

The Giant Ghost King's rage was reduced again because of what had just been said, and he even started to feel slightly guilty. He had to admit that what Bai Xiaochun was saying was true. The Giant Ghost King did very much care about his reputation, and had

also heard about the vile things people in the city were saying about Bai Hao.

“I told you I didn't want to go to the Necromancer Kettle, but you said the ghost king fruit was of vital importance. So I went. And what happened with the fruit? Hahaha! Much to my surprise, the restrictive spell, and in fact my own trust in you, became a noose around my neck! Do you know how quickly my cultivation base dropped after that restrictive spell unraveled? Can you imagine the bitterness I felt when more than a hundred chosen were all trying their best to kill me? The big bro who I had trusted in actually plotted against me. I almost died in that Necromancer Kettle!

“And it's not like you didn't know about that, I told you!!” The more Bai Xiaochun talked, the more worked up he got. That was especially true of the incident in the Necromancer Kettle, which continued to stab at his heart like a needle. If it weren't for the fact that he was in the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, he would definitely have died in there.

And there was only one ultimate culprit: the Giant Ghost King himself!

The Giant Ghost King's mouth was hanging open as if he wanted to respond, and he was still clearly enraged, but at the same time, had nothing to say.

“Of course, I remember you said that the other three heavenly kings were working together against you, and were trying to blackmail you. So despite the bitterness in my heart, despite the grief, I captured all of those chosen so that you could vent some of your frustration. I handed them all over so that you could blackmail everyone else right back! And you think it was out of ill will that I did that?! If I really had it out for you, I would just have killed all of them. Maybe it would have made things tough for me, but it would have made things really tough for you!

“And it's not like you didn't know. I explained it all to you!!” By

this point, Bai Xiaochun's anger seemed to be tinged with despair, and had the Giant Ghost King hesitating as he thought back to everything that had gone on between the two of them.

“Let me ask you, Giant Ghost King, have I ever asked anything of you? Which of the things that I've done have hurt you?! And let's not even get into the Devil Penitentiary! I already risked my life to settle that account. Or was that not enough!?!?” The more Bai Xiaochun yelled, the angrier he got.

“Even people in the tiniest little clans have multiple wives and multiple concubines. And I just want this one girl! Is that really such a big deal?! One girl, that's all! And over that, you're actually willing to attack and kill me!?!?” The bitterness in Bai Xiaochun's words was such that even the Giant Ghost King was starting to feel... that he really had gone a bit too far....

After finishing his outburst, Bai Xiaochun started to recover his senses, whereupon he began to sweat all over. His heart was immediately gripped with anxiety, and he began to wail inwardly as his guts twisted in fear.

“I'm finished,” he thought. “Kaput. I lost control and got all impulsive....” He already felt like he was about to collapse mentally, but realizing that he had already gotten himself into this situation, he couldn't stop now. Gritting his teeth, he put on the ultimate expression of bitterness.

“I know,” he said softly. “I know. You're the king, Your Highness, and a demigod too. I'm a nobody. You can discard me any time you wish. I guess what pains me the most is that I foolishly took you to be a true big bro to me....”

To see Bai Xiaochun standing in front of him trembling like he was caused a bit of a flush to rise up the Giant Ghost King's neck. If anybody else had spoken to him like this, he would have done nothing more than snort coldly. However, if there was one person in this heaven and earth who qualified to talk to him like this, and

even prevent him from responding, it was Bai Xiaochun.

And as he thought about the situation, he realized that it was exactly as Bai Xiaochun had said. Bai Xiaochun had served him with loyalty and integrity, and had accomplished all the tasks that he had been assigned. He was also very obedient. Although he tended to be a bit of a brown-noser, the Giant Ghost King actually liked that.

In fact, most of the rewards he had bestowed upon him were honorary at best. He hadn't really given him anything substantive. Furthermore, he was a genius when it came to conjuring flame. He was so daring that he had single-handedly thrown his own clan into chaos, and then kidnapped the king. He had been completely on his own when he crushed virtually all of the top chosen in the Wildlands. He was actually such an outstanding person that not even the Giant Ghost King had ever met anyone like him, not even his own daughter. She had a high cultivation base, but when it came to her strategies and tactics, she simply couldn't measure up.

The Giant Ghost King knew that someone like this would eventually soar to the highest heights, as long as he didn't perish or get killed along the way.... If the former happened, then the two of them would be inextricably linked in various ways. Finally, the Giant Ghost King sighed, and in a very calm and reasonable voice, said, "Hao'er, it's been a long time since I've come to view you as my own son."

At this point, Bai Xiaochun sighed inwardly, and knew that the danger was past. "Giant Ghost King, I only have one question. After we got back to the city together, did I ever ask you for anything?"

The Giant Ghost King didn't respond at first. Bai Xiaochun hadn't actually asked for anything other than this one girl.... And if you didn't take into consideration her impressive background, then it really wasn't a very big deal.

However, Chen Manyao was a personal apprentice of the Grand Heavenmaster. The Grand Heavenmaster had asked about her, and the Giant Ghost King couldn't ignore him. After a moment wrestling with the issue, determination filled his eyes, and he looked at Bai Xiaochun, convinced he had come up with a good idea.

“Well, this Bai Hao is completely outstanding, so... might as well do it!”

After a final moment of thought, the Giant Ghost King sighed and said, “Hao'er, you're right, I've never really given you anything. But, I happen to have a daughter who has a higher cultivation base than Chen Manyao, and is even more beautiful than her. Ten times as beautiful! How about I give her hand to you in marriage!?”

Chapter 712: Huh? Whats The Rush...?

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, stunned. He really never could have imagined that after his angry outburst, the Giant Ghost King would say something like this.... “Uh... you... you have a daughter? And you want to give me her hand in marriage?”

Bai Xiaochun almost felt like he was going to faint. Although he had heard that the Giant Ghost King had a daughter, she was a fairly mysterious person who didn't live in Giant Ghost City. From a very young age, she had lived in Arch-Emperor City.

“This way, the two of us will be family from now on.” The Giant Ghost King's eyes sparkled as he measured Bai Xiaochun up and down again. The more he thought about this idea of his, the more he liked it. This Bai Hao had a politically correct family background and education, and truly was outstanding. Even more important, his way of thinking lined up with the Giant Ghost King's.

As far as the Giant Ghost King was concerned, he was the ideal son-in-law, with the only exception being his relatively weak cultivation base. However, that last part was actually a positive, considering that it meant his daughter would be able to keep him in line easily.

“This Bai Hao has a lot of potential,” he thought. “With a single drop of my soul-blood, he unleashed a demigod-level attack. From that, you can see that he's made a lot of cultivation progress that no one is aware of....” That got the Giant Ghost King thinking about even more benefits to the arrangement.

“Uh... Your Highness, this is an important matter that shouldn't be arranged carelessly.” Bai Xiaochun was feeling very nervous. As he looked at the Giant Ghost King, he imagined what he would look like if he were a bit younger, and a woman, and the mere thought caused his scalp to tingle on the verge of exploding. Too

ugly!

“What,” the Giant Ghost King said, “think she’s not good enough for you? Hmph.... Don't even bother trying to compare my Zhou Zimo to Chen Manyao. Her talents surpass Chen Manyao’s so much that you can't even mention the two in the same sentence. Once you see her in person, you’ll know what I mean. Besides, unless I personally arranged the marriage, she would never agree to be your wife.” Glaring angrily, the Giant Ghost King waved his hand and said, “Hurry up and give me Chen Manyao. The matter’s settled as of here and now!”

Bai Xiaochun moaned bitterly in his heart. He was out of ideas. If he didn’t produce Chen Manyao right now, the Giant Ghost King would likely start to get suspicious. Therefore, he had no other option than to gamble and hope that either Chen Manyao hadn’t recognized him, or if she had, that she would keep it a secret for old-time’s sake.

With that, he pulled the unconscious Chen Manyao out of his bag of holding and handed her over.

The Giant Ghost King examined her for a moment. Although he had heard that she was beautiful, this was his first time seeing her, and it caused a strange expression to appear in his eyes. All of a sudden, he understood why Bai Xiaochun had been so staunch in his refusal to hand her over.

“Wow, she really is a beauty,” he thought. Clearing his throat, he glared at Bai Xiaochun again, then swished his sleeve to gather up Chen Manyao.

“Alright, things are settled. Tomorrow, you’ll head to Arch-Emperor City via the teleportation portal. Find my daughter in the Giant Ghost Legion. She's the sergeant major there, so you can start out by helping her with her duties there. As for romantic feelings, they will build up between the two of you naturally.”

“Huh? What’s the rush? Um... I....” Bai Xiaochun really had no

interest in this Zhou Zimo. Grimacing, he considered refusing, but it was too late. Before he could say a thing, the Giant Ghost King had issued official orders!

“Mo'er sent me a request recently, asking me to send someone to be her assistant. It seems to me that you're the best man for the job. Things are settled. You leave the city tomorrow! Oh, by the way, Mo'er wants to become strong and powerful on her own merit, so not many people know who she actually is. As for the nobility who do know, there's a tacit understanding to keep things a secret. Don't go and stir up trouble!” With that, he turned and vanished.

Bai Xiaochun was scowling on the verge of tears. He didn't want to marry this Sergeant Major Zhou Zimo whom he didn't even know. Besides, he was already a major general! As if a sergeant major could compare to that....

As far as the Giant Ghost Legion was concerned, Bai Xiaochun remembered capturing a soul cultivator by the Great Wall who had claimed to be the apprentice of one of the Giant Ghost King's marquises. It was a bit strange. Why would someone from Giant Ghost City have been all the way on the other side of the Wildlands? However, considering the insurrection that had taken place, perhaps that man had been dispatched by one of the rebel heavenly marquises to handle some personal matter.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun had no desire at all to go to Arch-Emperor City. The place seemed far too dangerous. That was especially true considering that he wasn't sure if Chen Manyao knew who he was. If she did, then he could be sending himself right to his own grave.

And there was more... he had kidnapped many of the heirs apparent and other important chosen who came from Arch-Emperor City. If he went to the city now, he would be like a lamb walking into the tiger's den....

And yet, refusing to go wasn't an option. The Giant Ghost King had made his stance clear. Bai Xiaochun had thrown a tantrum already, and if he tried to do the same thing again... then it really would harm his relationship with the king. If that happened, then he would be in a bad position even in Giant Ghost City.

“How did things end up like this?!” he thought, tugging at his hair. At this point, Bai Hao floated out of his bag of holding, a look of complete and utter amazement on his face. Just now, he hadn't dared to reveal even the tiniest scrap of his aura to the Giant Ghost King, but had been able to hear the conversation perfectly clearly. And as a result, he was left sighing in shock at how brave and daring his Master was.

Of course, he wasn't aware of the fact that Bai Xiaochun's mask would make it virtually impossible for anyone to detect his presence, so his extreme caution hadn't been necessary.

“Master, I've heard some things about the Giant Ghost King's daughter. She's a very mysterious figure who left Giant Ghost City long ago to further her cultivation....” With that, he went on to explain everything he knew.

Unfortunately, that wasn't much. In the end, Bai Xiaochun sighed and continued to ponder the matter. In the end, there was nothing he could do. Eventually, he trudged out of his meditation chamber and went out to make some inquiries of his own.

Most of his questions had to do with Arch-Emperor City, the others being about the Giant Ghost King's daughter. After returning, he sat there grimacing and gnashing his teeth.

“Arch-Emperor City is a terrifying place! I absolutely can't go there! Worst case scenario, I can leave Giant Ghost City and find a place to hide for a bit....”

Night passed. By evening of the following day, Bai Xiaochun knew that he couldn't dawdle any longer. He didn't dare to use the teleportation portal, so he came up with an excuse to request the

use of a giant ghost battleship to go to Arch-Emperor City. His current plan was to disappear along the way and hide out for a while before returning. If enough time passed, then perhaps the Giant Ghost King would finally understand how he truly felt.

In terms of the giant ghost battleship, he had long since had his eye on them, and knew that they were wonderful treasures. This was actually the perfect opportunity to take one out for a spin. At least, that was his explanation.

Unfortunately, the Giant Ghost King was one step ahead of him. It was with an enigmatic smile that he approved Bai Xiaochun's request for the giant ghost battleship, and then gave orders for Duke Deathcrier to help him pilot the ship, and also protect him along his journey.

Duke Deathcrier was a bit confused about why Bai Xiaochun wasn't just using the teleportation portal, but considering that the orders came from the Giant Ghost King, he didn't question them. Soon, Duke Deathcrier was piloting the giant ghost battleship away from Giant Ghost City, with Bai Xiaochun standing there on the deck with a blank look on his face.

Bai Xiaochun wanted to cry, but no tears would come. As for Duke Deathcrier, he had a somewhat grim expression, and completely ignored Bai Xiaochun.

As of this point, it was obvious that his plan had been seen through by the Giant Ghost King, and he had no option other than to continue on to Arch-Emperor City.

“Duke Deathcrier is a deva, so with him piloting the giant ghost battleship, the journey will take about three months.” Bai Xiaochun looked down at the jade slip he held in his hand, which contained a detailed map. Giant Ghost City was actually relatively close to Arch-Emperor City, as opposed to Nine Serenities City, which was much further away. If Duke Deathcrier had piloted the giant ghost battleship from there, it would take a full year to make

the journey.

Of course, if Bai Xiaochun piloted the ship, the journey would be even longer. Plus, it was a journey that would have been fraught with danger without a deva present.

He had no choice but to accept his fate. Rubbing the bridge of his nose, he contemplated all of the information he had gathered about Arch-Emperor City.

The Arch-Emperor Dynasty was organized with the Arch-Emperor at the top, followed by the Grand Heavenmaster, and then the four heavenly kings. Underneath the kings were the ten heavenly dukes, and 108 heavenly marquises!

Each of the heavenly kings had ten heavenly marquises in their home cities, but no heavenly dukes. Duke Deathcrier and his contemporaries were only earthly dukes. Although they ranked above the heavenly marquises, they were far below the heavenly dukes.

The ten heavenly dukes were the most powerful devas in the Wildlands, all of them being in the great circle of the Deva Realm. They actually counted as one of the reserve powers of Arch-Emperor City. As for the heavenly marquises, there were 68 of them who lived permanently within Arch-Emperor City itself.

Arch-Emperor City was by far the largest city in the Wildlands, and was also meticulously organized. Floating in the sky above the main city itself was the imperial palace.

The imperial palace had four main gates, which defended the four cardinal directions.

After the Grand Heavenmaster seized control of the Son of Heaven, it was an easy thing for the four heavenly kings to stay away from the city. However, the Grand Heavenmaster had ordered that their armies remained garrisoned in the region of Arch-Emperor City, ready to follow any orders they were given.

The army encamped west of the city was the Giant Ghost Legion, the commanding officer of which was the Giant Ghost King's daughter, Zhou Zimo.

Bai Xiaochun hadn't been able to get much information about Zhou Zimo back in Giant Ghost City. All he knew was that she didn't get along very well with the Giant Ghost King, and had long since left the city to practice cultivation on her own. As for how her relationship with her father was now that she had risen to the rank of sergeant major, it was impossible to tell.

“This Zhou Zimo obviously is a bit of a rebel. Hmmmphh! How could silly little girls like that understand how to lead an army!? As a magnificent major general, I guess I'll just have to go show her how it's done!” He sighed, feeling quite bitter.

He hadn't had enough time to gather much more information than that. Although Duke Deathcrier probably knew some information, he didn't seem too pleased about being forced to take Bai Xiaochun on this long journey, and completely ignored the questions he asked.

Chapter 713: Arch-Emperor City!

Although Giant Ghost City wasn't extremely far away from Arch-Emperor City, it still took Duke Deathcrier months of work to get them close.

And he was a deva. If Bai Xiaochun had been piloting the ship alone, the spiritual power wastage would have been immense. Even by replenishing himself with soul medicine, it would have been difficult to keep going for very long. Most importantly of all, he would have faced ten times the amount of danger.

Whether it was the bizarre creatures that inhabited the Wildlands, or the hordes of souls with their profound death auras, they were all things that left Bai Xiaochun trembling in fear. Of course, the souls would have been easier for him to deal with, but as for the beasts, they were shocking to the extreme.

At one point along the way, he saw a towering tree that was so shriveled it looked dead. However, it could move, and would consume anything that got too close to it.

He saw an enormous beast that resembled a hippopotamus. It was sleeping, but its snores were so mighty that they caused the sky to vibrate, and shook the lands for hundreds of kilometers in every direction.

There was a flock of vicious vultures that followed the giant ghost battleship for several days before begrudgingly letting it go.

The sight of all the bizarre creatures left Bai Xiaochun's mind reeling. They encountered a few cloudgyres, which caused even Duke Deathcrier's face to flicker. Only by piloting the ship at full speed did he manage to evade them.

At one point, Bai Xiaochun noticed that the ground down below was pitch white, and assumed it was snow. However, closer examination revealed that it was a sea of bones, covered with

waves just like water. The powerful aura radiating up from the sea of bones caused Duke Deathcrier's face to turn pale. Drawing upon a taboo magic, he negated the aura of the giant ghost battleship, and then pushed forward at full speed for several days until the sea of bones vanished behind them.

The sights changed, and the winds blew past. Thanks to this journey, Bai Xiaochun truly came to understand that crossing the Wildlands without using a teleportation portal was something that only devas could do.

Duke Deathcrier's face grew more and more grim as they faced one danger after another. He was not happy at all about the situation. It was all because of a single order from the Giant Ghost King, and all because the damnable Bai Hao had refused to use the teleportation portal. Because of that, he, a mighty deva, was forced to be a bodyguard.

It didn't matter that Bai Hao was favored by the king, Duke Deathcrier was still feeling very disgruntled. However, there was no way for him to vent his feelings, so he simply ignored Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun knew that he had dragged Duke Deathcrier into the matter, and therefore, took the initiative to try to smooth things out. Although he didn't completely succeed, his efforts were moderately successful.

One day, as the giant ghost battleship streaked through the air in a beam of light, Bai Xiaochun was able to catch sight of a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering city up ahead, a city far more magnificent than Giant Ghost City.

In terms of size, it could contain at least ten Giant Ghost Cities. The green city walls towered over the surrounding plains, casting immense pressure into the hearts of anyone who looked at them. There were countless restrictive spells locking the entire area down, taking the pressure of heaven and earth and using it to

protect the city.

The power of the five elements was harnessed to suppress even lightning and thunder. As a result, the city looked like an enormous beast of paragon-like power, resting but ready to erupt with power at a moment's notice.

Countless towering green pagodas could be seen within the city walls, each one of which had an enormous crystal ball at its top. Each crystal ball had violet mist sealed inside of it which crackled with lightning, and occasionally transformed into huge eyes!

It was difficult to put into words how much life force thrummed inside of the enormous city. However, the amount of qi and blood that Bai Xiaochun could sense was astonishing.

“How many people live there?!” he thought, shocked. As he examined the city, he couldn't help but look up to see... another city floating in the air above the main city!

It was smaller than the city below, and completely golden in color. There was something domineering about it that made it stand out from everything else in the area, as if it were something that could suppress the entire Wildlands.

Even the air around it seemed to be crushed by its presence, as if this city were something completely different than everything else in heaven and earth. Considering the golden light that shone out from it, it almost seemed like an enormous golden sun, or a gigantic golden castle in the clouds.

It was none other than... the imperial palace of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty!

Eight islands floated in the air around the imperial palace, each of them covered with clouds and rainbows. They appeared to be something like guard stations, there to protect the imperial palace against any outside forces!

From what Bai Xiaochun could tell, the rainbows on those islands

vastly surpassed those from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. After all, there was only one rainbow structure in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, but here, each of the islands had one!

Furthermore, those islands were only one part of the defensive network protecting the city.

Countless soul cultivators in golden armor were on patrol, making Arch-Emperor City completely and utterly astonishing to behold!

Bai Xiaochun had seen quite a few cities in his life, and Arch-Emperor City existed on a different level than all of them, and that included the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun felt as if he understood the world a bit better. And that was before he even studied the four armies which were encamped in the four cardinal directions around the city, filled with countless Wildlander cultivators.

Above each army flew a banner identifying it. One of them featured a huge green battle-axe, which showed that they were the forces from Nine Serenities City. There was a blood-colored banner without any symbol on it at all, which represented War Champion City.

As for Spirit Advent City, their symbol was a vicious-looking eye that seemed to peer out at all heaven and earth as the banner rippled in the wind.... Last was Giant Ghost City's banner, which was easily identifiable because of the giant ghost sigil on it. The giant ghost had its arms spread wide, and wore a vicious expression, as if it wished to rip the heavens to shreds.

“So those are the four legions....” Bai Xiaochun thought, mind spinning. All of a sudden, he felt the nervousness that came along with being in the headquarters of the enemy.

“What would happen if they found out that I'm Bai Xiaochun...?” he wondered. The mere thought caused his face to turn as ashen as

death. It was at this point that he realized he had missed something, and looked up at the clouds in the sky. Suddenly, the enormous head of a dragon dipped down out of the clouds, its enormous whiskers floating in the air beside it as it stared coldly at Bai Xiaochun. A moment later, it lifted its head back up into the clouds.

“A dragon!!” he thought, his eyes widening. Then he could see the long, serpentine form of the dragon swirling through the clouds, as well as its terrifying claws. Off to the side, Duke Deathcrier gave a cold harrumph, but didn’t say anything. Instead, he kept his gaze fixed reverently on Arch-Emperor City.

This was the heart of the Wildlands!

As a deva, Duke Deathcrier understood matters much better than Bai Xiaochun. He knew... that what was visible out in the open was only a part of what made up Arch-Emperor City. There was more of it underground.... There was a third city underground that was ten times larger than the part which rose up above the plains!

“Three cities above,” he murmured to himself, “three in the middle, and three below.... They formed what was spoken of in legend... the nine heavens!” He had never seen the true Arch-Emperor City, which was something that had only existed in the distant past. Back in its golden age, Arch-Emperor City was like nine collective heavens that dominated the world.

However... after Heavenspan rose to prominence, Arch-Emperor City declined. Then a grand war was fought in which heaven and earth were split apart. Heavenspan replaced the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, and occupied the island in the middle of the Heavenspan Sea.

As for Arch-Emperor City... it was during that war that the lower three cities were shattered, and the middle three cities were crushed. The only thing that remained were the top three cities, which fled to this location, gasping for life, where they remained

down to this day, attempting to recover....

Currently, only the top two cities were visible above ground, with the third city remaining beneath the earth, buried and incapable of rising.

Finally, Duke Deathcrier looked away from Arch-Emperor City and took Bai Xiaochun to the west side of the city, where the Giant Ghost Legion was camped.

Before long, they were at the entrance of the camp. Having no desire to remain around any longer, Duke Deathcrier waved his sleeve, sending Bai Xiaochun flying off of the giant ghost battleship and down to the main entrance.

Voice hard as stone, he said, “The task assigned me by his highness the king is now accomplished. You’re on your own now, Bai Hao.” Without another word, he turned the giant ghost battleship and sent it speeding into Arch-Emperor City itself. Clearly, he had his own matters to attend to. Furthermore, he would return to Giant Ghost City via teleportation portal, not by making the long journey on the ship.

Duke Deathcrier’s arrival caused quite a stir in the Giant Ghost Legion. Beams of light immediately flew over to the main entrance of the camp, and the two squads of soul cultivator guards stationed there immediately looked from the departing giant ghost battleship over toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Who goes there?!” one of them said, his voice threatening and seemingly dripping with blood. Clearly, these guards were the type who had seen countless bloody battles, and had frightening murderous auras.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times as he watched Duke Deathcrier leave, then turned to face the main entrance of the army camp. Scowling on the verge of tears, he decided that since he had gotten this far, he might as well keep going forward one step at a time.

“There’s no way I’m going to lose any face,” he thought. “I’m a big-shot here too. After all, the Giant Ghost King is giving me his daughter’s hand in marriage!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he looked at the soul cultivator who had just called out to him from the main entrance. Sticking his chin up, he put on the most unfathomable expression he could muster.

Tossing out his identity medallion, he clasped his hands behind his back and proudly said, “I am the grand majordomo and inspections commissioner from Giant Ghost City, Bai Hao, and this is my identity medallion. Take me immediately to see your sergeant major. She is my fiancée!”

Chapter 714: Red Dust Blows Upon My Face As I Walk The Road To The Capital

Bai Xiaochun stood there, pompous and haughty, clasping his hands the way a truly consummate chosen would, as if he could crush the entire army camp if he wanted to.

The two squads of cultivators manning the main entrance were shocked, and didn't even know how to respond. They weren't particularly impressed with the first part of what he had said, but the last part left them gasping in astonishment. They actually didn't know about Zhou Zimo's relationship to the Giant Ghost King, but he was their king after all. To hear the person he had sent say something like this was a huge shock.

“The sergeant major is his fiancée?”

“Is this for real? This Bai Hao.... I remember hearing about him. He's one of the top aides to his highness the king.... Could it be that the king is rewarding him by arranging this marriage?” The powerful experts who had been shocked by Duke Deathcrier's sudden appearance earlier had also heard Bai Xiaochun's shocking words, and as a result, their expressions flickered. They looked incredulously at Bai Xiaochun, and then examined his identity medallion to confirm who he was. Although strange expressions could be seen on their faces, they didn't dare to delay, and quickly relayed the information up the chain of command to request orders about what to do next.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased at the reaction to his words, and mused that his days as a major general had truly given him an imperious way with words that surpassed ordinary people. Feeling quite proud, he cleared his throat.

“Very well, I'm coming in now.” As he began to strut forward, the soul cultivators of the Giant Ghost Legion exchanged awkward glances, but didn't dare to get in his way. However, before he could

take more than a few steps, a beam of light shot toward the entrance from somewhere in the middle of the camp, resolving into the shape of a young woman.

As soon as she arrived, all of the surrounding soldiers breathed sighs of relief.

She didn't appear to be very old, and had a Core Formation cultivation base. She was very pretty, with snow-white skin, and eyes that sparkled brightly. There was something formidable about her, but at the same time she was extremely attractive. That was especially the case considering that she wore a suit of tight-fitting leather armor that perfectly accentuated her sensuous curves.

Bai Xiaochun immediately perked up a bit as he wondered if this was Zhou Zimo. However, considering the level of her cultivation base, it didn't seem likely.... After looking her up and down, he was just preparing to say something when she coolly said, "Come with me. The sergeant major wants to see you!"

There was little respect to be heard in her tone of voice, and after finishing speaking, she turned and headed back into the camp. As she walked away, Bai Xiaochun simply couldn't help but once again marvel at her attractive figure.

"So, she's not Zhou Zimo after all. Hmph. Quite the nerve she has!" He was definitely not very pleased at his reception so far. No matter what the situation was, he was still the famed majordomo of Giant Ghost City. However, Bai Xiaochun also reminded himself that he wasn't the type to nitpick, so he simply snorted and followed the young woman.

As he walked along, he thought about what the Giant Ghost King's mysterious daughter would be like. Considering what the king had said to him, she was even more incredible than Chen Manyao.

"If he was lying to me, then I'll figure out some reason to leave Arch-Emperor City and get back to Giant Ghost City." Having

made up his mind, he swaggered after the young woman into the camp. As he looked around, he could see quite a few people looking over at him with quizzical expressions, occasionally leaning over to whisper to each other.

“Who's that? I can't believe the sergeant major's personal guard is escorting him....”

“I just heard some voices from outside. Supposedly this guy claims to be the sergeant major's fiancé...”

“What!?!?”

As the whispered conversations reached his ears, Bai Xiaochun felt prouder of himself than ever. As he made his way through the army camp, he realized that it was quite large. Based on his estimates, there were probably around 1,000,000 troops garrisoned here. Tents stretched out in all directions, seemingly without end.

There was something stern and harsh to the camp that made Bai Xiaochun think about the Great Wall.

As the young woman hurried him through the camp, Bai Xiaochun got the strange sensation that some of the people around him seemed familiar. However, there was little time to ponder the situation as the female cultivator led him to a huge red tent in the middle of the camp!

It was fully 300 meters wide, and considering that evening was falling, it was already lit by flickering torches.

It was heavily guarded, and the entire area radiated a bleak and deadly air. All of the guards had completely expressionless faces. Even as Bai Xiaochun and the personal guard approached, their gazes remained completely icy, as if they didn't care who Bai Xiaochun was. If he showed the slightest errant behavior, they would all attack him immediately!

It was at this point that his heart quivered a bit. Although he had been hurried through the camp, he could still sense that there were

many powerful experts present. From what he could tell, some of them were even half a step into the Deva Realm. However, he couldn't sense any aura at all coming from inside the bright red command tent. Even as he approached, he heard a cold snort echo out from inside.

“You still haven't found him?!” It was the voice of a woman, and it sounded like she was growling through clenched teeth. There was something incredibly shocking about her, as though she could surpass heaven and earth. The way the air vibrated sent a twinge of fear through Bai Xiaochun.

“That aura... it's from a deva!” There was even something about the aura that seemed familiar. Before he could spend any time thinking about it though, a rumbling sound could be heard as a statue flew out from inside the tent.

The statue depicted a person, and was already shattering to pieces as it flew out of the tent. However, most of the head remained intact, and it rolled across the ground until it came to a stop at Bai Xiaochun's feet.

When he looked down at it, his eyes went wide, and all the hair on his body stood on end.

The portion of the head that remained intact revealed a fact that looked much like his own.... Not Bai Hao's face, but his true appearance....

“This... this....” he muttered.

Before he could collect his thoughts, the woman's voice could once again be heard inside the tent.

“Keep looking! I refuse to believe that we can't find that damned Bai Xiaochun!”

Bai Xiaochun shivered, and a look of disbelief appeared on his face. Whether it was the aura he was sensing, or the voice, there was something so familiar with it that if he couldn't place who it

was by this point, it would mean he had memory problems.

Although he was now sure of who this person was, he still couldn't bring himself to believe it was true.... Even as he stood there shivering, the tent flap opened, and another female guard appeared. An unsightly expression could be seen on her face as she completely ignored Bai Xiaochun and began to clean up the shattered pieces of the statue.

However, because of the tent flap suddenly being opened, Bai Xiaochun could now see inside to a woman sitting there. When he saw her face, he felt like a million lightning bolts were striking his mind.

“Mistress Red-Dust!” His face turned as pale as a sheet, and his legs began to shake. Sitting there in the tent was the very same person he had cursed in his heart over and over again, the same person with whom he had fought in the necropolis... Mistress Red-Dust!!

Never could he possibly have imagined that the Giant Ghost King's daughter would be Mistress Red-Dust.... Clearly, Zhou Zimo was her name, and Red-Dust was a Daoist name.

Shaken, he suddenly realized why so many people in the army had seemed familiar. These were the very same necromancers and soul cultivators who had participated in the war at the Great Wall....

He had even fought some of them personally, and many of them had cursed him to death because of his Soul Convergence Pills....

A few had even experienced incredible humiliation because of the enormous beasts that had consumed his enhanced Aphrodisiac Pills. These were people who hated Bai Xiaochun with an undying passion that defied description.

In fact, in all of the Wildlands, nobody hated him more... than this group of people!

Back when he had been at the Great Wall, information about the Wildlands had been very hard to come by for some reason. Even after becoming a major general, he hadn't learned very much about the Wildlanders other than that they were all enemies. He'd never been given any information about the specific forces they faced, or where they came from.

“Heavens! The Giant Ghost Legion... Mistress Red-Dust... heavens! What am I doing here!?!? I've been dropped into the lion's den!!” As he wailed in his heart, and as his mind reeled, he shivered and backed up a step. His first instinct was to flee from this place as quickly as possible.

The mere idea of what would happen if his identity were revealed filled him with intense anxiety....

However, before he could do anything, Mistress Red-Dust's cold voice echoed out, “Who's sneaking around out there!?”

The surrounding guards' gazes instantly locked onto Bai Xiaochun, and the killing air that rose up was readily apparent. Even the female guard who was cleaning up the shattered statue looked at him with cold eyes.

Bai Xiaochun really wanted to cry as he stood there, wilting inwardly as everyone looked at him.

“What do I do, what do I do...? I hate you, Giant Ghost King....”

There he stood, unsure of how to respond, heart pounding with fear. Then, Mistress Red-Dust's cold voice again rang out from within the tent.

“Take him away and execute him!”

Chapter 715: I'm Your Fiance....

As soon as the words rang out, the killing air in the area seemed to take corporeal form. Ten beams of light immediately began to shoot in Bai Xiaochun's direction, making it seem like the army camp itself was like the mouth of some chaotic, primeval beast that wished to devour him.

“We haven't even talked, and she already wants to kill me!?!?” An intense sensation of deadly crisis immediately swept through Bai Xiaochun, and at the same time, the deva pressure weighing down on his flesh and blood had him wailing inwardly. He had to do something!

“Zimo!” he said loudly, “Uh, your father the Giant Ghost King sent me... I'm... I'm your fiancé, Bai Hao!”

Countless jaws dropped in response to his words. After all, few people knew of the relationship between Mistress Red-Dust and the Giant Ghost King, and therefore, this news was completely stunning to everyone.

“What? The sergeant major is the daughter of his highness the king?!”

“Is... is it true?”

Even as the news began to rock the entire Giant Ghost Legion, an enraged shout erupted from the bright red tent.

“Shut up!”

The tent flap flew open, and Mistress Red-Dust appeared, her expression matchlessly grim, her eyes flashing like lightning as she looked at Bai Xiaochun. It was almost as if she could see right into the center of his being as she sent more deva pressure weighing down onto him.

Hatred burned in her heart over the fact that Bai Hao had revealed her connection to the Giant Ghost King in order to get out

of the earlier situation!

Whether it was the ordinary soldiers or Mistress Red-Dust's personal guards, all of them were staring at Bai Xiaochun with wide eyes and odd expressions. Although none of them had yet fully digested the news about how their sergeant major was connected to the Giant Ghost King, when they saw the look of fury on her face, her personal guards exchanged awkward glances and then backed away. In fact, their expressions even brightened as they prepared to watch the scene unfold.

Bai Xiaochun fought to keep his expression the same. It was hard though, especially considering that, in the moment in which Mistress Red-Dust had thrown open the tent flap, he had seen that inside were seven or eight more statues of himself.... Clearly, Mistress Red-Dust had them at hand to use to vent her anger whenever she felt like it.

From those statues, it was easy to see how deep her hatred ran....

“This Granny Red-Dust really won't give up on her idea of killing me....” Bai Xiaochun was getting so nervous that beads of sweat covered his forehead, and he was moaning in his heart. He had never intended to intentionally piss off Mistress Red-Dust, but in the moment, he had had no other choice. If he had reacted even a little bit slower, he would have been dragged away and executed. Although it was possible she had only been trying to intimidate him, he hadn't been confident enough to bet on that option. The only way to save himself was to cause a big scene, which was why he had called upon the name of the Giant Ghost King to put Mistress Red-Dust and her army in place.

“I hate you, Giant Ghost King....” he thought, livid with regret at how things were playing out. He simply couldn't understand why he was so unlucky to have been screwed over by the Giant Ghost King yet again. Standing right there in front of him was Mistress Red-Dust, clad in a crimson suit of armor, looking very valiant and formidable, and pulsing with a murderous aura.

To say that Mistress Red-Dust was astonishingly beautiful was no exaggeration. Her skin was as fair as snow, and her phoenix-like eyes sparkled as if with starlight. She had an oval face, with a fair neck that one would expect to see on a statue.

The armor she wore accentuated her ample chest and her curvaceous hips, giving her an attractive hourglass figure that perfectly matched her long, slender legs.

In terms of beauty, she and Chen Manyao were very similar. However, Chen Manyao was like a noble orchid growing in a secluded valley, whereas Mistress Red-Dust was like a bright rose bristling with razor-sharp thorns.

If things hadn't played out the way they had in the necropolis, or if he really was Bai Hao, then to have a fiancée this beautiful, and a deva at that, would have left him feeling very happy. But instead, his heart was pounding with fear, and he felt like the sky was turning dark overhead. To him, Mistress Red-Dust was not a spectacular beauty; she was a deadly wild beast or a fiendish monster.

Even as everyone stole glances at Mistress Red-Dust, reeling in shock about her relationship with the Giant Ghost King, she stood there, her expression turning grimmer by the moment, her anger surpassed only by the humiliation she felt.

“Did you just say you're Bai Hao?” she said coldly. Although she did not speak loudly, her voice was filled with the might of a deva, causing the air to distort and a gale force wind to spring up out of nowhere.

Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard and then replied in a shaky voice, “Just let me explain, Zimo, I--”

However, before he could complete his sentence, the vicious loathing in Mistress Red-Dust's eyes grew more intense than ever, and she spoke in a voice as cold as midwinter snow

“You’re the notorious wife-stealing, clan-reviling Bai Hao?” Mistress Red-Dust had heard many stories about Bai Hao, and was especially repulsed by how people called him a wife-stealer.

Bai Xiaochun simply couldn’t stand to be wronged in this way. The true wife-stealer was not him, it was Mistress Red-Dust’s father!

“But that was because his highness the king told me to--”

“Shut up! My father is above board and righteous about everything. You’re a debauched, sinister bootlicker who persecutes good and loyal men!” At this point, the truth about who she was had been revealed, so Mistress Red-Dust didn’t see any need to try to keep it secret. Her hatred and loathing growing more intense by the moment, she spoke in an even icier voice than before.

“Don’t even consider talking about matters relating to my father the king. Furthermore, you don’t qualify to be my official Daoist partner. You just stay out of sight in the camp here, and if I see even a single bad report about you, I’ll have you executed immediately!” Mistress Red-Dust had been told that her father had arranged for her to be given in marriage to Bai Hao, and was clearly not happy with the idea. Not giving him another glance, she spun and stalked back into her command tent.

The surrounding guards continued to look over at him with odd expressions on their faces.

“That’s it?” Bai Xiaochun thought, standing there blinking a few times. However, considering what had just happened, he now knew that Mistress Red-Dust had no idea who he really was, which led to him heaving a sigh of relief. Although he was still a bit nervous, there was also something a bit exciting about it all that had him trembling as he stood there.

“She really didn’t recognize me.... And now she’s my fiancée....” He was actually feeling so exhilarated that his throat felt dry. Then he thought back to the scene which had just played out, and the

wheels in his head began to turn.

“It actually seems like she was just trying to scare me. Furthermore, she clearly wants to ruin her father’s plans for the marriage.... In that case, she definitely won’t hurt me.... After all, I’m backed by her own father.... However, it’s really impossible to say, so I still have to be careful.

“In any case, I definitely can’t stick around in the Giant Ghost Legion. It might be exhilarating, but it’s too dangerous. The slightest mistake on my part and my poor little life would be out the window.... I really am in the middle of the lion’s den here.” With those thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun turned and hurried away nervously, his heart pounding in his chest the entire time. Things had spun out of control so quickly that he still hadn’t recovered, and was still wracked with nervousness.

Before he got very far, though, a whistling sound could be heard as one of Mistress Red-Dust’s personal guards flew over and blocked his path.

“Majordomo Bai,” she said coldly, “you’re going the wrong way. Follow me to your quarters.” Although her cultivation base wasn’t very high, as one of the sergeant major’s personal guards, she still carried herself in a very intimidating fashion.

To see this young woman standing in his way caused Bai Xiaochun to immediately plaster a haughty and angry expression onto his face.

“I’m not going anywhere,” he said coolly. “Since the sergeant major doesn’t approve of me, I’m leaving.”

“It’s beyond your control, Majordomo Bai. The sergeant major said that she wants you to stay in the camp, so I advise you not to disobey her orders.” As soon as the words left her mouth, other soul cultivators in the area turned to look at Bai Xiaochun. Clearly, if he disobeyed orders, they would attack him immediately.

“What gall!” Bai Xiaochun growled, his eyes widening into a glare. Of course, inwardly he was shivering in fear at the sensation of so many auras locking down onto him.

Ignoring Bai Xiaochun’s posturing, the young female guard said, “Please don’t make me go hard on you, Majordomo Bai. Follow me!”

Inwardly, he was feeling very nervous. However, he really didn’t want to stay in the camp, and furthermore, he knew that not only was he backed by the Giant Ghost King, he still had the restrictive spell inside of him. Although most of the restrictive spell was gone, it would still be partially effective. On top of all of that, he had come here on orders. Therefore, it was very unlikely that he would face any serious threat to his life.

“She doesn’t know that I’m Bai Xiaochun, but I was so nervous about it earlier that I immediately backed down. The more I back down, the stronger her position will be. In that case, it’s time to stick to my guns! I don’t care what they say, I’m leaving!” However, he still didn’t feel completely safe about everything, so he secretly took out a transmission jade slip and sent a voice message to the Giant Ghost King.

“Giant Ghost King, your daughter wants to kill me. Is this the marriage you supposedly arranged? I’m about to die!!” Not even waiting for a response, he suddenly looked up, a vicious and fiendish look on his face. Eyes blazing with cruelty, he looked at the red command tent and yelled, “Sergeant Major!! What’s the meaning of this!?”

His voice echoed out like heavenly thunder, ringing out through the entire army camp, attracting the attention of all the soul cultivators.

“If you don’t want to acknowledge the marriage agreement put in place by the Giant Ghost King, then that’s fine with me. But as the majordomo of Giant Ghost City, do you really think you can

prevent me from leaving this camp?! If so, then you can't blame me for acting rashly!” To accompany his angry words, he unleashed his Nascent Soul cultivation base, causing a killing air to fill the entire area. At the same time, he kept his eye on the tent to see what reaction would come.

“I’ve dominated the field wherever I went for years now,” he thought. “I created the Win Charm, and received countless love letters. Let’s see how this measly Granny Red-Dust responds to this move!”

Chapter 716: A Wise Man Knows To Back Down When The Odds Are Against Him

The surrounding soul cultivators were now starting to feel a bit hesitant. After all, Bai Xiaochun's words just now had revealed a lot more about the overall situation, and all the information was coming too abruptly. First, they had learned that their sergeant major was the daughter of his highness the king. And now they learned that the king had arranged for her to marry someone, only to find that she didn't accept the arrangement.

For her to refuse was one thing, but it was quite another for her to try to confine Bai Hao to the camp. The source of friction was now very clear.

“Is that really what the sergeant major is trying to do?”

“Seems to me this Bai Hao is actually in the right! If she refuses to accept the arrangement, she should just let him go....”

Such were the types of words that people murmured inwardly. At the same time, the overall hostility toward Bai Xiaochun began to weaken.

Bai Xiaochun was pleased to see that his tactic was working, and began to consider what to say next. On the one hand, he couldn't go too far in pissing off Mistress Red-Dust, but on the other hand, he couldn't allow himself to come off too weak. His entire goal was to make a smooth exit from the camp.

However, before he could say anything else, Mistress Red-Dust's voice erupted from the red command tent, filled with icy cold killing intent.

“I can try.”

Her voice was like a cruel and vicious whip, the strike of which caused all of the soul cultivators in the Giant Ghost Legion to unleash the power of their cultivation bases. Instantly,

indescribable pressure descended from all corners onto Bai Xiaochun's area.

Bai Xiaochun's heart immediately began to race. He could feel, not just Mistress Red-Dust's cultivation base, but the cultivation bases of hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Furthermore, this was Arch-Emperor City, the most important location within the Wildlands. Bai Xiaochun was shaking inwardly, shocked at how unreasonable this Mistress Red-Dust was being. In fact, she and her father seemed completely muleheaded.... All he wanted to do was leave, and she wasn't going to let him?

“Don't tell me she's trying to goad me into making a break for it? And then she'll use that as an excuse to kill me? If things played out that way, then I'm afraid even his highness the king wouldn't be able to complain.” His eyes widened, and his demeanor on the outside seemed just as stubborn as before. But inside, he was considering that he might need to just give in and spend a bit of time in the army camp. After all, as the saying went... a wise man knows when to back down when the odds are against him!

Even as he stood there trying to decide what to do, the Giant Ghost King finally responded to the repeated messages he had been sending. He first offered a few words of comfort, and then said that it was all a big misunderstanding, and that he would talk things over with his daughter.

Having received the response, Bai Xiaochun finally felt a bit more at ease, and decided that he couldn't let an ounce of fear show.

“It was fairly recently that three heavenly kings and numerous nobles and aristocrats from the imperial city all tried to set a trap for me in the Necromancer Kettle, the purpose being to prevent me from getting the ghost king fruit. I went in alone and captured all of the heirs apparent and chosen, including the Junior Champion King, heir apparent of the War Champion King, Prince Zhou Hong, heir of the Nine Serenities King, and Spirit Advent City's Princess Xu Shan.... I even did the same to the second prince! I completely

dominated the Necromancer Kettle, and nobody could dare say a thing about it!

“Back in his highness the king’s decay period, the deva patriarchs of the Chen, Bai and Cai Clans all tried to chase me down and kill both me and his highness the king. They were joined by a host of Nascent Soul experts, and yet with me to protect the king, he made it safely to the end of his decay period! I escaped every deadly situation I faced in Giant Ghost City, and not even three devas could do anything about me!

“If you don’t like me and want to kill me, Zhou Zimo, then say the word. There’s no need for this disgraceful attempt to humiliate me. And there’s even less need to try to keep me locked up in this camp. I, Bai Hao, am a force to be reckoned with wherever I go. In the big wide world out there, I am like a fish that can become a dragon at any moment. When I flap my wings, I soar to the highest heavens and beyond! Under no circumstances will I allow myself to be the subject of bullying!” His words echoed out like thunder for everyone in the camp to hear, and made it clear that he was the type of person who was not to be trifled with.

Inside of the red command tent, Mistress Red-Dust could be seen frowning. The truth was that she really did want to see Bai Hao dead, but couldn’t really do that because of her father. One reason for it all was the fact that the matter had been arranged without her knowledge, and another was the fact that she didn’t believe that a lowly person like this deserved to have her father’s ear.

However, when it came to the arranged marriage, there was actually a reason why she did want to keep Bai Hao around.

Whether it was in terms of her beauty or her powerful cultivation base, she was one of the blazing suns of the Wildlands, and was the subject of pursuit by countless handsome elites. Of course, she completely ignored the advances of nearly every single one of them. There were only two that she would have a hard time refusing, one being the grand prince, and the other being the

Grand Heavenmaster's highest ranking apprentice, Ouyang Song.

They were also devas, and had very high positions. Despite the fact that she didn't really like them, she wasn't in a position to reject them outright. Therefore, if she kept Bai Hao around, she would have a good excuse to avoid them. Plus, if fights broke out between the men, Bai Hao would probably get killed, and she wouldn't have to do anything.

Her original plan had been to simply intimidate him and then force him to stay in the camp. Never could she have imagined that the seemingly weak and timid Bai Hao would be able to ignore all of the pressure weighing down on him and even fight back with biting words. In fact, not only were his words biting, they contained so much truth that there was nothing she could say in response.

Besides, her father the Giant Ghost King had just sent her a message. First, he had offered some consoling words, and then had said some nice things about Bai Hao. He had also discreetly explained the matter about the restrictive spell.

At this point, Mistress Red-Dust sighed. After communicating back and forth with her father quickly, the two of them came to an agreement. Bai Hao had to stay in the army camp, but only for three months. After that, he would be free to go.

During that time, she would guarantee that nothing untoward happened to him.

Mistress Red-Dust's secret hope for that plan was that, during the three months, all of the elites who were pursuing her in the imperial city would come to hear that her father had officially arranged for a Daoist partner for her. Although they would realize that she wasn't happy about the situation, when Bai Hao went back to Giant Ghost City three months later, he would take the hatred of her suitors with him. In the end, she would have the perfect shield to keep them at bay.

Dealing with matters related to his daughter's romantic relationships was a big headache for the Giant Ghost King. After comforting her, he sent some appeasing words to Bai Xiaochun, and then washed his hands of the matter.

When all was said and done, Bai Xiaochun realized that he really didn't have any choice in the matter. After all, of the two people he was dealing with, one was a deva and the other was a demigod.

“Trying to use me as a shield, huh? Like father, like daughter. Scoundrels both!”

With the matter resolved, Mistress Red-Dust reigned in her killing intent, and dissipated the pressure weighing down on the army camp. As for Bai Xiaochun, he sighed and followed the female guard to his quarters.

He was placed in a relatively remote location, which he didn't mind at all. Once inside, he sat down cross-legged and sighed despondently about the situation.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, am a majestic major general. I even fought Mistress Red-Dust once. But thanks to a freak combination of factors, I ended up in the Wildlands as Mistress Red-Dust's Daoist partner, and her shield....

“How did things end up like this? And then there's that Giant Ghost King, the villain. He and Mistress Red-Dust are both scoundrels.... I guess there are just too many bad people in this world, and that pure, honest people like myself are just destined to be at a disadvantage.” Rubbing the bridge of his nose, Bai Xiaochun mused that although he wasn't their match in terms of cultivation base, when it came to morals, he definitely occupied vastly higher ground.

“Well, at least in terms of my safety, the fact that the restrictive spell is still in place will keep Mistress Red-Dust in check to some extent. She definitely won't let me get killed. Three months.... Fudge! I'll just hang in there. It's only three months, right?!”

Gritting his teeth, he contemplated the fact that he just wasn't strong enough. He really needed to get more powerful so that he could just ignore Mistress Red-Dust if he felt like it. That way he could come and go as he pleased.

“I need to conjure some flame!” With that, his eyes began to shine brightly, and he decided that for the next three months, he would keep his head down and avoid provoking anyone. He wouldn't leave the army camp; instead he would conjure a sixteen-colored flame and use it to improve his cultivation base. He needed battle prowess that could put devas in their place.

“Hmph. You just wait until I can handle devas. The first one I'll cut down to size will be Granny Red-Dust!” With that, he produced a soulhoarding pagoda from his bag of holding. It wasn't very large, and in fact, contained only a single soul.

It was none other than Bai Hao in soul form. He sat there frowning as he performed auguries regarding the formula for eighteen-colored flame. Sensing that Bai Xiaochun was looking at him, he looked out of the soulhoarding pagoda.

“How is the formula coming along, my little apprentice?” Bai Xiaochun said, a warm smile on his face.

Bai Hao looked quite exhausted. Rising to his feet, he said, “I'm still not quite there, Master. In order to complete the formula for eighteen-colored flame, I have to create something out of nothing. It's extremely difficult. I think it's going to take much longer than anything before it. However, I came up with an idea. Perhaps multiple tongues of seventeen-colored flame could be combined and transformed into an eighteen-colored flame.... In fact, I was even thinking that the transformation could occur when they were in the sea of fire state. Then, after the eighteenth color appeared, the sea could be made back into a true flame!”

“Well, no need to be anxious, Hao'er,” Bai Xiaochun replied. “Make sure to keep well-rested. Master is planning to conjure a

sixteen-colored flame right now, why don't you assist me? Plus, I'd love to hear any suggestions you have as you watch." Bai Xiaochun knew that Bai Hao's genius in flame conjuring far surpassed his own, although he wasn't very familiar with sixteen-colored flame. If Bai Xiaochun wanted to be able to conjure sixteen-colored flame with the greatest speed possible, the best way to do that would be to take advantage of Bai Hao's genius. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun also wondered if the fact that Bai Hao was now a ghost cultivator would be of some help.

Waving his hand, he set some restrictive spells up and produced a large amount of vengeful souls. Then he used the formula for sixteen-colored flame which he had acquired by shaking down the clans in Giant Ghost City. He had studied the formula quite thoroughly, but still had some questions about it that could only be resolved by actually working with the formula.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun was about to begin, Bai Hao hesitated and then said, "Master, once you get past fifteen-colored flame, the success rates get much lower. Furthermore, there will be more instabilities; if you're not very careful, unexpected consequences can occur. Perhaps you should do a bit more research first, Master. Besides, we aren't exactly in the ideal location to do flame conjuring...."

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and confidently said, "Ah, don't worry about it. This place is perfect. Trust me, Master has a lot of experience in this kind of thing."

Although Bai Hao still had his reservations, Bai Xiaochun seemed very confident. Perhaps his Master had researched the formula more than he realized. Therefore, Bai Hao suppressed his anxiety and watched closely as Bai Xiaochun began working.

Chapter 717: Master Has A Lot Of Experience?

Bai Xiaochun settled his aura and calmed his thoughts. Forgetting about matters pertaining to Mistress Red-Dust, he waved his hands out in front of him to summon a fifteen-colored flame from his bag of holding.

He had originally succeeded at fifteen-colored flame by acquiring some from the three great clans, and then reverse-engineering the formula. Were it not for the fact that he was worried about accidentally revealing his identity, he would already have performed fifteenfold spirit enhancements on everything he owned.

“Well, there’s nothing I can do for now. I’ll just have to settle for fourteenfold enhancements. Otherwise, people might get suspicious, and that would put me in danger.” After mentally reviewing the formula, his eyes flashed, and he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, then waved his finger.

Even more vengeful souls poured out of another soulhoarding pagoda, until there were so many that they produced a tempest.

Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun had set up powerful restrictive spells, and also had the protective concealment provided by his mask. Because of that, not a single fluctuation rolled out into the open to alert anyone to what was happening.

From the outside, Bai Xiaochun’s tent seemed completely still and quiet. In fact, as the guards went about their evening patrol, none of them even looked over at him.

An hour flew by, and Bai Xiaochun was completely focused on the task at hand, making constant adjustments to the fifteen-colored flame, and also carefully controlling the sea of souls around him.

If he made the slightest error in fusing the souls into the flame, it would lead to a failure. Therefore, sweat dripped down his face and neck as he worked, carefully feeding the souls in, and occasionally adding special souls into the mix as they were needed.

Although it was an exhausting process, he gritted his teeth and kept on going.

“I need to get stronger! That’s my only option here in the Wildlands. If my identity gets exposed, at least then I’ll have something to fall back on....” The incident earlier with Mistress Red-Dust had been exhilarating, but had also left him feeling like he had come close to losing his poor little life. Because of that, he knew that he had to do everything possible to make the progress he needed.

There was a stubborn focus within him, something that had first appeared way back in the Spirit Stream Sect when he was concocting medicine. Now that his poor little life was on the line, it was even more fully on display.

Soon his eyes were bloodshot, and a vicious expression could be seen on his face. Off to the side, Bai Hao was getting nervous; this was his first time seeing his Master acting like this.

“Master is really going for broke in this conjuring session....” he thought nervously. Just when he was about to give some advice, Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered, and something went wrong with the fifteen-colored flame. It flared brightly, then went dim, and finally, a popping sound could be heard as it transformed into countless motes of light that scattered in all directions.

“Dammit!” Bai Xiaochun roared. Pulling out another fifteen-colored flame, he immediately started over. This time, he spent longer. Eventually, the sun shone brightly outside, and Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were completely bloodshot, and he was even panting. He had spent the entire night getting the sixteen-colored flame to the point of being thirty percent complete. However, in

the final moments, when he thought he could finish the flame in one final burst, he made a mistake, and the fifteen-colored flame did the same thing as before. It flared with light, then vanished.

“How could this be happening?!” Tugging at his hair, he pulled out the formula again and started to study it. As for Bai Hao, he stood off to the side muttering for a bit, until his eyes finally glittered.

“Master, perhaps the problem is that we’re in an army camp, and the overall murderous aura is too strong. Although the murderous aura doesn’t have a specific shape, it can still affect the vengeful souls....”

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the explanation, his eyes lit up. It did make sense.

“Well done, apprentice!” he said, slapping his thigh. “You’re absolutely right.”

Spirits lifting, he produced another fifteen-colored flame and was about to start working when Bai Hao continued, “Master, why don’t you rest up a bit first? You don’t seem to be in the best shape to conjure flame....”

“Ah, don’t worry, Master is in perfect shape at the moment.” Clearly not worried, Bai Xiaochun began to work with the fifteen-colored flame. This time, he took even longer than last time. An entire day went by. By evening of the following day, he was clearly exhausted. His eyes were bright red, and he looked extremely nervous as he stared intently at the vanishing flame in front of him.

“How could this be happening...? Another failure.... I resolved the issues caused by the murderous aura, but something else went wrong! I refuse to believe that I can’t resolve all the issues!” By this point, he had already lost track of the time, or where he was. Gritting his teeth, he produced another fifteen-colored flame and then started conjuring.

Bai Hao was getting very nervous. Something seemed very off about Bai Xiaochun, and he seemed completely unstable. Occasionally he would try to persuade him to stop, and at first he would respond, but eventually just stopped listening. That only made Bai Hao even more nervous.

“This just isn’t the way to conjure sixteen-colored flame! If he keeps going on this way, something unexpected is going to happen....” Bai Hao was extremely apprehensive as he watched his Master work, and he felt a dangerous, pulsing aura building up. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun’s expression turned fierce as he sent a huge group of vengeful souls into the fifteen-colored flame.

In one fell swoop, he was fifty percent done with his work, and his excitement surged. However, it was in that moment when, all of a sudden, the flame flickered wildly, and a terrifying energy rolled out of it. Another color appeared within the flame, a sixteenth color, but then, just as quickly, that color disappeared, changing it back into fifteen-colored flame.

As this unstable development occurred, the terrifying fluctuations rolling out of the flame became more obvious. Bai Xiaochun was going mad with anticipation, and refused to give up, instead working as hard as he could to get the flame under control.

“Stop, Master!” Bai Hao shrieked, terror written on his face. “The flame is unstable! It’s too horrible to contemplate what could happen if you lost control!!”

However, even as the words left his mouth, Bai Xiaochun’s face fell, and he lost control over the flame. Instantly, the terrifying fluctuations erupted out with full force.

Fire and blinding light filled the tent. Bai Hao was trembling in despair; even though his soulhoarding pagoda would offer some protection, considering how close he was to the explosion, there was no way he would be able to escape unharmed.

“I’m finished. Finished....” he wailed inwardly. However, even as

the flames erupted out, Bai Xiaochun moved with blinding speed. He grabbed Bai Hao, and then a black flash of light could be seen, which was none other than his turtle-wok. Then he dropped to the ground, curled up, and placed the wok over himself and Bai Hao.

It happened with the fluid ease and indescribable speed that only came with a very familiar action....

The instant the turtle-wok thumped down, a deafening boom split the air!

It was late in the night, and most of the soul cultivators in the camp were resting. The sudden sound of the explosion immediately awoke virtually all of them, and yet, before they could react, a massive sea of flames began to roll out.

It was a gigantic mass of fire that was occasionally fifteen-colored and occasionally sixteen-colored. Furthermore, it didn't fall from the sky, but rather, spread out from Bai Xiaochun's tent. Viewed from afar, it was possible to see countless tents being reduced to ash, and everything in the area being scorched black....

Nearly half of the camp was affected. As the sea of flames spread out, countless shrieking sounds could be heard as the vengeful souls that Bai Xiaochun hadn't had time to collect back up were transformed into souls of fire that made the incident even more destructive.

Countless structures were destroyed, and innumerable tents became ash. Anything that wasn't directly destroyed was instantly engulfed in flame. Furthermore, the fire was unique in that it could also burn armor, causing vast numbers of soul cultivators to throw their armor off, simultaneously screaming in pain.

The entire army was thrown into chaos by the sudden explosion.

“What's going on!?!?”

“I'm on fire!!”

“Heavens! What's happening....”

Countless figures emerged into the open, some to fight the fire, others to search for the source of the explosion.

It only took moments for the shouts and cries to reach a deafening level.

Meanwhile, back where Bai Xiaochun's tent had once stood, a big black wok could be seen on the ground. Slowly, the bottom lifted up by just a crack, and an eye peered out.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then stuck his head out to see everything around him on fire, and the camp in pandemonium. Next to him, Bai Hao also looked out tentatively. He was still shaking from the mere thought of the danger they had just been in.

Clearing his throat guiltily, Bai Xiaochun said, "Don't worry, like I said, Master has a lot of experience in these kinds of things. Look, not a thing happened to either of us!"

Stunned, and even more nervous than before, Bai Hao replied, "Master, we... just caused a huge disaster...."

Although Bai Xiaochun was actually terrified, he had to put on a good front for his apprentice, so by way of comfort, he said, "It's fine. In terms of the aftermath to this kind of thing, um... Master... has a lot of experience in that too."

Chapter 718: Dont Do Something Youll Regret

“That’s not ordinary fire, it’s conjured flame!!”

“Dammit! Are we under attack? We're in the imperial city! How could someone be attacking us here!?!?”

“Quick, put out this fire....”

“This is definitely man-made! When I find out who did it, I'm going to chop him to pieces!!”

The entire camp was in utter chaos, with people flying around looking for the source of the explosion. The shouting that filled the air had Bai Xiaochun completely jumpy. In fact, there were already soul cultivators in the area, and as they looked over, they could tell that his tent was the epicenter of the fire.

Bai Hao was also feeling very nervous, and suddenly realized that his Master wasn't very reliable after all.... With that, his mind began to race as he tried to come up with a solution to the situation.

However, even as the soul cultivators began to approach, and before Bai Hao could come up with any ideas, Bai Xiaochun grabbed Bai Hao's soulhoarding pagoda and then flew up into the air. His face was a vicious mask of rage as he glanced around and shouted, “Who did it? Dammit! Who's responsible!! Heaven damn you, whoever you are. I was sleeping and nearly got burned to death. Outrageous!!

“Fellow soldiers, come with me to search for the culprit. Together, we can surely find who was responsible!!” The rage in his voice was clear as his words thundered out. As for the people who had been approaching, they were taken aback, and had no time to ponder the situation before Bai Xiaochun led them around to start searching.

Bai Hao was in his soulhoarding pagoda in soul form. Because of the special properties of his soul body, he could remain formless and invisible to anyone else. Therefore, no one could see him. But if they could have, they would have seen him sitting there dumbfounded, staring blankly as his Master ranted and raved. In fact, if Bai Hao hadn't known the truth, he would have been taken in by the act.

That was what helped Bai Hao to fully understand what his Master meant when he said he had experience....

“This... is definitely not the first time Master has caused a disaster. Nor is it his first time getting out of the situation.... He... really does have a lot of experience....”

However, even as Bai Xiaochun pretended to be incensed, and led the surrounding cultivators in a search, one particular soul cultivator with tattered, burned clothing flew up into the air. He clearly wasn't in very good condition. Pointing a shaking finger at Bai Xiaochun, he howled, “It was you, Bai Hao!! I was on patrol here and saw with my own eyes that the explosion started in your tent! I can't believe you're pretending to search for the culprit. You're the culprit!!”

Bai Xiaochun's heart began to pound. Just when he was about to offer an explanation, a group of eight more soul cultivators flew over.

“We saw it too! The explosion started in your tent!!”

“How shameless of you, Bai Hao! The people in Giant Ghost City might be a bit scared of you, but nobody here is going to indulge you like that!” As these people spoke, their murderous auras flared to life. As for the other surrounding soul cultivators, they had no reason to distrust their comrades-in-arms, nor any reason to trust Bai Xiaochun, who was an outsider. Soon, many angry glances were locking onto Bai Xiaochun, glances filled with killing intent.

Licking his lips, Bai Xiaochun said, “Listen, everybody, let me

explain....”

However, before he could say anything else, the fluctuations of magical techniques erupted out, and a rain of multicolored, magical light shot toward him. Heart pounding, he leapt to the side.

Countless magical techniques slammed into the spot he had just occupied, shattering the ground in all directions. Bai Xiaochun’s scalp was tingling in fear as he attempted to flee, but there were too many soul cultivators in the area. There were already a few hundred within his line of sight, with more behind him.

“I’ve never met anybody as shameless as this guy. Kill him!”

“Who cares if he's a majordomo? This is mutiny, which is a capital offense!”

Rage burning, they gave chase. As for Bai Xiaochun, his heart was racing, and he did his best to evade his opponents. However, despite being in the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, the fact that more and more enemies were showing up by the moment was terrifying.

“Calm down everybody! Don’t do anything you’ll regret. I can explain everything.... There’s nothing that can’t be worked out with a bit of discussion....” The only answer to his words was a hail of magical techniques coming from more than a thousand soul cultivators.

The sea of magical technique was so frightening that Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but let out a yelp of shock. Drawing on the power of his fleshly body, he prepared to teleport away. However, before he could, the aura of a spell formation could be sensed rising up in the army camp. Unexpectedly, someone had activated the camp’s defensive spell formation....

“You bunch of bullies! All I did was accidentally cause a fire! Nobody died! Y-y-you people... you’re actually going to use a spell

formation to try to attack me!?” As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, these people were all crazy. More and more were beginning to surround him, although none were willing to get too close.

“Zhou Zimo, we had an agreement! Nothing can happen to me for the next three months!!”

Despite being surrounded by a crowd of nearly ten thousand shouting cultivators, he was in the mighty Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, and had shocking fleshly body power. As a result, his voice rose above all of theirs to echo out in all directions.

Of course, Mistress Red-Dust was well aware of what was happening. Up to now, she had been sitting there with clenched teeth, furious with Bai Hao. First, he had seemed weak and timid, only to turn around and act with brazen arrogance. Finally, things had settled down and they made their three-month agreement. But now, only two days into it, he had already caused a huge disaster.

Although the sea of flames had been put down, the damage to the camp was severe. And considering that Mistress Red-Dust was in charge of this army, that meant that she would be responsible for all costs involved in repairing and replacing what had been damaged or destroyed. By this point, Mistress Red-Dust already regretted her decision to keep Bai Xiaochun behind.

However, she couldn't back out of the agreement easily. Then she heard Bai Xiaochun yelling outside, and her cheeks puffed out in anger. Gritting her teeth, she took a step forward and vanished, reappearing next to Bai Xiaochun.

Ripples spread out in all directions as she appeared, causing the surrounding soul cultivators of the Giant Ghost Legion to suppress their killing intent and clasp hands in greeting.

Bai Xiaochun was still nervous, but he hadn't started the fire on purpose. It had been an accident! However... worried that Mistress Red-Dust wouldn't honor the agreement, he quickly said, “We

have an agreement, remember! Ai. I told you that if you don't like me you should just send me away, didn't I? But you had to keep me here.”

He sighed, seemingly on the verge of tears.

His words almost caused Mistress Red-Dust to lose her temper. Taking a deep breath, and her expression profoundly grim, she looked around and said, “You're all dismissed.”

Despite their raging fury toward Bai Xiaochun, the crowd calmed down and then bowed their heads and left. Soon, everything was quiet, and even the fluctuations of the spell formation vanished.

Bai Xiaochun was shaken by the scene. Considering he had been a major general at the Great Wall, he knew that there were only two ways to get an entire army to back down. One was to use one's cultivation base, and the other was to have the trust of that army. Clearly, this army trusted Mistress Red-Dust to the ultimate degree.

As everyone filtered away, Mistress Red-Dust turned to look coldly at Bai Xiaochun. It was a look that struck anxiety deep into his heart, so he quickly said, “Um... I really didn't do it on purpose. It was an accident, nothing more than an acc--”

“Whether it was an accident or not doesn't matter. I'm warning you... if a second incident like this occurs, I'll have you executed, agreement or not!” Every word she spoke was like a bolt of deadly lightning striking Bai Xiaochun's mind.

With that, she paid him no more heed, and turned to leave without another word. Of course, the truth was that she was actually worried that if she looked at him any longer, she might not be able to hold back from killing him.

The fact that Mistress Red-Dust had personally appeared ensured that the chaos quickly settled into silence. However, the icy glances being cast toward Bai Xiaochun from all directions had him

feeling very embarrassed.

Most nerve-wracking of all was the thought of what could happen if he continued to try to conjure flame in the camp. If another sea of flame exploded out, then Mistress Red-Dust... would very likely do something very bad to him.

However, not conjuring flame wasn't an option as far as he was concerned. He had already conjured fifty percent of a sixteen-colored flame, and with a bit more work, he was confident he could succeed.

“Ah, whatever.... As long as I don't provoke Granny Red-Dust, I'll be fine. I just won't work in the middle of the camp. I'll go a bit outside the gates. That way, if there is a sea of flames, it won't affect the main part of the camp. Granny Red-Dust won't have any reason to do anything to me because of something like that.” Eyes flashing with determination, he flew out of the camp.

As soon as he was out in the open, he could tell that some divine sense had locked down onto him. According to the agreement, he had to remain with the army for three months, but if he wanted to go out to handle some errand or other, he could. Soon, he was on a lowlying mountain a short distance away.

Once he settled down there, the divine sense slowly faded away, as expected.

Chapter 719: Master, Look Up There....

Bai Xiaochun looked down at the army camp from his position on the mountain, and sighed. “Too overbearing.... All I'm doing is a bit of flame conjuring....”

Pulling out Bai Hao's soulhoarding pagoda, he continued, “They forced me to come all the way out here to work. What happened earlier was an accident.... Isn't that right, my apprentice? Master is completely innocent!”

Bai Hao was about to respond, but after a moment, he simply shook his head and smiled wryly. He was beginning to understand this petty Master of his a bit more. However, despite the fact that he seemed very unreliable, Bai Hao couldn't hold back from trying to offer some more advice.

“Master, why don't we just take a break for a bit. What happens... what happens if there's another explosion...?”

Thumping himself on the chest, Bai Xiaochun said, “Don't worry, your Master has a lot of experience.”

Almost immediately, Bai Hao began to get nervous, and was about to continue to try offer more persuasion when Bai Xiaochun pulled out a fifteen-colored flame and a horde of vengeful souls.

Worried that further interruptions could cause problems, Bai Hao swallowed his words, sighed, and prayed that everything went smoothly.

Before long, three days had passed. Bai Xiaochun was taking things very slowly. Apparently, he was also afraid of causing another explosion, so when even the slightest unexpected variation cropped up, he would stop.

Sticking his chin up, he proudly said, “Look, didn't I say we'd be fine? After three days, there hasn't been a single explosion!”

Despite how slowly he was working, he was already seventy

percent finished.

By this point, Bai Hao was feeling a bit less nervous, and also very grateful that Bai Xiaochun was listening to him and being more careful.

“Master, when conjuring sixteen-colored flame, the most difficult part is in the end. You need to be a bit more careful from here on out. Absolutely, positively do not do anything impulsive.”

“Yeah, yeah, don't worry.” Bai Xiaochun waved his hand and continued working. A few more days went by, and Bai Xiaochun's eyes were completely bloodshot. Once again, he seemed bedeviled. No matter what he did, he was still stuck at seventy percent completion, and could tell that if he pushed things ahead prematurely, he would fail.

“Just what exactly am I doing wrong...?” he muttered, tugging at his hair and staring fixedly at the tongue of flame in his palm. Then, the flicker of augury appeared in his eyes. Bai Hao looked on, also unsure of what to do. However, the sight of Bai Xiaochun in this state had him nervously thinking back to the explosion.

Before Bai Hao could contemplate what that meant, Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone brightly, and he said, “That must be it! These vengeful souls have too many impurities!”

With that, he started working again. However, Bai Hao couldn't help but think that the explanation sounded too simple. He was going to give voice to his reservations, but hesitated when he saw how excited Bai Xiaochun was to try out his new idea.

“Ah, whatever. I'll just let Master give it a shot. Who knows, maybe he's right.”

Bai Xiaochun was indeed very excited. Considering that the problem had to do with impurities, he immediately thought back to how he had solved such problems when concocting medicine. Eyebrows dancing up and down in anticipation, he waved his

hands and started working again.

As he worked, the fifteen-colored flame gobbled up the vengeful souls, and then black tendrils of smoke began to rise up. When it happened with the first soul, it was hardly noticeable, but as more souls poured in, more black smoke appeared, and Bai Hao started to get more nervous.

Although Bai Hao wasn't sure exactly what it meant, he was sure that the black smoke which resulted from burning away impurities could not be a good thing. "Master, wait, there's too much of this black smoke. Something's wrong. Give me a minute to figure out what it is...."

"A little bit of smoke like this is nothing. Don't worry, my little apprentice. Master has a lot of experience in things like this." Laughing heartily, he continued his work. As he did, more and more black smoke appeared, and Bai Hao continued to get more nervous. In the end, he was actually trembling in fear.

Bai Xiaochun was so focused that he had forgotten himself. The flame gobbled up the souls, and an entire day went by. By evening the next day, it was eighty percent complete!

"So it does work!" Excited, he was just about to continue working when, all of a sudden, signs of instability appeared in the fifteen-colored flame. Terrifying fluctuations began to build up in the flame. However, before they could roll out, Bai Xiaochun decisively closed his hand into a fist, extinguishing the fifteen-colored flame in an instant!

As he did, massive quantities of black smoke escaped through the cracks between his fingers, making a black mushroom cloud that rose up into the air.

"Hmmmphh. Did you see that, my apprentice? Decisive, wouldn't you say? I told you there wouldn't be any explosions. The only thing that happened was we saw a bit of smoke, that's all." Bai Xiaochun looked over proudly at Bai Hao as the last bit of black

smoke swirled away from his hand.

Bai Hao really felt like he was going to fall apart this time. Sighing, he pointed up into the sky.

“Master, we have to get out of here.... Look up there!”

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped. He had been so focused on the flame conjuring that he hadn’t been paying attention at all to what was happening overhead. After looking up, his eyes went wide, and his face fell.

The black mushroom cloud overhead was growing bigger and bigger. In the blink of an eye, it had turned into something like an enormous thundercloud, floating slowly toward the army camp. It seemed extremely heavy, and was slowly sinking down toward the ground.

“Why does that black cloud look so familiar...? Wait. No way. Black clouds appeared back when I used to concoct medicine. But conjuring flame shouldn’t produce the same result!” By this point, his heart was beginning to pound as he watched the black cloud slowly cover the entire army camp. It continued to sink until it was only about 300 meters above the camp itself. It almost looked like it would make ground fall soon.

The soul cultivators in the camp noticed the cloud, and began to fly up into the air and attack it with magical techniques in the hopes of driving it away.

However, no attacks did anything to the cloud. In fact, it even began to drop down faster. To Bai Xiaochun’s shock, the black cloud... quickly enveloped the entire camp.

Then, coughs began to ring out, along with screams. Clearly, the camp was devolving into pandemonium.

“Heaven damn you, Bai Hao!!”

“Cough-cough. What is this... cough-cough... Bai Hao! You did this!!”

“Heavens, first was that explosion, and now this black cloud. Cough-cough... My eyes! My throat! Bai Hao... I’m gonna kill you!”

More and more voices filled the air, creating a deafening cacophony of sound that pushed Bai Xiaochun right to the brink of tears. After all, he truly felt innocent in the matter.

“I did everything to prevent any explosions. I didn’t think that there would be any black smoke. You people can’t blame me for this!” Bai Xiaochun was extremely nervous, so much so that his heart was pounding. As for Bai Hao, he stood off to the side in soul form, also scowling on the verge of tears.

“Master,” he said in a pleading tone, “can we talk this over a bit? How about you change your name? I wanted to bring this up in Giant Ghost City, but now.... You caused the disaster, but they're calling out my name, demanding that I die....”

Bai Xiaochun was in no mood to deal with Bai Hao at the moment. He was staring anxiously at the black cloud, and listening to the increasingly ferocious shouting coming from inside. Soon, people emerged from within and began to fly toward them with murderous auras surging.

“I’m finished. Kaput....” He quickly pulled out a jade slip to send a request for help to the Giant Ghost King. More people were howling in rage and pouring out of the smoke in his direction. Then, Bai Xiaochun gasped as Mistress Red-Dust appeared, shooting out of the smoke like a bright red arrow, right toward him.

Mistress Red-Dust felt like she was about to go crazy. At this point, she was absolutely convinced that her father had sent Bai Hao to her because he was a living disaster!

It hadn’t even been half a month yet, and he had already instigated two mutinies within the camp. Mistress Red-Dust almost couldn’t believe it. In fact, even if she had intentionally set out to do the things that Bai Xiaochun had done, she wouldn’t have

been able to....

“Feeling suicidal, Bai Hao?!” she roared, flying toward Bai Xiaochun on the lowlying mountain.

Chapter 720: Hell-Emperors Fist

“I didn’t set anything on fire this time!” he blurted as he backed up, heart pounding with fear.

It wasn’t exactly the best explanation, and it immediately led Bai Hao to ponder what calamities would be forthcoming. Unfortunately, he had waited too long before interfering to forestall disaster. The soul cultivators from the Giant Ghost Legion closed in, expressions of rage on their face. As they thought back to what had occurred with the explosion, it only got them angrier and angrier.

Of course, Mistress Red-Dust was the fastest of all. When she extended her hand toward Bai Xiaochun, her will instantly took control of the entire area, surpassing and replacing the will of the heavens. Right in front of her, the image of a huge palm appeared, which immediately began to rumble toward the low-lying mountain.

When it hit, the ground quaked, and the mountain collapsed into pieces. By that point, though, Bai Xiaochun had vanished and reappeared some 3,000 meters away in midair.

“Come on, be reasonable, Zhou Zimo! I didn’t set anything on fire!” Then he anxiously sent another message to the Giant Ghost King.

“Hmm?” Mistress Red-Dust murmured. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had evaded her palm strike was actually quite surprising to her. After all, she was a deva, and had replaced the will of the heavens in the area. She had assumed that Bai Xiaochun would be killed, and yet, contrary to expectations, he evaded her. “Seems father was right. His battle prowess really is beyond ordinary. Incredible actually....”

With a cold snort, she prepared to keep fighting, when all of a sudden, she frowned. Looking down at her bag of holding, she

realized that the Giant Ghost King was sending her an angry message.

A grim expression overtook her face as she took out the jade slip and hovered there in midair, communicating with the Giant Ghost King. That sight caused Bai Xiaochun to immediately breathe a sigh of relief.

“I really can't stick around this place. Mistress Red-Dust is completely unreasonable. I mean, come on, I didn't start any fires this time....” Feeling very unlucky, and at the same time a bit guilty, he furtively studied Mistress Red-Dust.

As for the other soul cultivators from the Giant Ghost Legion, the fact that their sergeant major was taking the lead in dealing with this Bai Hao meant that they couldn't do anything other than fan out to surround him and lock the area down. Then they stared at him with murderous auras surging, which of course only served to make him more nervous than before.

Mistress Red-Dust was not very pleased at all with how the discussion with her father went. In the end, she crushed the jade slip and looked over at Bai Xiaochun with an icy expression.

Bai Xiaochun waited there nervously to see what she would say.

“If you can survive one attack from me, then you can leave the army camp. And afterward, I don't ever want to see you again. Ever!” Even as her words continued to echo out, she took a step forward and appeared right in front of Bai Xiaochun. There, she waved her hand through the air, causing a bright red wind to spring up and surround Bai Xiaochun.

That wind contained Mistress Red-Dust's will, and was a deval level attack that could easily crush any Nascent Soul cultivator. As soon as the wind appeared, it spun into a huge red tornado that rose up high into the sky.

It was as if Mistress Red-Dust had called upon all of the power of

heaven and earth and fused it with her will. It became a deadly attack so powerful that her face appeared within the tornado itself!

The surrounding soul cultivators looked on excitedly, just waiting to see how this Bai Hao would handle a blow backed by the power of a deva.

Bai Xiaochun could instantly sense an incredible pressure weighing down on him. His aura slowed to a crawl, and his face fell. Heart pounding, he tried to back up, but realized that Mistress Red-Dust's will controlled the entire area, locking it down and making his own teleportation abilities impossible to use.

He could do nothing to escape the red wind, and as such, an intense sensation of deadly crisis built up within him. There was no time to ponder how to deal with the situation. Instead, he roared, "You really think I'm scared of you, Zhou Zimo!?"

Instead of attempting to evade, he took a deep breath and then drew upon the full power of his cultivation base. At the same time, his fleshly body power all erupted out through his right hand in a fist strike!

It was no ordinary fist strike; as soon as it began, his aura shrank down, and a black vortex appeared around his fist. As the vortex spun, Mistress Red-Dust's will was shattered and sucked into the fist, making everything around Bai Xiaochun a raging, illusory vortex.

Mistress Red-Dust's face fell as she realized that instead of overestimating her opponent as she had assumed she had, she had actually underestimated him! The power of this fist caused her heart to tremble; clearly this was not a magical technique from the Nascent Soul stage. Furthermore, she could sense a bit of Bai Xiaochun's will within the fist!

That was a hallmark of the Daoist magic of devas!

In the same moment that Bai Xiaochun's will appeared, the

image of a person appeared behind him, wearing imperial robes and an imperial crown. Almost as soon as that image appeared, it was also sucked into the fist strike. This was the... Undying Emperor's Fist!

The fist struck out into the red wind, landing directly onto the image of Mistress Red-Dust's face.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Everything in the area was shaken violently by the resulting boom. Even the populace of Arch-Emperor City was shocked. Furthermore, because it was entirely possible that there might be people in Arch-Emperor City who recognized the Undying Live Forever Technique, Bai Xiaochun used the powers of his mask to alter the image of the black vortex and the shadowy emperor.

What everyone else saw was a domineering fist strike that could shake heaven and earth.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The contact between these two opponents caused heaven to shake and the earth to tremble. The enormous face shattered, and the wild wind began to disperse. As for Bai Xiaochun, despite the fact that he was physically tough, and was fully clad in fourteenfold spirit enhanced items, he was still sent flying backward 3,000 meters. As he did, he coughed up two successive mouthfuls of blood. And yet, he was still at peak battle prowess!

Mistress Red-Dust had not used all of the deva power at her disposal. Furthermore, the subsequent counterattack was far more stunning and spectacular than she could ever have imagined. Despite making a hasty attempt to defend herself, she was still sent staggering backward 300 meters, blood oozing out of her mouth, and her internal organs quivering painfully. After coming to a stop, she looked up in shock at Bai Xiaochun, her face ashen.

In her entire life, there had only ever been two people who were

not devas that could fight her in this way. One was Bai Xiaochun, and the other was this Bai Hao. Furthermore, based on what she remembered, there was no way that Bai Xiaochun could pull off a fist strike like this. Despite the fact that a twinge of suspicion appeared in her heart, and she even knew that Bai Xiaochun had a mask of disguise, she still didn't believe them to be the same person, the main reason being the fact that this Bai Hao had been sent to her by her father.

She refused to believe that Bai Xiaochun could fool the divine sense of a demigod. Therefore, the fact that the Giant Ghost King had approved of this Bai Hao made everything clear. As for the tiny suspicion that had just been born, she quickly buried it.

"I beat Granny Red-Dust half to death last time we fought," Bai Xiaochun thought, "and I'm a lot stronger now than I was then. How could I possibly be afraid of her now? Hmph. Maybe I can't beat her, but I'm definitely not going to let her stomp me like she did last time!! However, based on the expression on her face, it's possible she might be suspicious of my identity now...." At the moment, his cultivation base was quivering a bit. He had just attacked with ninety percent of the power of the fist strike, and had held ten percent in reserve. The truth was that he wasn't quite capable of unleashing the entire, fully-powered version at the moment.

In this brief interchange with Mistress Red-Dust, he could already tell how much more powerful he was than before. In their previous fight in the necropolis, it had only been because of Mistress Red-Dust being weakened by the curse that he made it out alive. He had sacrificed his clones and used every technique at his disposal before managing to flee. But now... things were different!

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he realized that Mistress Red-Dust wasn't actually as terrifying as he had taken her to be. There he hovered in midair, looking at her, not saying a word.

Meanwhile, all of the surrounding soldiers of the Giant Ghost Legion were looking on in complete shock. As their eyes came to rest on Bai Xiaochun, their minds filled with unprecedented levels of astonishment.

“A Nascent Soul cultivator who can fight a deva!?!?”

“Heavens! Was I seeing things just now? This Bai Hao... is so strong! I heard the rumor that he kidnapped all of the other chosen in the Necromancer Kettle, but I thought that was only because he had the help of the Giant Ghost King. Now I can see how shocking he really is!”

“That fist strike is definitely his trump card....”

As everyone reeled in shock, something else happened in the imperial city high in the air above. Somewhere in the imperial palace, in Heavenmaster Hall, the Grand Heavenmaster suddenly opened his eyes and looked out in the direction of the Giant Ghost Legion. Soon, his vision pierced through all obstacles to come to rest on Bai Xiaochun.

“Was that... the Hell-Emperor Fist?” The Grand Heavenmaster was clearly moved. Based on what he could tell, the fist strike which had been unleashed was definitely very similar to the legendary Hell-Emperor Fist.

“The Hell-Emperor Fist is part of the legacy of the Hell-Emperor.... Only someone approved by the Hell-Emperor would be able to use it!” When it came to the legendary Hell-Emperor, even the Grand Heavenmaster, someone who was very near to the peak of the Demigod Realm, someone who controlled the Son of Heaven and issued commands to all creation, was still shaken and fearful.

Chapter 721: A Spirit Enhancement Shop

Back outside of Arch-Emperor City, right next to where the Giant Ghost Legion was garrisoned, Mistress Red-Dust was staring at Bai Xiaochun, still radiating the pressure of a deva. Her will continued to transform the heaven and earth that surrounded Bai Xiaochun, as if a mere thought on her part could cause everything to tremble violently.

Most Nascent Soul cultivators would collapse under such pressure. As for Bai Xiaochun, it hadn't bothered him at first, but as the pressure built up, it reached the point where he realized he couldn't back down at all, otherwise he would be crushed.

“That fist strike of mine is pretty frightening. What a pity I'm only in the eighth stratum of the Tempered Bones level. If I could reach the ninth stratum, it would be twice as powerful. At that point, I would be able to make her cough up blood with it. That will be my true trump card! If I could reach the ninth stratum of the Powered Bones level, it would be three times as powerful!”

With such thoughts on his mind, he felt more courageous than ever, and glared back unblinking at Mistress Red-Dust.

Silence reigned in the area.

The powerful soul cultivators of the Giant Ghost Legion were completely shocked, and almost couldn't believe what they had witnessed. It was with very mixed feelings that they continued to watch Bai Xiaochun.

The fist strike he had unleashed was truly astonishing. The fact that someone with a Nascent Soul cultivation base could fight with a deva was unprecedented. Although he hadn't been able to outshine her, he was clearly in the position of being able to completely dominate ordinary Nascent Soul experts.

Beyond that, after delivering the blow, he simply hovered there

in the air, seemingly ready to keep fighting at the same level as before. Domineering veins of steel seemed to throb within him, as well as a battle spirit that caused the entire crowd to instantly admire him.

They all lived in a world where power was respected, and a powerful expert like Bai Xiaochun would definitely earn that respect no matter where he went.

After seeing how the look in the eyes of the audience was changing, Bai Xiaochun's spirit soared even further, and he continued to glare straight at Mistress Red-Dust.

“Staring contest, huh? Back when I was in Core Formation, nobody was my match. Now that I'm even more powerful than before, there's no way you can intimidate me that way!” As such thoughts raced through his head, his impressive demeanor grew even more prominent.

After a long moment passed, Mistress Red-Dust took a deep breath and looked away. She had said earlier that if he could survive a single attack, he could leave. That had been her agreement with the Giant Ghost King, and she had to stick to her word.

“Don't ever let me see your face again!” A profound glint passed through her eyes as she turned and vanished back into the army camp. The rest of the soul cultivators exchanged glances and then quietly followed her. Before long, everyone was back in the camp, and Bai Xiaochun was left by himself outside.

After watching Mistress Red-Dust leave, he wiped the sweat from his brow and heaved a long sigh. Using that fist strike at ninety percent had completely drained him. Although he could have squeezed a bit more power out with his cultivation base, he knew that there were plenty of powerful experts in the vicinity of Arch-Emperor City, and not all of them would be heroes. There were some things he would be powerless to defend himself against, and

therefore, he didn't want to reveal the full extent of his abilities.

However, fighting like that also limited him in many ways. Now that Mistress Red-Dust was actually leaving, he finally breathed a sigh of relief. Simply too many preposterous things had occurred during this trip to Arch-Emperor City.

“How did it all end up like this...?” he thought bitterly. Thankfully, he was now free from the Giant Ghost Legion, which was a good thing as far as he was concerned. Shaking his head, he turned to leave.

However, the world was a big place, and Bai Xiaochun was immediately unsure of exactly where he should go.

“Plus, my cultivation base isn't very high. Otherwise, I could simply cross the Wildlands on my own and get back to the River-Defying Sect.” He looked nervously at Arch-Emperor City off in the distance, and then in the direction of Giant Ghost City. After some thought, he produced a transmission jade slip and contacted the Giant Ghost King.

“Your Highness, Arch-Emperor City is way too dangerous. What do you say we just forget about the whole marriage thing? Um... could you send someone to get me? I want to get back to Giant Ghost City, and you, sir....”

As for the Giant Ghost King, he was very annoyed by everything that had occurred. Never could he have guessed that sending Bai Hao to the Giant Ghost Legion would turn out like this. It was supposed to have been a wonderful event, and yet, nothing had turned out as expected.

Whether it was the fact that his daughter refused to cooperate, or the disasters which had occurred, it all had him stamping his feet in frustration. Then he saw another message come in from Bai Xiaochun, and felt an even bigger headache coming on.

Glaring at the transmission jade slip, he sent a reply. “Bai Hao,

the marriage agreement is already official. We can't go back now. You need to go over and apologize to Zimo immediately. Just explain everything, and then stay close to her afterward.”

As soon as Bai Xiaochun got the response, he simply gave up trying to be diplomatic. He staunchly refused, and then once again suggested that he return to Giant Ghost City. That got the Giant Ghost King very pissed off.

“No, you can't come back to Giant Ghost City, not unless it's as husband and wife! Go and apologize to Zimo. Beg for her forgiveness if you have to! What, you can't even handle a single woman? I'm done helping out, so don't bother me about this anymore!” With that, he severed the connection. When Bai Xiaochun immediately tried to reestablish communication, the Giant Ghost King simply ignored the jade slip and pretended he hadn't noticed the new message.

“This father and daughter are both scoundrels! Rotten to the core!” Bai Xiaochun was feeling very depressed, and definitely had no desire to go see Mistress Red-Dust. Furthermore, she had said the same about him.

“The world is such a big place. Could it really be that there is no safe harbor for Bai Xiaochun in it?” Considering that he had no giant ghost battleship, nor any way to use the teleportation portal, that meant that he had to give up any hope of getting back to Giant Ghost City.

Sighing, he looked again at Arch-Emperor City off in the distance. Although he really didn't want to go there, at the moment he didn't seem to have any other choice. Besides, evening was falling, and if he delayed, it was possible he could end up stuck outside for the night.

“I remember back when I shook down the three great clans, one of the things I got was the deed to a shop in Arch-Emperor City....” Rubbing the bridge of his nose, he patted his bag of holding to

produce a jade slip. Sure enough, branded inside the slip was the official deed to a place in the city. At this point, his mood started to brighten.

“Ah, whatever. I’ll just hole up in that shop for a while and make sure not to cause any trouble. I’ll focus on cultivation, and then figure a way to get myself out of the Wildlands.” Shaking his head, he headed toward Arch-Emperor City.

However, it was in that very moment that Bai Hao suddenly popped out of his soulhoarding pagoda in the bag of holding, where he had gone to hide after events started to heat up. At the moment, he was looking at his Master with undisguised admiration, and he even clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Apprentice misunderstood you earlier, Master. Just now, I was dazzled by your techniques. Amazing, simply amazing!”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, a bit taken aback. Despite thinking for a moment, he couldn’t imagine what mistake his apprentice might have made to suddenly speak in such a way.

“There’s no need to be humble, Master. Apprentice understands. You caused those two disasters on purpose, all to get the sergeant major of the Giant Ghost Legion to kick us out of the army camp!” The reverent admiration on Bai Hao’s face was clear. Although he felt his Master’s actions to have been a bit crude, he also found them truly thought-provoking.

“Uhh....” Bai Xiaochun said, blinking a few times. Clearly, Bai Hao didn’t truly understand Bai Xiaochun that much. Contrary to everything Bai Hao had just said, it was only a freak combination of factors that led to the current outcome. However, Bai Xiaochun had to admit that everything had played out well, and after looking up in thought for a moment, he cleared his throat, swished his sleeve, and stuck his chin up.

“Hahaha! So even you noticed. Not bad. Not bad at all, my little apprentice. Although your powers of understanding are only

middling at best, perhaps if you pay close attention going forward, you can make some progress. After all, Master's all-encompassing abilities are such that a single step forward is the same as ten thousand. Nothing in heaven and earth can compare to me!"

Bai Xiaochun's high and mighty pride was actually somewhat self-defeating. When Bai Hao saw it, he suddenly began to question whether or not his previous assessment had been correct.

Continuing to boast, Bai Xiaochun headed into Arch-Emperor City. The city was enormous, and well-guarded at every corner and intersection. He even had to undergo a formal interview before being allowed in the gates, and pay a tax of soul medicine. Thankfully, he had a lot of soul medicine in his bag of holding. By the time he got into the city, it was evening, and yet, the city was just as packed and lively as any other time of the day.

Once inside, he pulled out the jade slip with the deed in it, and used it to find his way through the winding streets of the city. The sights and sounds along the way left him shocked. Arch-Emperor City was a very rich place. The streets were paved with green jade, and there even seemed to be a bit of spiritual energy about....

Shops of all types imaginable lined the streets, offering everything from vengeful souls to magical items to Heavenspan River water.

Among the crowds on the street, Bai Xiaochun saw countless powerful experts, as well as savage giants, who were required to shrink down to a smaller size when in the city.

Most eye-opening of all to him was how many of the structures in Arch-Emperor City glowed with bright, magical light. Because of that, even during the dark of night, the city shone, bright and dazzling.

It took two hours for him to locate the shop, by which time night had truly fallen. There, in a relatively out-of-the-way part of the city, he found the location of the shop in the deed.

It was a spirit enhancement shop.

Chapter 722: Sticking Together To Survive

Not counting the imperial palace, Arch-Emperor City consisted of ninety-seven subdistricts which were referred to as boroughs. The central district of the city occupied about ten percent of the city as a whole, and the north district was the largest, occupying roughly twenty percent.

Bai Xiaochun's spirit enhancement shop was located on the edge of Borough 89. Although it couldn't be considered a very fancy shop, considering that it was located in Arch-Emperor City, it was fundamentally extraordinary.

However, it took Bai Xiaochun a long time to find it. It was already late into the night, and yet the shops on the street were all brightly lit, with customers going in and out constantly.

After finally locating the shop, Bai Xiaochun was depressed to find that it was actually relatively small. The storefront was only about nine meters wide, whereas most of the other storefronts on the street were at least fifteen meters wide.

There was a sign on the door that had three simple words on it: Spirit Enhancement Shop.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit stunned by the simplistic wording and the worn-out nature of the sign. Inside, the shop was narrow, but stretched back relatively far from the street. There also appeared to be a courtyard in the back. Unfortunately, no matter which way one examined the shop, it was obviously a lot smaller than the others in the area.

The interior was lit with lamps, but they weren't very bright, ensuring that it didn't really stand out to the crowds of passersby.

The only good thing that Bai Xiaochun noticed was that there were actually customers in the shop. One of them was a young man who appeared to be panting in anger. Before Bai Xiaochun had

even walked all the way inside, the young man erupted in anger.

“I can’t believe you actually ruined my Trimoon Streamcloud Pearl!! Dammit, all I asked you to do was perform a twofold spirit enhancement! Twofold, that’s all! Y-y-you....” The young man was speaking so loudly that even people outside of the shop could hear him, and soon, some of the passersby were whispering about what was going on.

“He must be new here, otherwise he would never have picked this place to get spirit enhancements.”

“Exactly. This spirit enhancement shop produces nothing more than trash. The true miracle is that it's still in business.”

Upon hearing the talk around him, Bai Xiaochun frowned. Then he watched as the young man stormed out of the shop, cursing it well and good before moping off dejectedly. Bai Xiaochun sighed. From what he could tell, other than its value as a place to rest his head, it seemed relatively worthless.

“Ah, whatever. All I wanted was a place to hole up for bit anyway.” Shaking his head, he walked further into the shop. Once inside, he saw the clerk, who was leaning up against the counter looking bored to death. The shelves on the wall were mostly empty. As for the items that did occupy them, Bai Xiaochun could tell that they would be useful for performing threefold or perhaps fourfold spirit enhancements.

The clerk looked over at Bai Xiaochun and yawned, then ignored him. Bai Xiaochun looked around again and sighed. Then he walked up to the counter and put the deed jade slip down onto it.

The clerk seemed surprised, then suspicious. “You want that jade slip enhanced? Alright, let me explain how things work. Success or failure don’t matter. You pay up front, and if the result is a failure, I won’t take any responsibility.”

Then he picked up the jade slip and looked at it. At that point, his

eyes went wide.

“You’re the owner?!” he blurted, shooting to his feet. After examining Bai Xiaochun, he sat back down.

Fairly certain that he had come to the right place, Bai Xiaochun replied, “I believe this is my shop.”

“Whatever. Since you’re here, how about you pay me my salary? 3,000 portions of soul medicine for this year, and 3,000 for next year, up front. If you don’t pay up, I’m not moving a muscle!” With that, he sat there looking proudly at Bai Xiaochun. This clerk wasn’t very good at performing spirit enhancements, but he was very familiar with Arch-Emperor City, and how to run the shop. Therefore, as far as he was concerned, there was no way this owner could do without him.

“Salary?” Bai Xiaochun said, stunned. With that, he asked a few more questions about the shop. Soon, he came to understand that the shop hadn’t always been the way it was now. After Bai Xiaochun acquired ownership, all of the old staff had been dismissed by the clan who had previously owned it. The only person left behind to manage things was this clerk.

The clerk’s spirit enhancement skills were average at best, and because of that, the shop had slowly been in decline. As of now, it was actually notorious within the city, and virtually no one would patronize it. The only people who entered its doors were travelers who the clerk would con out of a bit of spirit medicine, and who would never again return.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t quite sure what to say. However, from the way the clerk was sitting there, he seemed like he was prepared to cause quite a scene if he didn’t get his salary. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun patted his bag of holding to produce 3,000 portions of soul medicine, which he tossed over to the man.

“Alright, get out of here!”

“You’re kicking me out?” the clerk said, stunned. Not looking very pleased, he took his soul medicine, flicked his sleeve, and left. “It won’t even take a month before that guy is begging to have me back. There are a lot of spirit enhancement shops in Arch-Emperor City, and all of them are always squabbling and competing. He’ll have to pay an arm and a leg to get a real necromancer to come over and perform spirit enhancements.” Chuckling coldly, he hurried away.

After the clerk left, Bai Xiaochun looked around for a bit before closing the front door and placing a restrictive spell on it. Then he straightened up the shop, as well as the courtyard and the small residence attached to it. Several hours later, deep in the night, he finally sat down in the courtyard and looked around, sighing.

“This can’t compare at all to my mansion back in Giant Ghost City!” Shaking his head, he contemplated how much he missed Giant Ghost City. He also regretted how conscientiously he had handed over Chen Manyao. Hadn’t he done enough at that point?

Bai Xiaochun was not very happy at all with the shop, but Bai Hao had the opposite reaction. As a ghost cultivator with special soul body abilities, he was actually very pleased with everything he saw. After looking around, he sat down next to Bai Xiaochun and excitedly said, “Master, this place is great. Since we can’t get back to Giant Ghost City any time soon, why don’t we settle down here? The spiritual power in the area is very beneficial to me.”

Even as he spoke, he changed his appearance to look like a middle-aged man.

“You think this spiritual energy is good?” Bai Xiaochun responded dully. “One of these days Master is going to take you to a place where the spiritual energy is exponentially better than here. You just wait.”

“Don’t feel down, Master. This place isn’t bad at all. Why don’t you focus on your cultivation, and let me handle the day-to-day

affairs of the shop?” Bai Hao lived in the soulhoarding pagoda in Bai Xiaochun’s bag of holding, and was a ghost cultivator with special soul body powers. Furthermore, he was protected by the powers of Bai Xiaochun’s mask. Because of that, he wasn’t worried about anyone figuring out who he really was. Besides, before his death, he had been a mere Foundation Establishment cultivator, and the furthest he had ever been away from his clan was the Jungle of Lost Souls, where he had died.

The idea of running a shop in Arch-Emperor City was extremely exciting to him.

Bai Xiaochun could see how enthusiastic Bai Hao was about the matter, and that actually improved his mood a bit. Looking at Bai Hao thoughtfully for a moment, it was easy to tell that he already felt a bit at home.

“You know what, you’re right. You had a hard lot in life, my apprentice. Plus, because I’m still using your identity, after you came back as a ghost cultivator, you haven’t been able to interact with any other living people. That’s really not fair to you.” With that, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, sending some of the power of his mask over onto Bai Hao.

“Master...?” Bai Hao said, looking surprised.

“From now on, just pretend that you’re my soul slave. With my skill in spirit enhancement, I can bring this shop back from the dead with the flip of my hand.” Many necromancers in the Wildlands had what they called soul slaves, which were usually unable to do much more than perform very simple tasks.

To have Bai Hao pretend to be a soul slave would forestall many suspicions about who exactly he was. Plus, by using his ghost cultivator ability to change his appearance, it would be highly unlikely that anyone would ever be able to figure out who he was.

Bai Hao was getting even more excited. Clasp hands, he bowed deeply to his Master.

With that, Master and apprentice settled down in the shop. A few days went by before the doors of the shop opened. Although nothing about the shop looked very different, the spirit enhancer who operated it was as different from the previous one as heaven was from the earth.

However, the name of the shop was definitely not appropriate, and even after being open for about half a month, it was obvious that all the other shops on the street were very busy, but this one wasn't.

When Bai Xiaochun realized that, and thought back to the grand words he had spoken to Bai Hao, he started feeling antsy. After some thought, he gave some new instructions to Bai Hao.

“Apprentice, after some thinking, I've decided that the reason people aren't coming to the shop is that the name isn't attractive enough. Therefore, we're going to change names. From now on, we're... The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven!”

Chapter 723: Bring In A Skill...?

Bai Hao hesitated for a moment. The name seemed a bit bombastic, after all. However, he could see how determined Bai Xiaochun was about it, and that there was really no choice other than to agree. Soon, the shop's sign was replaced.

The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven!

The new sign instantly caused a big commotion in the other shops in the area. Furthermore, quizzical expressions could be seen on the faces of all the passersby.

After changing the sign, Bai Xiaochun temporarily stopped his work on sixteen-colored flame and instead sat eagerly behind the counter, eyes glued to the front door as he waited for some customers.

Bai Hao stood to the side, equally excited. Although he felt that the new name was a bit flamboyant, he was just as eager to get new customers as Bai Xiaochun was.

But after two hours passed, not a single one of the hundreds of passersby stepped into the door. In fact, a lot of people were even pointing at the sign and laughing.

“Number one under heaven? Too pretentious!”

“I know this spirit enhancement shop. Their reputation went down the drain a long time ago. They ruined magical items belonging to quite a few customers. They'll definitely be going out of business soon. What do they think, that changing the name will fool people or something?”

“Is that supposed to be some kind of a joke? We cultivators want reliability!”

Bai Xiaochun could hear many of the comments, and soon, his eagerness began to turn to rage. However, he took a deep breath and told himself that he just needed to have a little patience. A day

passed. Then another. Eventually, seven days later, he couldn't take it any longer.

During that week, not a single person had set foot into the store. At first, the change in sign had caused a bit of a stir on the street, but eventually, even the mocking comments ceased....

Nobody seemed interested in the shop at all, which got Bai Xiaochun depressed, but at the same time, defiant.

“I refuse to believe this! I'm a genius who causes a big scene wherever I go. How could a crappy little store like this be such a problem!?” With that, he called over Bai Hao, who stood there with a bitter smile on his face as he accepted some new instructions.

“Alright, my apprentice, I've thought it through. You see, our new sign isn't enough to do the trick. Let's put some [auspicious couplets on either side of the door](#) to show our proud and unyielding character!

“I've already thought of what to put on the couplets. It's best to be simple and direct. On one side put One Spirit Enhancement, 1,000 Portions Of Spirit Medicine. On the other side put Must Enter Shop With Minimum Of 10,000 Portions Of Spirit Medicine!” With that, he swished his sleeve grandly.

Shaken by what he had just heard, Bai Hao asked, “Um... what about the couplet on top?”

“Want Enhancements? Come in. Don't Want Them? Leave!”

Bai Hao was now right in that spot between laughter and tears, but as long as his Master was happy, he was happy too. Before long, the couplets were written and hung up around the door. Yet again, a bit of a commotion resulted. All of the surrounding shops, and the passersby as well, were stunned at how crazy this shop was acting.

“1,000 for a single enhancement? Is that the set price, or the

minimum? Other shops only charge a few hundred at most. A minimum price of 1,000 is the kind of price that only a celestial necromancer would charge.”

“Crazy talk! What kind of a scam do they think they’re running?”

“It’s kind of funny actually....”

Even as Bai Xiaochun waited excitedly, Bai Hao's eyes glittered, and he suddenly leaned over and whispered something into his ear. Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then slapped his thigh and agreed.

Was Bai Xiaochun’s original method effective? Or had word just spread? No one could tell. In any case, the day after the couplets were hung on the door, The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven got its first customer.

He was a burly savage giant, who despite having shrunk his overall size, was still fully three meters tall. Even just stepping into the shop, he caused the ground to tremble around him.

Bai Hao was just about to hurry over and attend to him when the man waved his hand, causing a huge battle-axe to slam down onto the ground. Although it was relatively ordinary in construction, it had six silver designs on its surface, making it very eye-catching.

“That’s a really crazy sign you have out there,” the burly man said in a booming voice that immediately attracted some attention from outside. People even began to gather to see what was happening. “My battle-axe here already has a sixfold spirit enhancement. Now I want a seventh, and I’m not willing to pay 1,000. I’ll pay 3,000! But if you ruin my battle-axe, then I’ll tear your shop down!”

Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back and proudly walked out from behind the counter to examine the axe. “If you have the proper materials, I’ll do it for 3,000. Without materials, it will be 10,000!”

The burly man's eyes went wide, and then a ruthless smile broke out on his ferocious face.

“Fine. 10,000 it is. I'll wait here for the finished product.”

Bai Xiaochun nodded, then made a grasping motion, which caused the axe to fly over into his hand. Then, he walked into the back room. By this point, quite a crowd had built up outside, and when they heard 10,000 portions of spirit medicine mentioned, it caused a big stir.

“10,000 for a spirit enhancement...? You never see prices like that from small shops like this! Is that burly guy a [shill](#) or something? Doubtful. It seems too obvious.”

“Whether he's a shill or not doesn't matter. Let's just see if the spirit enhancement works!”

“I never could have guessed that this shop would accept a job for a sevenfold spirit enhancement. If the enhancement fails, the shop's reputation will definitely be in ruins.”

“Does this shop even have a reputation to begin with? If they can't do spirit enhancements, then they'll definitely be out of business soon....”

People stood there discussing the matter for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, until powerful fluctuations began to roll out from the shop's back room. Then, eyes went wide as Bai Xiaochun walked out, holding the battle-axe in his hand. Clearly, it had seven silver designs on its surface!

“It actually worked!”

“Heavens! That's a sevenfold spirit enhancement! And he did it in the time it takes an incense stick to burn!!”

Even as the crowd reeled in disbelief, Bai Xiaochun tossed the axe over to the burly savage. Then he clasped his hands behind his back and stood there with an arrogant, enigmatic expression on his face.

As for the burly savage, he trembled with excitement as he clasped his battle-axe in hand and looked it up and down. He seemed completely stunned and incredulous.

However, Bai Xiaochun didn't seem very pleased, and even cleared his throat.

When the burly man heard that, he reacted immediately. Casting a reverent glance at Bai Xiaochun, he suddenly shouted, "A god! Simply incredible! This is the most shocking spirit enhancement I've ever seen in my entire life! From six to sevenfold. And it happened in an instant! As of this moment, Grandmaster Bai, I am fully convinced. The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven definitely lives up to its name! It really is The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven!!

"Look, everybody! My battle-axe's sevenfold spirit enhancement is already finished! This place is second-to-none! I'm definitely coming back here in the future!"

Everyone could hear him very clearly. Within moments, strange, amused expressions appeared on the faces of the people in the crowd. This burly man's acting skills were terrible, and seemed like an obvious advertisement. He even happened to know the spirit enhancer was surnamed Bai, even though they had supposedly never met before....

Bai Hao stood off to the side, smiling wryly. This burly man was most certainly a shill. Bai Hao had come up with this idea, and after getting his Master's approval, had gone to find an appropriate person to hire. However, the person who had come up with the script was Bai Xiaochun, although Bai Hao had edited it slightly to make it slightly less exaggerated.

Bai Hao had originally suggested that the burly man act a bit more reserved, and not make things so obvious. But now... things were extremely obvious.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't pleased, and was even frowning. However,

the reason for his displeasure was that the burly man wasn't taking things far enough. His original plan had been for the man to first sing the praises of the spirit enhancer, then the shop itself, and then the spirit enhanced item. The entire process was supposed to last for the time it takes an incense stick to burn.

Despite his displeasure, he couldn't say anything about it under the circumstances. He could only stand there and look up into the sky with a profound and reverent look on his face.

The burly man cleared his throat loudly and then paid the soul medicine he owed, then left looking very happy. The people in the crowd exchanged awkward glances, and yet, after a moment passed, someone gritted his teeth and walked into the shop.

The burly man had been a shill, and an obvious one at that. However, the sevenfold spirit enhancement had worked, which was enough for most soul cultivators.

The shop had six customers that day, and only one failure among those six. However, the fact that there had been five successes cause quite a stir.

A success rate like that was astonishing, and therefore, on the second day, there were twenty customers. And things only went on from there. For the following half a month, The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven caused an enormous commotion in the area.

Word began to spread. Soon, almost everyone in Borough 89 had heard of it. More and more customers came to the shop, and although not every single spirit enhancement succeeded, the success rate of over sixty percent was a wonderful thing to the local soul cultivators. The following month, Bai Xiaochun became so busy that he and Bai Hao decided to make some new rules. For one thing, there was a limit of ten orders per day.

Another thing had to do with vengeful souls. Bai Xiaochun required a lot of vengeful souls to work on his flame conjuring, and

although he had a good stockpile, it was still limited. If he wasn't careful, he would run out eventually.

Therefore, the shop opened up another line of business: selling soul medicine. And of course, the currency used to buy them was vengeful souls. To Wildlanders, soul medicine was an essential part of cultivation, and was one of the most common types of business to get into.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he could produce mid-grade and even high-grade soul medicine. That immediately made his shop extremely competitive in the marketplace. After all, among all of the soul medicine shops in Borough 89, only a few offered high-grade soul medicine. But Bai Xiaochun's shop offered as much as people could purchase, as long as they had enough souls to pay for it.

As a result, Bai Xiaochun's shop was soon becoming famous in all of the boroughs.

Chapter 724: The Tree Might Long For Peace, But The Wind Will Never Cease

Business got better and better, to the point where people would line up outside the shop before the doors opened in the morning. Roughly half would come for the spirit enhancements, the other half to purchase high-grade soul medicine.

The benefits of high-grade soul medicine to soul cultivators was almost impossible to put into words. Furthermore, The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven had all sorts of soul medicines available, to the point where most people were shocked by the variety in stock.

The shop's popularity grew on a daily basis. Within two months, it had become a top-tier name in Borough 89, and was even the subject of conversation in some of the surrounding boroughs.

Although profits didn't literally increase every day, it was close. As far as the intake of vengeful souls was concerned, Bai Xiaochun was extremely pleased. As long as things kept going on the way they were, he would be completely set in terms of the souls he needed to work on flame conjuring.

Bai Hao was also very pleased with everything. Although maintaining his role as Bai Xiaochun's soul slave meant he had to pretend to be stiff and rigid around people, he was still very happy. Whether it was in life or in death, he had almost always been on his own, and had thirsted to interact with people like he was now.

Now that the shop was so popular, he was dealing with lots of customers every day. Although that only involved a bit of basic communication, it was still wonderful as far as he was concerned.

Of course, for the shop to suddenly be incredibly popular incited a bit of jealousy among other nearby shops. Such shops were feeling the pressure, and some of them even tried to cause

problems.

However, Bai Hao managed to smooth things out with most of them. He was the type of person who was willing to back down in certain areas as long as business wasn't affected too negatively.

At first, Bai Xiaochun didn't even notice what was happening. However, as more people came trying to cause trouble, he started to get irritated. That was especially true considering his own cultivation base and status.

“I'm a mighty major general from the Great Wall, and the majordomo of Giant Ghost City. Plus, the Giant Ghost Legion's sergeant major is my Daoist partner. Fudge! I kidnapped the Giant Ghost King, as well as over a hundred noble and aristocratic chosen in the Necromancer Kettle. I'm just trying to run an honest business here, and I never went around bullying anybody! And now these shrimps dare to come try to push me around?!”

That evening when he closed up shop, he snorted and said to Bai Hao, “Apprentice, starting tomorrow, if anybody comes looking for trouble, you call me, and I'll take care of them.”

He had been paying attention over the past few days, and had confirmed that most of the people who came to stir up trouble were Nascent Soul and Core Formation cultivators. Because of that, Bai Xiaochun wasn't worried about the situation at all.

Bai Hao could only smile wryly at his Master's displeasure. However, after thinking about the matter for a bit, he decided to offer some advice.

“Master, why don't we wait until the shop is more well-established in the area? Business is doing good, and... well, it would probably be better not to make waves. Don't worry, I'll handle anything that comes up.” The truth was that Bai Hao was actually a bit worried about how good his Master was at causing problems. The mere thought of how everything had played out in the Giant Ghost Legion had him very nervous, not to mention all

of the rumors he had heard back in Giant Ghost City. The way that his Master always seem to feel that he was being wronged left Bai Hao unsure of whether to laugh or cry.

In response to Bai Hao's advice, Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened into a glare. "Are you kidding? Do you think your Master is the type to just grin and bear it?!"

Sighing inwardly, Bai Hao decided to call on the one trump card he hadn't used so far. "Master, we're all alone in the imperial city, and nobody here could be considered friends. Plus, remember how you captured all of those chosen? They all live here.... Why don't we just let things go for a bit? The fewer major issues we have to worry about the better."

Apparently, his tactic worked. Bai Xiaochun's face fell as he thought about the bitter state all of those chosen had ended up in. If he were back in Giant Ghost City, it wouldn't have been as big of a deal. But now he was in their territory, and immediately started to feel a bit guilty about everything. However, he didn't let that show on his face. Laughing heartily, he clasped Bai Hao on the shoulder.

Eyes gleaming with praise, and without the least bit of embarrassment, he said, "Master was just kidding around! Not bad. Not bad at all, my apprentice. Your cautious personality shows through again. Reminds me of myself back in the day. What you just said couldn't have been more correct. In fact, it was actually exactly what I was thinking."

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had given up his previous idea, Bai Hao sighed in relief, and didn't even think about trying to call his Master out. Instead, he merely smiled and continued to chat.

And so the days continued to pass. During the day, Bai Hao would take orders from customers, and Bai Xiaochun would spend more time working on sixteen-colored flame.

In the evenings, Bai Xiaochun would perform the spirit

enhancements on all of the magical items from earlier in the day, and would then do more research. Another half a month went by. At long last, it was with Bai Hao's help that he finally perfected the formula for sixteen-colored flame.

At that point, he began to make preparations to actually conjure the flame. Worried about accidents occurring, he spared no cost to purchase some restrictive spell formations. Considering how well-off he was, he even went so far as to buy a soul formation that could be used to defend an entire clan. Using all of those various formations, he set up his flame conjuring workstation to be as impregnable as the mightiest castle. Only then did he begin to work.

Bai Hao needed no instructions about what to do. He immediately closed the shop and refused to take any more spirit enhancement orders. Then he prepared himself to be fully devoted to assisting Bai Xiaochun in the flame conjuring.

Unfortunately, things didn't go well at first. Despite all of the research, and all of the help from Bai Hao, failure after failure occurred. Thankfully, he had plenty of vengeful souls to rely on. After an entire month went by, he waved his hand, and the fifteen-colored flame in front of him consumed enough vengeful souls that a sixteenth color appeared.

Although he was immediately excited, he kept his feelings under control. Settling his qi and clearing his mind, he kept the sea of fire under control as he slowly brought it back together in his palm. He closed his fingers into a fist, then slowly opened them back up to reveal... a sixteen-colored flame!!

"It worked!!" he said, laughing heartily, his heart pounding with excitement. It had taken the better part of a year, and countless vengeful souls, plus major input from Bai Hao, to finally succeed in this conjuring. For any other person, it would have been impossible to succeed in dozens of years, let alone the amount of time he had spent.

As for Bai Hao, he was exhausted, but equally delighted. Furthermore, he was well-enough acquainted with his Master to realize that he liked to be praised, and thus quickly launched into some flattery.

Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily, then started to do some more tests. His success rate wasn't particularly high, only about twelve to fourteen percent, which he wasn't very happy about. And yet, that was the best he could do.

“Ah, whatever. I have plenty of vengeful souls. Although I went through quite a bit, at least I mastered the technique.” After thinking about it for a bit longer, he decided that he didn't need to be too picky. Furthermore, after some contemplation, he decided that, for the time being, he wouldn't perform another spirit enhancement on his nascent soul.

Although it would increase his cultivation base, it would also attract a lot of attention in the Wildlands. If such coincidences kept happening over and over, it could arouse too much suspicion.

“I'll wait until I can conjure eighteen-colored flame, or maybe even something higher than that. Then I'll enhance my nascent soul all in one shot, and achieve a major cultivation base breakthrough.” Having made his decision, he recuperated for a bit, then started researching seventeen-colored flame. Meanwhile, Bai Hao had opened the shop again. Needless to say, after being closed for a month, business boomed as soon as the doors were opened.

As time passed, business only improved. Bai Hao was very content to run the shop, which warmed Bai Xiaochun's heart. Then he mused that, just as he had always thought, he really was a genius who rose to prominence wherever he went. Sighing, he reveled in the calm life they were now living. He felt like some sort of mysterious, divine being who was in hiding in the mortal world. The only thing he regretted was that he didn't have any life force with which to cultivate his Undying Bones.

Unfortunately, as the saying went, the tree might long for peace, but the wind will never cease. The fact that Bai Xiaochun's shop was becoming so famous had indeed attracted some attention.

In the central district of Arch-Emperor City, in Borough 9, there was a rather luxurious building in which several dozen people were gathered.

They were all good-looking individuals with profound cultivation bases. The weakest among them was in the mid Nascent Soul stage, with some being in the great circle. Anybody familiar with the nobility in the city would recognize these people as the heirs apparent and chosen from the various noble and aristocratic families.

One of them was Little Wolfgod, and another was Li Tiansheng. Miao Lin'er was also present.

All of them had grim expressions as they sat waiting for someone to speak first. As it turned out, Little Wolfgod took the initiative.

“Well, you all know that the damned Bai Hao is here in Arch-Emperor City. If he had stuck to the Giant Ghost Legion, it might have been one thing. But instead, he completely looked down on us and went and started a spirit enhancement shop in Borough 89!”

All of these people hated Bai Xiaochun to an indescribable degree. The events of the Necromancer Kettle had become a humiliating nightmare to all of them. Bai Xiaochun had captured them and drained their life force until they were like human raisins, and as a result, every single one of these chosen wished to see him dead.

“I heard that he was kicked out of the Giant Ghost Legion!”

“Yeah, that's right!”

“How shameless!”

Chapter 725: Get Him The Hell Out Of Arch-Emperor City

“This Bai Hao is shameless to the ultimate degree, and completely notorious. In Giant Ghost City, he’s known for being morally degenerate, a wife stealer and a property thief. He’s the worst that society has to offer!”

“After the incident, I asked around, and heard that he’s a reviler of his own clan, and even killed his own father and brother. He also arranged for his foster mother to be killed. Everyone in Giant Ghost City lived desperate lives because of him. Wherever he goes, people end up in a terrible situation. One can only imagine what disasters he will cause now that he’s in Arch-Emperor City!”

“How can the Giant Ghost King like a person like that!?”

“Hmph! Well, as long as the Giant Ghost Legion doesn’t do anything to protect him, then we have to pay him back for the humiliation of the Necromancer Kettle!!”

As everyone in the group took their turn to speak, curses flowed out of their mouths. And yet, considering how powerful Bai Xiaochun was, and who he had backing him, they were forced to admit that they couldn't easily take action.

Not all of the chosen who were present had gone to the Necromancer Kettle, though, and when they heard the stories being told, they couldn't help but be curious.

Eventually, a young man in pink robes took the floor and said, “Ladies and gentlemen, I think you’re all being a bit too cautious. I admit that this Bai Hao is strong, but this is not the Necromancer Kettle, this is Arch-Emperor City. This is where we are the strongest!”

By the time he had finished speaking, almost everyone present had turned to look in his direction.

Li Tiansheng rose to his feet, clasped hands and said, “Brother Chen, if you have a way to fix this situation, then I would be more than happy to offer a gift in thanks.”

“That’s right. Bai Hao has never met you, Brother Chen. If you can take care of him, then I, Little Wolfgod, will definitely owe you a favor!”

“Fellow Daoist Chen Xiong, you always exceed all expectations. Would you please take the initiative to do something?”

Some people seemed angry, some depressed, and some thankful. The last to speak was Miao Lin’er, who looked at the pink-robed Chen Xiong with such glistening eyes that he couldn’t help but cock an eyebrow. “Brother Chen, could you please help me out here?”

“Well,” Chen Xiong said, “I’ll have to do things within the bounds of the law. Killing him wouldn’t be easy. But I can drive him out of Arch-Emperor City as easily as I could turn over my hand.” He emphasized his words by smacking his fan down onto the counter next to him. His eyes shone with intense confidence.

“Ladies and gentlemen, as long as all of you can donate some soul medicine to the cause, then within a month, I will definitely get him out of the imperial city!”

The eyes of the various chosen glittered brightly, and not another word was spoken.

The night passed uneventfully. The following morning at dawn, seven or eight people were already lined up outside of The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven, waiting for the doors to open so that they could drop off items to receive spirit enhancements.

Soon, Bai Hao opened the doors, and the waiting customers hurried in. Bai Hao received them as he usually did, taking his time to accept the spirit enhancement orders.

Bai Xiaochun lounged behind the counter, occasionally looking over at the customers, but focusing most of his mental attention on the formula for seventeen-colored flame.

Before long, the morning was almost over. Bai Hao took care of the constant stream of soul cultivators, and things were going so smoothly that Bai Xiaochun eventually yawned and started to think about going out for a stroll.

However, that was when a young man in a long pink robe entered the shop, cooling himself with a fan as he walked. The fluctuations of a late Nascent Soul cultivation base rolled off of him, leaving all of the customers in the shop feeling shaken. Of course, he was none other than Chen Xiong.

He was a very impressive figure, and to top it off, was flanked by two old men with profound cultivation bases, apparently Dao protectors of some sort.

“The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven? How bombastic!” Based on his words, all of the customers in the shop could immediately tell that Chen Xiong had come looking for trouble.

As Bai Hao sighed and hurried over to take care of the matter, Bai Xiaochun remained behind the counter. When he looked up at Chen Xiong, there was something familiar about him. “I’m pretty sure he looks like one of the chosen that I saw in the Necromancer Kettle.”

Even as Bai Xiaochun was preparing to speak, Chen Xiong waved his sleeve, sending out a blast of wind out that knocked Bai Hao to the side.

Bai Xiaochun’s face suddenly turned grim, and he vanished from behind the counter. When he reappeared, he was next to Bai Hao, protectively sending the wind away from him. However, Bai Hao’s face was pale, and he looked a bit more blurry than usual. Clearly, Chen Xiong had waved his sleeve with quite a bit of force.

To see Bai Hao weakened in such a way sparked Bai Xiaochun's anger, and he turned to look at Chen Xiong with an ice-cold expression.

“If you have something to say, just say it. There's no need to start shoving people around.”

Chen Xiong was a bit shaken by Bai Xiaochun's icy gaze, and he immediately thought back to all the stories people had been telling. Suddenly, his heart began to pound, and he seemed a bit less impressive than before. However, now was not the time to back down.

“I've never relied on force to bully others!” he stated. “Your shop is open, right? And you're supposedly the number one spirit enhancement shop under heaven? Well I'm here to get a spirit enhancement! And yet, to my surprise, you aren't taking orders?! Are you intentionally looking down on me?”

As Chen Xiong's words rang out, it caused even people outside of the shop to look inside curiously to see what would happen.

A cold smile broke out on Bai Xiaochun's face, and yet before he could say anything in response, Bai Hao grabbed his forearm. Bai Hao could immediately tell that this person was different from the others who had come recently looking for trouble.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he took a deep breath and thought back to what he and his apprentice had discussed. Then he reminded himself that he wasn't back in Giant Ghost City, and that the best thing to do was suck it up.

“What do you want enhanced?” he said in a hard voice.

When Chen Xiong saw that Bai Xiaochun was willing to compromise, his eyes glittered, and a cold smile spread out across his face. Slapping his bag of holding, he produced a violet jade pendant that was surrounded by a dense, violet mist. Unexpectedly, the image of a howling flood dragon could be seen

within that mist! With the wave of a hand, Chen Xiong sent the pendant flying over to Bai Xiaochun in a beam of violet light.

Most shocking of all was that the pendant had ten silver designs on it!

The crowd immediately began to comment on what they were seeing.

“That jade pendant has the soul of a flood dragon sealed inside of it! Soul treasures like that are very difficult to perform spirit enhancements on!!”

“It already has a tenfold spirit enhancement! Performing an eleventh... would completely change the fundamental nature of the magical item! Furthermore, it would be extremely difficult to succeed!”

“I'm afraid that not even a terrestrial necromancer would dare to attempt that spirit enhancement. The chances of failure are just too great.”

Bai Xiaochun's mind raced, and then he quickly plastered a look onto his face that made him seem flustered and exasperated. He even glared a bit at Chen Xiong.

Chen Xiong smiled faintly; the tumult of the crowd was exactly what he had expected would happen. Furthermore, the look on the face of this person who had struck such fear into the hearts of the other noble and aristocratic chosen left Chen Xiong feeling very pleased with himself. A snide look appeared in his eyes as he coolly said, “Just enhance that jade pendant. However, it's very expensive, so don't even think about ruining it!”

Bai Xiaochun flicked his sleeve and contemplated how to put this person in his place. “The cost for my services is based on how many spirit enhancements the item has already received!”

Chen Xiong smiled in response, then tossed over a soulhoarding pagoda.

“The soul medicine in this pagoda will cover the cost. Well, get to work! And by the way, if you ruin my item... Then you’ll compensate me in full measure! However, if you succeed, then I’ll pay you ten times your normal price!”

Everyone in the audience was shocked. The prices charged in this shop for spirit enhancements were already high. The fact that the price for this item would be ten times the normal price was shocking to the extreme. And yet, even more shocking was the price that would be paid in the case of a failure.

“Now this is a bet....”

“He has to compensate him if he fails, but if he succeeds, then he’ll reap a huge reward!”

“The bet seems fair to me.... Let’s just see whether or not the shop owner agrees.”

Chen Xiong stood there with a cold smile on his face. He had promised to get Bai Xiaochun out of Arch-Emperor City within a month, and was naturally confident in being able to do so. Although the jade pendant didn’t look particularly impressive, it was actually a gift from the imperial clan, and as such, he could name virtually any price he wanted as its value.

Even if this Bai Hao succeeded, he could then demand to have another spirit enhancement performed. At some point, he would definitely fail, at which point Chen Xiong could start to cause some real problems.

Chen Xiong was an insidious fellow, and had worded things very well. Although it was clearly a bet, he hadn’t worded it in a way that would make it a formal wager. He had also said it in a way that didn’t give Bai Xiaochun any room to maneuver.

Even if Bai Xiaochun refused, he would return the next day with another challenge. And he would also have his followers come with similar challenges. Before long, he would definitely win.

If Bai Xiaochun continuously refused to accept the challenges, it would be difficult for him to stay in business, which would also count as a win. None of this counted as bullying with force. After all, in the world of spirit enhancement, the issue of failure rates meant that compensation was always an issue. Besides, the fact that he had offered a reward of ten times the original cost meant that not even the Giant Ghost King would be able to complain about the arrangement.

Most importantly, this was only the first step in his plan. There was also a second step, and a third. With all of this combined, Chen Xiong was absolutely confident in being able to win.

Chapter 726: Calculating The Bill Wrong

“Well?” Chen Xiong said sneeringly. “Yes? Or No?”

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times. Before he even had a chance to finish digging the pit for this pink-robed young man to fall into, he had jumped in of his own accord.

“This guy really is insidious. This jade pendant is probably extremely valuable.... And based on how confident he seems, it’s obvious that if I succeed, he’ll just ask me to do another spirit enhancement, and then another and another....” After reaching this point in his train of thought, an imperceptible glint appeared in his eyes. Then his expression turned grimmer. Shivering, and even panting a bit, he forced his eyes to turn bloodshot.

“There’s no job I won’t take!” he shouted, seemingly incapable of revealing how he was actually very unconfident about it all. “But when I perform spirit enhancements, I charge with each successful enhancement! And if you don’t have enough soul medicine, I....”

Everyone looking on would think that he actually didn’t want to accept the job, and was trying to make it sound like the customer couldn’t afford to pay.

“That’s fine,” Chen Xiong said. “We can calculate the bill based on every success!” At this point, he frowned slightly. Something about the situation seemed off. Although he was trying to control everything, it almost seemed like Bai Xiaochun had pushed him into a corner. Eyes flashing, he reviewed his plan, and then chuckled coldly.

“Seems he’s on to me,” he thought. “However, there is no way he could possibly guess how determined I am to succeed, nor the fact that I’m actually prepared for the fact that he can perform spirit enhancements up to the fourteenfold level! Besides, there’s even a high likelihood that he’ll fail somewhere from the eleventh to the fourteenth spirit enhancement!” Although Chen Xiong’s actions all

seemed a bit rash, he had actually investigated Bai Hao, and come to the realization that he was equipped almost entirely with fourteenfold spirit enhanced items.

“What a pity that I have items that not even he could compensate me for if he destroyed them. Furthermore, even if he does succeed in raising them to the fourteenfold level, if he gives up after that, my efforts will be equally effective!” Chuckling he agreed to all of Bai Xiaochun’s demands.

When he saw the ashen look on Bai Xiaochun’s face in response to that, he felt a bit more comfortable.

Although Bai Xiaochun appeared to be scowling on the verge of tears, he was actually smiling broadly in his heart. And yet, he kept his teeth gritted, and then flicked his sleeve as he took the jade pendant into the back room.

Before long, he came out, and the jade pendant had no more silver designs on it. Instead, it had a single golden design. Furthermore, it looked different from before. It was a bit smaller, and it emanated spiritual power fluctuations that caused everyone in the area to stare in shock.

“He actually did it!”

“An elevenfold spirit enhancement....”

When Chen Xiong saw it, his expression remained the same as ever, but inwardly, he sighed.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he proudly stuck his chin up and then announced, “Soul Aide, please explain my spirit enhancement pricing method to the young prince here, and calculate how much soul medicine he owes me.”

Bai Hao stepped forward. “When creating something from nothing, the first spirit enhancement costs 1,000 portions of soul medicine. Going from onefold to twofold is 2,000. Twofold to threefold is 4,000. And so on and so forth. Fourfold is 8,000.

Sevenfold is 64,000. Ninefold is 256,000. Tenfold is 512,000.... As for the eleventh, the total soul medicine cost would be.... 1,024,000.”

Gasps could be heard among the audience in response to Bai Hao's words. Although some had already calculated the numbers involved, to hear them spoken out loud was a shocking thing.

Bai Xiaochun stood there looking proudly at Chen Xiong, who simply smiled coolly as he produced a soulhoarding pagoda.

“There are 5,000,000 portions of soul medicine in this soulhoarding pagoda. Keep performing more enhancements. I'm not happy with only eleven.” Another buzz of surprised talk went through the crowd. The kind of bet that they were witnessing was so exciting that many of them were already sending messages to friends using transmission jade slips.

Before long, all of Borough 89 was buzzing, and countless soul cultivators were rushing toward Bai Xiaochun's shop. There were also numerous streams of divine sense which came to focus on the shop.

Bai Xiaochun's pupils constricted as his theory was confirmed. Abandoning his act, he chuckled coldly and took the jade pendant into the back room.

Shortly thereafter, he emerged, and the jade pendant had a second golden design on it. When people outside the shop saw it, cries of shock rose up into the air.

“Twelfefold enhancement! Heavens!!”

“I haven't seen a competition like this in years! Call everybody over to watch! This is definitely going to shake all of Arch-Emperor City!!”

The shouts and cries of the crowd were now causing Chen Xiong to feel a bit of pressure, and it was even possible to see some hesitation in his eyes. However, he continued to glare at Bai

Xiaochun as he said, "I'm still not happy. Keep going!"

Bai Xiaochun could tell how determined this pink-robed young man was. Inwardly, he gave a cold harrumph and thought, "You just wait. I'm gonna scare you to death!"

Spinning in place, he headed into the back room and came out moments later to reveal three golden designs on the pendant!!

Before anyone could react, Bai Xiaochun loudly said, "Soul Aide, calculate the bill!"

Bai Hao couldn't help but shiver. Never before had he ever experienced anything like this, and yet, it was without the slightest hesitation that he replied, "The cost is 4,096,000 portions of soul medicine!"

By this point, it wasn't just Borough 89 that was being rocked by the event. Word was spreading into the other boroughs, and it was even possible to see people hurrying over from those locations to join the commotion.

Chen Xiong was trembling, and a bit of panic could be seen in his eyes. He almost couldn't think straight. This was definitely not what he had planned for. He had placed all his hopes on the possibility that the jade pendant would be destroyed.

"This guy's skill in the art of spirit enhancement is shocking!" he thought.

However, he still gritted his teeth, looked up at Bai Xiaochun, and then slowly said, "I'm still not happy. Keep going!"

The audience was completely bowled over. By this point, they could tell that this was no ordinary bet, and that there was some specific reason that Chen Xiong kept saying he wasn't happy.

"Still not happy, huh?" Bai Xiaochun thought. "Alright mister pinkster. You just wait to see how I scare the living daylights out of you!" He returned to the back room, and after the time it takes an incense stick to burn, he came back out. This time, when the

audience saw the jade pendant, they devolved into a massive hubbub.

“Four... fourteenfold!!”

“A fourteenfold spirit enhancement! How is this even possible?! Heavens....”

Even as everyone clamored, they also spread word to their friends, who began to hurry over in shock. Not bothering to wait for Bai Hao to calculate the bill, Bai Xiaochun proudly announced, “8,192,000 portions of soul medicine!”

He was of the opinion that personally saying it himself was a lot more impressive.

Bai Xiaochun’s words were like a death knell to Chen Xiong. He felt like his mind and heart were being struck by countless bolts of lightning, and his face was as white as a sheet. He staggered backward as if physically struck, gasping, his eyes completely bloodshot. Although he had told himself he was prepared for the possibility of a fourteenfold spirit enhancement, he was still completely shaken. Furthermore, the amount of soul medicine at stake was immense. That was especially true when he contemplated how he had already spent nearly 15,000,000.

He was already starting to regret this little plan of his, and was even thinking of giving up, but as the saying goes, if you ride a tiger, it's hard to get off. There were simply too many people in the audience now, with more showing up by the moment. There were probably tens of thousands of people lining the street outside.

Sticking his chin up proudly, Bai Xiaochun said, “Well, dear customer, are you happy now? At the moment, there isn’t enough soul medicine in this soulhoarding pagoda to pay me the 8,192,000 you owe me. If, after we settle accounts, you’re still not happy, then I’d be happy to continue!”

When Bai Hao heard this, he stood there stunned and feeling a bit

hesitant. From what he could tell, his Master had actually calculated the bill wrong, and had only included the most recent spirit enhancement, not the combination of everything up to this point.

Although he wanted to point this out, there were simply too many people in the area. Considering he was supposed to be a simplistic soul slave, there was no way he could speak up now. Sighing, he mentally did a facepalm.

Gasps were also audible among the audience. Quite a few people had odd expressions on their faces as they too came to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun had calculated the bill wrong. However, this pink-robed young man was obviously a noble chosen, and none of them wanted to offend him. Many people were looking at Bai Xiaochun furtively, wondering what would happen next. As for Chen Xiong, he was obviously a bit surprised at Bai Xiaochun's proud front. However, he still couldn't figure out what exactly was going on. Although he refused to believe that his opponent would actually miscalculate the bill... he patted his bag of holding and threw out another soulhoarding pagoda.

“There are 4,000,000 souls in there. I... I'm still not happy. Keep going!!” This was all of the soul medicine that both he and the other chosen had been able to come up with. It was a huge amount, the type that could form the reserve savings of a great clan!

At this point, Bai Xiaochun proudly said, “The cost for going from a fourteen to a fifteenfold spirit enhancement is different. It doesn't cost double. It costs ten times as much! That means that if I succeed, you will owe me... 81,920,000 portions of soul medicine!” Even Bai Xiaochun seemed a bit jumpy to speak such a number out loud. After a moment of silence, he added, “Are... are you sure you can afford that much?”

Chapter 727: I Absolutely Detest Cheaters

The number Bai Xiaochun had just spoken left Chen Xiong teetering on the verge of passing out. Gasps could be heard among the other soul cultivators looking on. After all, there was a huge difference between a fourteenfold spirit enhancement and a fifteenfold one.

Fifteenfold spirit enhancements brought with them the power of a deva, and could help cultivators who were in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage to gain enlightenment of heaven and earth. Spirit enhanced treasures like that were incredibly valuable, and usually were possessed only by clans who specialized in spirit enhancement, or the powerful noble or aristocratic clans. Treasures like that which did exist would rarely be brought out into the open.

Such items were not common at all, especially because the success rates with high-level spirit enhancements were so low. One needed only look at the fact that the Giant Ghost King, upon rewarding Bai Xiaochun and simultaneously entrusting him with an extremely important mission in the Necromancer Kettle, only gave him a sixteenfold spirit enhanced spear.

The reason for that was not because he was being stingy. Rather, it was because items with fifteenfold spirit enhancements or higher were just too rare. Besides, most were only suitable for use by devas.

Because of their rarity, it would be difficult for anyone to say with certainty how much soul medicine it would be worth to raise something from a fourteenfold to a fifteenfold spirit enhancement. Bai Xiaochun's quote of more than 80,000,000 portions of soul medicine seemed dramatic, but everyone present realized that if he succeeded, the resulting item would be of great help to anyone wishing to rise to the level of a deva!

In the Wildlands, people became devas by means of magical items with fifteen or more spirit enhancements. By gaining enlightenment of heaven and earth with such items, they could become one with all creation.

“Take your time and think about it,” Bai Xiaochun said sincerely. “Look, if you’re still not happy, then considering that you offered to pay ten times my quote, then I guess you already owe me... Eee? about 80,000,000. So, are we finished here...?” With that, he looked at Chen Xiong with a look of sincere compassion.

When Bai Hao was reminded of the matter of “ten times” the original quote, he sighed. From what he could tell, the miscalculation of the bill had already lost them more than 60,000,000 portions of soul medicine....

As for Chen Xiong, he shouted, “Shut the hell up!!”

His eyes were so bloodshot that they almost looked like pools of blood. Tone mocking, he continued, “I’m not happy! Do the next enhancement, alright? Do it!! I refuse to believe that you can succeed at a fifteenfold enhancement!!”

The two old men flanking him had long since grown completely ashen. Terrified, they even attempted to interfere and give Chen Xiong some advice.

“Get out of my face!” he yelled at them. “The bet is still on, Bai Hao!” He really had no choice but to keep betting. If he did, then he still had a shot at winning. But if he gave up right now, the price he would have to pay would be impossible to accept.

Bai Xiaochun gave Chen Xiong a long, level look, then took the jade pendant into the back room without another word. Countless gazes and countless streams of divine sense were locked onto him. Everyone was jumpy with excitement, wondering what would happen in the following moments. However, no one could observe what went on in the back room. There was a scintillating restrictive spell that blocked all sight and divine sense, as well as

another barrier that was almost impossible to penetrate.

Of course, the barrier was actually created by the powers of Bai Xiaochun's mask, and was created in a way that only a demigod would be able to pierce through to see what was beyond. And yet, anyone who did pierce through it would only see what appeared to be Bai Xiaochun going about a spirit enhancement in the ordinary fashion.

Bai Xiaochun had set it up this way intentionally to dispel any suspicions on the part of the most powerful experts.

Bai Xiaochun had always planned to rely on the mask as his most powerful line of defense. By now, there were too many soul cultivators gathering outside to count, even filling the air to the point where it cast Borough 89 into shadow.

Everyone was talking, creating a din of conversation that filled the area.

“This Bai Hao is definitely a celestial necromancer. Furthermore, he's probably at the peak of the celestial necromancer rank!”

“Celestial necromancers all have special methods that they use to increase their success rates. However, going from a fourteen to fifteenfold spirit enhancement is really, really difficult. Success all depends on luck!”

“The truth is that this bet is no longer about necromantic skill. It's really just about luck....”

“Well, whatever happens, The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven is definitely going to be popular after this. It might not be completely famous, but it will definitely be known throughout Arch-Emperor City!”

As everyone talked about the matter, Chen Xiong stood there trembling, his face devoid of blood and his mind a complete blank. Things had already progressed to the point where he wasn't sure he could handle it, and might collapse.

“How could this be happening...? My plan was perfect.... How could he be succeeding every single time? I had so much soul medicine built up! It should have been enough. But then he went and refused to fail even once! Well, this time he’ll definitely fail, and when he does, I’ll have finally won!”

Time passed, and more people gathered outside of the shop. Nobody seemed even the least bit impatient. It was common knowledge that going from a fourteen to a fifteenfold spirit enhancement took a lot of time, and therefore, all gazes and all streams of divine sense were fixed on the door to the back room.

Bai Hao floated off to the side, face expressionless, but sighing in his heart at how easily his Master started feuds, and at the same time, counterstruck with deadly force....

Chen Xiong appeared to be in sore straights, so much so that Bai Hao even felt sorry for him. But then he thought, “Well, you could have kept things between the two of us, but you had to go and offend my Master....”

Two hours passed, and Bai Xiaochun still hadn’t emerged. Of course, the truth was that he was actually inside the back room doing some breathing exercises, and not even thinking about spirit enhancement. Six hours later, he expelled a mouthful of impure vital energy, then opened his eyes.

“That should be enough time,” he thought, shaking his head. “I really didn’t want to screw you over, but I had no choice. You kept pushing me to do more spirit enhancements. You insisted! Well, when I make a move, I frighten even myself.”

Marveling at how pure and benevolent he was, he finally started to work on the spirit enhancement. Before long, he had a jade pendant with five golden designs on it. It pulsed with the energy of a deva, and the flood dragon inside of it looked incredibly realistic, to the point where it almost appeared to be a deva soul.

“What a lovely treasure!” he thought, moved. After looking at it

closely, he realized it would be a simple thing to unleash a shadowy flood dragon from within the pendant, and that it would be monumentally powerful.

After fiddling around with the pendant for a bit, he finally rose to his feet and took a deep breath. Then, he forced himself to look tired and drained, and even made sure that his forehead was dripping with sweat. Finally, he trudged out of the back room looking very ashen-faced.

As soon as he appeared, all eyes and all streams of divine sense focused on him, and especially on his hand. When everyone saw the jade pendant, the first reaction was silence.

But then, everyone erupted into a commotion that could shake heaven and earth.

“Heavens... this... this....”

“Fifteenfold!! I can sense the aura of a deva on it!!”

“He did it! I can’t believe he really did it! A fifteenfold spirit enhanced magical item!!” Countless eyes began to shine with greed.

“If a fifteenfold spirit enhanced item like that went up for auction, it would bring in an astronomical price! And this Grandmaster Bai enhanced it all on his own!!” The exclamations turned into a small-scale sound wave that caused much of Arch-Emperor City to tremble. As for Chen Xiong, he could barely speak.

“Impossible... impossible... it’s not real....” he muttered, staggering backward in despairing daze.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times and then said, “Look, didn’t I just try to persuade you not to do another enhancement? But you wouldn’t listen. Ah, whatever. I’m a soft-hearted kind of guy. How about I give you a discount? Let’s just make it a nice round number. 80,000,000 portions of soul medicine.... Ai. Wait, no. You said that if you were happy, you would give ten times the original

price. So that makes 800,000,000....” Looking sincerely at the flabbergasted Chen Xiong, he continued, “You absolutely, positively must not ask for another enhancement.... You listen to me, alright...? Keep your cool!”

Off to the side, Bai Hao was feeling very odd. By now, he could see that his Master had intentionally miscalculated the bill earlier to lay a trap. How could he not have seen it himself? All of a sudden, his Master seemed even more profound and enigmatic than ever, and on top of that, completely unpredictable.

Blood sprayed out of Chen Xiong’s mouth as his heart was gripped with regret. “Bai Hao!! You conned me! You miscalculated that bill on purpose!! You tricked me!!”

He had originally planned to simply back out of the bet, but after Bai Xiaochun miscalculated the bill, he decided to keep going. Considering how things had turned out though, it seemed obvious that his opponent had been playing him all along. With that, he spun on his heel and prepared to make a run for it. There was absolutely no way he could continue the bet; the stakes were just too high. And that didn’t just count for him; not even his entire clan could sustain such losses. The mere thought of 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine filled his heart with such fear that the only thing he could think to do was leave.

“I conned you?” Bai Xiaochun shot back. “What’s that supposed to mean? Hey, get back here! You owe me some soul medicine! How dare you try to renege on your debt!!” Bai Xiaochun truly had no idea what he meant, and even started to think back to make sure he had calculated everything correctly. The truth was that he really had accidentally calculated the bill wrong. And now, the sight of his opponent preparing to flee instantly caused his expression to turn grim. After all, he had sincerely tried to persuade him to stop. And yet, not only had the pink-robed young man demanded to keep going, he had then hurled false accusations about miscalculating the bill. It was really outrageous.

“I absolutely hate cheaters!” Bai Xiaochun roared. With that, he took a step forward. Of course, Chen Xiong’s two Dao protectors had sensed that things were heating up, and immediately moved to block the way. But when they made contact with Bai Xiaochun, blood sprayed out of their mouths, and they tumbled backward. As for Bai Xiaochun, he barreled forward at top speed to appear right in front of Chen Xiong. Then he reached his hand back and prepared to slap him across the face.

Chapter 728: Who Gives A Crap About Heavenly Dukes?!

A thunderous smacking sound rang out, and blood sprayed out of Chen Xiong's mouth as he was sent flying backward.

“Do you truly dare to start a fight in Arch-Emperor City!?!?” he shrieked.

“You bet I dare!” Bai Xiaochun shouted. “You owe me soul medicine, buddy! I'm completely in the right here!” With that, he stepped forward and kicked Chen Xiong, sending him flying into the air. A moment later, he slammed into the stone wall on the opposite side of the shop, where he remained, embedded and unmoving. Many of his bones were broken, and his cultivation base was in chaos. Then, unexpectedly, he simply passed out.

“Hmph! I can't believe he tried to renege on his debt. When you owe Lord Bai a debt, you pay up!” As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, this pink-robed brat was a complete scoundrel. He was the one who had come and suggested the bet, and then he'd attempted to flee. That just went to show how arrogant the brat was, and one of the things Bai Xiaochun hated most in life was when people looked down on him.

Looking over at Chen Xiong lying unconscious in the wall, his two old Dao Protectors immediately began to shout in rage at Bai Xiaochun.

“What gall, Bai Hao!”

“Chen Xiong is the qilin son of our Chen Clan, and our most powerful patriarch is currently a heavenly duke!”

“Heavenly duke?”

A flicker of dread ran through Bai Xiaochun. After all, in the Wildlands, the only people who could become heavenly dukes were people at the peak of the Deva Realm. Devas like Duke Deathcrier

were only earthly dukes. However, Bai Xiaochun was convinced that he was in the right here, and besides, this Chen Xiong had been the one to come looking for trouble, not the other way around. He had also been the one to suggest the bet, and had been the one to try to flee. Bai Xiaochun wasn't in the wrong at all, and therefore, he had no reason to look scared in front of all these people.

Gritting his teeth, he glared at the Dao protectors and said, "Who gives a crap about heavenly dukes? Back in Giant Ghost City, I kidnapped a demigod!"

With that, he casually waved his sleeve, causing a wild wind to pick up the two Dao protectors and slam them into the wall next to Chen Xiong, where they too fell unconscious.

When the bystanders saw all of this, gasps rang out. Everyone was thoroughly impressed by Bai Xiaochun's valiant performance, and word of the incident was already beginning to spread.

With that, Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back and proudly said, "Soul Aide, please close the shop!"

Heart pounding with fear, Bai Hao quickly escorted all of the customers out and then closed the front door.

As for all of the soul cultivators who had come to watch the excitement, they were shaken by what they had seen. In fact, very few of them left. After all, it was unlikely that the heavenly duke from the Chen Clan would simply let this matter drop, and therefore, people wanted to see what would happen next.

"From now on, this spirit enhancement shop is definitely going to be famous in Arch-Emperor City!"

"A fifteenfold spirit enhancement.... That alone is enough to make the shop worthy of its name, and the couplets!"

"Who would have thought!? There was actually a top master hiding in Borough 89, someone named Bai Hao. Why does that

name seem familiar...?”

Of course, everyone was aware of Bai Hao's name because of how Chen Xiong had yelled it out. Soon, people began contemplating that name, and before long, one of the soul cultivators suddenly let out a shout of shock.

“Bai Hao.... I remember now! He must be Bai Hao from Giant Ghost City. He killed his own father and helped the Giant Ghost King during the rebellion. He’s also the one who kidnapped all of those chosen in the Necromancer Kettle. Bai Hao!!”

“Heavens, I remember now too! It is him. I heard that he's vicious and merciless, and a reviler of his own clan. He’s a bully through and through who everybody hates!”

“All that is nothing. I heard that he actually takes pride in being a wife-stealer! Shameless to the ultimate degree! So, he’s actually in Arch-Emperor City now. And now he’s taken up the mantle of a grandmaster of spirit enhancement!!”

As more people talked, more people recalled the stories they had heard about Bai Hao. Meanwhile, back inside the shop, Bai Xiaochun stood there with his hands clasped behind his back, looking at Chen Xiong and his two Dao protectors embedded in the wall. As he thought about how arrogant Chen Xiong had acted, and how he had even tried to escape without settling his debt, his anger grew.

“Complete and utter bullies. I was keeping my head low, trying not to provoke anybody. Suffering in silence! But then this bastard had to come and try to bully me!”

Using the powers of the mask to ensure that only Bai Hao could hear him, he said, “Hao’er, this isn’t Master’s fault, is it? You saw everything! They were completely out of line!”

Bai Hao simply smiled wryly and shook his head, unsure of exactly what to say in response. Disaster had already been

instigated, and yet, it was true that Bai Xiaochun hadn't started it. It really was a case in which the tree might long for peace, but the wind will never cease.

“Master, we need to think of what to do now,” he said. “Their clan is definitely going to come looking for them soon.”

Bai Xiaochun actually felt a bit nervous. Although he had acted brazenly earlier, he had actually been very nervous. After all, this was a clan with a deva in it, and he wasn't in Giant Ghost City. Therefore, he nervously took out a transmission jade slip and sent a voice message to the Giant Ghost King.

Before long, the Giant Ghost King's domineering voice could be heard responding.

“What are you scared of? He's just a heavenly duke, right? Listen, Bai Hao, you're the majordomo of Giant Ghost City, and also my son-in-law. They came looking to stir up trouble, and you beat them up, right? If that's all, then so be it. If Chen Haosong tries to use his status to be a bully, then I'll do the same thing right back!”

It had been a long time since Bai Xiaochun felt moved by the care of another, so as soon as he heard the Giant Ghost King's response, it was like music to his ears. The fact that his highness the king actually cared was enough to take a lot of the pressure off. Taking a deep breath, he looked over at Chen Xiong and his Dao protectors, and gave them all a good glare.

“Hmph! Trying to run out on a debt to me?! Maybe I should charge some interest! After all, the Giant Ghost King said he would back me up.” Licking his lips, he tried to decide if he was pushing things a bit too far. But then he remembered that he was owed 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine, and his anger flared. Therefore, he didn't hesitate to pull out his Eternal Parasol and then stick it into Chen Xiong.

“I'll just take a little....” he murmured. Immediately, Chen Xiong's eyes snapped open, and blue veins bulged out on his face

and neck. He even let loose an agonized shriek.

When the people on the outside heard that, their jaws dropped. Even Bai Xiaochun was a bit startled, and pulled the Eternal Parasol back. He had only sucked away ten percent of Chen Xiong's life force to improve his standing in the Tempered Bones level.

“What are you doing, Bai Hao!? You're not gonna die a good death!!” Chen Xiong was obviously a bit thinner. Glaring angrily at Bai Xiaochun, he began to try to struggle free from the wall.

Considering how clear-eyed and worked up Chen Xiong was, it seemed that he hadn't really been hurt by the Eternal Parasol, and therefore, Bai Xiaochun decided that he might as well take a bit more life force. With that, he stabbed the parasol into Chen Xiong again. “Shut up! I just took a little, it's not like it's a big deal! You owe me 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine! How dare you curse me!”

Another agonized shriek rang out, followed by more cursing. After that, Bai Xiaochun used the parasol a third time, then a fourth and a fifth....

Bai Hao was stunned, and quickly began to offer some advice. “Master, you should stop. You're going to kill him....”

“Don't worry, your Master has a lot of experience with this kind of thing.” Bai Xiaochun was actually feeling quite enthused, and before he realized it, Chen Xiong was little more than a bag of skin and bones. His cries were now weak, and he was even gasping for breath. Furthermore, his eyes shone with an unprecedented level of terror. By this point, he thoroughly regretted all of his decisions, and also understood why all of his friends had cursed this Bai Hao so much, and yet hadn't dared to tangle with him.

Having finished with Chen Xiong, Bai Xiaochun looked over at the two Dao protectors. After a moment, he said, “What do you say, my apprentice... should I move on to these two?”

Bai Hao smiled wryly and looked over at the poor Chen Xiong, who had been turned into a virtual skeleton by his Master. Although he felt bad for him, Bai Hao also felt he needed to tell his Master how he truly felt.

“Um... why not give them all the same treatment? We've already offended Heavenly Duke Chen, so it probably won't make a difference either way....”

“That’s the spirit!” Bai Xiaochun replied. “Hahaha! I was thinking the exact same thing!” With that, he stabbed the Eternal Parasol into the first of the Dao protectors. Before long, both of the Dao protectors were both much skinnier than before. However, knowing that he didn't want to go too far, and also considering that they hadn't been the main culprits, he only took a portion of their life force.

Even as he was delighting in the influx of life force, the front door of the shop rumbled as though a powerful force had landed onto it. Then, the door slammed open, and a wave of deva energy surged into the shop.

“Bai Hao!”

Teeth gritted and eyes blazing with rage, Mistress Red-Dust burst inside.

Chapter 729: Cant Get You To Submit?

Startled, Bai Xiaochun pulled back the Eternal Parasol and spun to face the beautiful Mistress Red-Dust as she stomped into the shop.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun was in no mood or position to enjoy feasting upon her beauty. There were few things in the Wildlands that he feared more than Mistress Red-Dust. After everything the two of them had gone through, Bai Xiaochun was convinced that if she found out who he really was, she would stop at nothing to kill him.

Heart pounding, he tried to look as calm as possible as he affectionately said, “What are you doing here, Zimo...?”

“What have you done, Bai Hao!?” she said in a voice of rage, nauseated by the fact that he had called her Zimo. Moments ago, she had received a message from the Giant Ghost King, and then right afterward, from Heavenly Duke Chen. That made sense considering that many people in the city already knew that Bai Hao was the majordomo of Giant Ghost City, and also her intended husband.

If Bai Xiaochun caused trouble, then the Chen Clan’s heavenly duke would naturally come to Mistress Red-Dust. After all... once Heavenly Duke Chen learned of what had happened, and heard that 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine were at stake... he knew that not even he could afford to pay up.

Despite being completely enraged, and also having absolutely no desire to see Bai Xiaochun, Mistress Red-Dust had no choice but to come handle the matter.

Looking over at the emaciated Chen Xiong and his two Dao protectors, Mistress Red-Dust’s fury built, and her loathing of Bai Xiaochun grew.

“You really know how to cause problems, don’t you? I don’t know what my father sees in you! Listen up. If you cause any more problems in the future, you’ll end up like this statue!” With that, she pulled a statue out of her bag of holding and crushed it to pieces.

Originally, Bai Xiaochun had been preparing to argue a bit. But when he realized that the statue she had pulled out bore his own true visage, his temper suddenly vanished....

“Heavens! This Granny Red-Dust really does hate me, doesn’t she? She actually carries statues of me around to crush when she gets angry....” A shiver passed through him. After all, what scared him was not Mistress Red-Dust’s threat, but rather, her attitude.

However, even as his fear increased, he realized that the situation really was very exhilarating. After all, Mistress Red-Dust’s own father was playing the matchmaker between the two of them, and Mistress Red-Dust had no idea that he was really Bai Xiaochun. The entire thing was... very exciting!

“Hm... if I ever have the chance to take her into the bridal chamber... and take off my mask, I wonder if it would startle her to death...?” Suddenly, Bai Xiaochun realized that he was thinking about things in entirely the wrong way, and quickly readjusted his attitude. However, it was still very exhilarating....

When Mistress Red-Dust saw the way that he was looking at her, she simply couldn’t suppress her revolt. Were it not for the Giant Ghost King’s support of Bai Hao, then she would definitely not suppress her desire to exterminate him on the spot.

“This Bai Hao is an obscene lowlife,” she thought. “You can tell from the look in his eye that he’s contemplating something abominable!” However, she had no choice but to suppress her woe. Waving her right hand, she collected up Chen Xiong and the two Dao protectors.

Her beautiful face was almost green with fury as she growled,

“I'm warning you, Bai Hao. I don't have any patience left to deal with you. If you annoy me even the slightest bit, don't blame me for exterminating you!”

Having cleared his mind of the inappropriate thoughts from before, Bai Xiaochun said in a frustrated voice, “Hey, this wasn't my fault! He came looking to cause trouble, and he was the one who suggested we make a bet. He was the one who lost 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine to me.”

“Shut up!” Mistress Red-Dust shot back, glaring at him. Then she turned to leave, apparently not inclined to help Bai Xiaochun collect the soul medicine he was owed because of the debt.

Everyone on the outside had clearly seen Mistress Red-Dust stomp her way into the shop. Furthermore, word had already spread that Bai Xiaochun was the majordomo of Giant Ghost City, and also that the Giant Ghost King had promised Sergeant Major Mistress Red-Dust of the Giant Ghost Legion to him in marriage.

That only served to intrigue people further. When they thought about it all, and about how domineering Mistress Red-Dust was, it caused many mouths to twist into slight sneers.

“Well I guess it's not Bai Hao's fault. After all, his Daoist partner is a deva...”

“Goddess Red-Dust has always been completely domineering. To tell you the truth, I actually feel sorry for this Bai Hao....”

When such talk drifted into Bai Xiaochun's ears, he couldn't help but feel a bit embarrassed.

The truth was that he didn't care too much about the soul medicine. Material things like that weren't very important. However, he did feel that it was a big pity that Chen Xiong still had the fifteenfold spirit enhanced jade pendant in his bag of holding. And yet, considering how domineering Mistress Red-Dust was acting, he hesitated to say anything. But then he thought back to

something the Giant Ghost King had once said to him.

What, you can't even handle a single woman...?

Those words rang in his mind, and actually made him feel like he was losing a lot of face. If nobody else were present, it might not have been a big deal. But Bai Hao was standing off to the side, and there were plenty of people on the street who could see what was happening, and were even discussing the situation in hushed tones. At this point, Bai Xiaochun decided that the situation had gone too far. After all, he was the very love saint who had invented the Win Charm! How could he possibly lose so much face in front of so many people?

“Stop right there!” he shouted at Mistress Red-Dust, who was currently walking away from him, seething with a murderous aura.

Mistress Red-Dust stopped in place and looked over her shoulder, her phoenix-like eyes flashing with cold light. “How dare you speak to me in such a tone!”

She even unleashed some deva pressure to go along with her words. She had never liked this Bai Hao, and would love to take this opportunity to teach him a lesson if he said even the slightest wrong word.

Bai Xiaochun's innards churned underneath Mistress Red-Dust's cold glare, and he realized that he had gone and done something impulsive. However, when he heard the crowd gasping in response to his words, he braced himself, slowly clasped his hands behind his back, and turned his head to the side. After all, his profile was his most impressive feature as far as he was concerned. Looking out of the corner of his eye at Mistress Red-Dust, he put on the most arrogant expression he could manage. As of this moment, there was now something unique and special about him, something different than before, as though veins of steel pumped beneath his skin.

“Although his highness the king betrothed his most beloved daughter to me, I most certainly do not deserve such an honor.... Because of my status and standing, you refused to accept the matter, and there is nothing in that decision with which I can find fault!

“Furthermore, the reason I came to Arch-Emperor City was not just because of the matter of the marriage, but rather, for another important purpose. Your father the king wanted me to assist you in your duties. Sadly, you hate me. And I'm not interested in intentionally annoying people. But his highness the king has shown me unending kindness, and therefore, I must still do my best to fulfill the task he assigned me!

“I won that soul medicine in a bet, all for the purpose of giving it to you. 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine is a massive amount of wealth, but if you don't want it, then at least make sure that Heavenly Duke Chen owes you a huge favor. Either way, I can say that I followed his highness the king's commands to assist you.

“Take the soul medicine, or not, the choice is yours. However, the choice of whether or not to speak, and what to say if I do speak, is mine! I don't need instructions from you. Furthermore, I would very much appreciate if you don't ever again use the words shut up with me. Now, please see yourself out!” To make his performance more impressive, he called upon a bit of the underlying power of the Undying Emperor's Fist, which made him seem vastly more impressive than before.

Everyone watching on the street was shocked, and even Mistress Red-Dust seemed stunned. Never could she have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would utter words like this. Regardless of how much of what he had said was true, the fact that he was giving her 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine was monumental. Either she took the money, and ended up with massive wealth, or she rejected it, and earned a huge favor from someone very powerful.

Even to her, a favor from a heavenly duke was something to take

very seriously.

Mixed emotions could be seen in her eyes as she looked at Bai Xiaochun one last time. Then, without saying another word, she turned and left. As she did, Bai Xiaochun's voice rang out.

“Soul Aide, please close the shop!”

Bai Hao shivered. He had been stunned over and over again by the events of the day. The sudden appearance of Mistress Red-Dust had been a total shock, and not even he had been able to pierce through the act put on by his Master. He quickly hurried over and closed the front door of the shop. As he did, Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back and went into the back room.

As soon as he did, he slumped down onto the ground, and sweat began to pour down his forehead. Taking a deep breath, he thought back to everything he had said, and felt very pleased with the show he had put on.

“Hmmmphh! You listen to me, Granny Red-Dust. There's no way that the mighty Love Saint Bai Xiaochun can't get you to submit!”

Chapter 730: The Princes Make A Move

A whole slew of dramatic events had just occurred. After Mistress Red-Dust left, the crowd finally began to thin out, and people went on their way, various thoughts running through their heads.

None of them would be able to forget what had occurred. Whether it was the success with the spirit enhancements, the terrifying bet that ended up reaching a sum of 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine, the arrival of Mistress Red-Dust, or the sight of Bai Xiaochun making his solemn and yet domineering monologue, they were scenes that would be branded into the memories of everyone present.

Everybody knew that from this day on, the name of Bai Hao... would become very important throughout all of Arch-Emperor City!

Before long, everyone was talking about the news of what had happened to the qilin son of the Heavenly Duke Chen's clan, Chen Xiong. Of course, word soon came back to all of the various chosen, and they gasped in shock.

“This Bai Hao... is too vicious!”

“800,000,000 portions of soul medicine... that's ridiculous!”

“I heard that it wasn't just the soul medicine. He also drained Chen Xiong's life force! He ended up nothing more than skin and bones....” Little Wolfgod, Li Tiansheng, Miao Lin'er and many of the other chosen were all taken completely aback. Although none of them had been completely convinced that Chen Xiong would be able to get rid of Bai Hao, they had at least harbored some hope. After all, they were in Arch-Emperor City, not the Necromancer Kettle.

As they heard the news about how things had played out, they trembled with fear. The mere thought of Chen Xiong's fate made

them all think back to the Necromancer Kettle, and the brutality they had experienced. The entire group still shivered with fear because of those lingering memories.

That vicious face, those coldly brutal eyes, and the nightmarish draining of their life force, were things that Little Wolfgod and the other chosen could never forget. In fact, many of them even cut ties with Chen Xiong. It was a bitter decision that they weren't happy with, but they knew they had to abandon any ideas of trying to cause problems for Bai Hao.

“Dammit, losing to him in the Necromancer Kettle was one thing, but how could the same thing happen in Arch-Emperor City?!”

“It's all the fault of that Chen Xiong. No skill whatsoever. But what do we do next? This Bai Hao is incomparably vicious! We definitely need to come up with a good plan, and must avoid any rash decisions!”

Of course, now that everyone was talking about Bai Hao, it didn't take long before stories about what had occurred in the Necromancer Kettle began to spread again, until everybody was talking about the matter.

Soon enough, tales about the Bai Clan and Giant Ghost City also began to spread. Before long, everybody in the city had heard about such matters.

As for Mistress Red-Dust, in the end, she decided not to demand the 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine, and instead, asked for Heavenly Duke Chen to owe her a favor.

Bai Xiaochun was definitely no ordinary soul cultivator. He had a very impressive background, and because of that, the noble and aristocratic chosen were not easily able to do anything against him. They could only plot against him within the bounds of the law. Just as they had mentioned earlier in their discussion, they had to take their time to come up with a good plan.

After the incident, The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven became very famous. In the following days, soul cultivators came from all over Arch-Emperor City and lined up to get spirit enhancements and soul medicine. Others came to merely get a glimpse of Bai Hao, and see whether he was really as superhuman as everyone claimed him to be.

Borough 89 was more of a bustling place than ever. Business for the other shops in the area began to pick up because of Bai Xiaochun's shop. It was a welcome development as far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, but Bai Hao felt nervous about it.

Worried, he said, "Master, showing off too much isn't really going to help us with our master plan...."

Clearing his throat, Bai Xiaochun put an anxious expression onto his face, sighed, and said, "Ai, Master didn't want things to turn out this way either. You just need to get used to it. The thing is, no matter where your Master goes, he always ends up rising to prominence and becoming a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering figure. I really am just too outstanding. There's nothing I can do about it."

A strange expression appeared on Bai Hao's face as he looked at his Master, unsure of how to respond. Finally, he simply smiled wryly and shook his head. Aware that discussing the matter was useless, he began trying to come up with his own plan about how to resolve any dangerous situations. After a bit of time passed, he came up with an idea and started to make plans.

Before long, people were talking about this Bai Hao's impressive background. Certain people were very emphatic about how important Bai Hao was to the Giant Ghost King, and how good their relationship was. Other people would emphasize his cultivation base and battle prowess. In this way, people began to get a more rounded view of him.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased to be such a center of attention.

He would often leave the shop and stroll about with his hands clasped behind his back, enjoying all the people looking at him. However, after a few days of such showing off, he got bored and went back to continue working on seventeen-colored flame.

After the incident with Chen Xiong, nobody came looking to start trouble. Everyone knew that Bai Hao was the type of person who was not to be trifled with. When he lost his temper, not even a heavenly duke clan could do anything about it, let alone more ordinary people.

Rumors spread like wildfire. However, for Bai Xiaochun, life just got calmer and calmer. He immersed himself in researching seventeen-colored flame, and even began to perform some experiments, although he would immediately abort them if unexpected problems cropped up. After all, if he caused fire to rain from the heavens in this area, or sent black smoke out everywhere, his comfortable life would definitely become anything but comfortable.

Because of that oath, nothing particularly dramatic occurred. However, because of how much time he was devoting to seventeen-colored flame, his understanding and control of sixteen-colored flame improved.

It also helped a lot that Bai Hao would give good ideas here and there, and would help with his own augury. Together, they made slight adjustments to the formula for sixteen-colored flame. As time went on, Bai Xiaochun continued to struggle with seventeen-colored flame, and at the same time, improved his success rate with sixteen-colored flame. By this time, he had roughly a thirty percent success rate.

Actually, anybody who heard that he had achieved a success rate that high would be completely incredulous. Virtually no formulas in the world were so successful, and it was all thanks to the help provided by Bai Hao.

“Master, this specific augury technique was designed for fifteen-colored flame. If I want to succeed with seventeen-colored flame, then we really need to improve the sixteen-colored flame first.” Bai Hao had been working very hard lately. Even when he had time off, he would sit around thinking about seventeen-colored flame, and even the future formula for eighteen-colored flame.

He had a few ideas, one being to use multiple seventeen-colored flames to deduce the formula for eighteen-colored flame. The other was to spread a seventeen-colored flame out into a sea of fire, add another color to it, and pull the fire back into a tongue of flame afterward. All of the thinking and discussions about the matter left Bai Hao feeling very drained mentally.

It would have been very difficult for Bai Xiaochun to accomplish these things on his own. Even if he had succeeded, it would have taken an unimaginable amount of time.

As Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao were focusing on their research on flame conjuring, the rumors in the city continued to rage, and Little Wolfgod and the other chosen continued taking their time coming up with a plan. However, as all of that happened, there were two people whose sinister gazes came to be locked on Bai Xiaochun’s shop in Borough 89.

“Little Wolfgod and the others are complete morons. How could they bungle things up dealing with one trifling Bai Hao!?” In Borough 3, there was a particularly towering pagoda in which the heir of the Nine Serenities King, Prince Zhou Hong stood, staring off into the distance.

He normally spent his time in Nine Serenities City, but after hearing that Bai Hao had come to Arch-Emperor City, he had hurried over. After all, he simply couldn’t let the matter of the Necromancer Kettle rest. Almost immediately upon arrival, he heard about the wretched fate of Chen Xiong.

Standing next to Zhou Hong was a handsome, middle-aged man

dressed in luxurious clothing. His facial features looked much like Xu Shan's. Upon hearing Zhou Hong's words, he chuckled and replied, "You're exactly right, Brother Zhou. This Bai Hao... is relying completely on the Giant Ghost King. Maybe he does have some pretty good battle prowess, but he's only one person, and he's not the actual heir of the Giant Ghost King. Zhou Zimo hates him too. I think dealing with him... shouldn't be much of a problem at all."

Turning to look at the middle-aged man, Zhou Hong said, "Brother Xu, I heard that Xu Shan actually likes this Bai Hao. Is that true?"

"My little sister is a bit naïve. She said a lot of nice things about this Bai Hao after she got back, which cooled father down quite a bit. Anyway, she just doesn't get life. As her older brother, I simply cannot allow this insult to Spirit Advent City to stand. That is why I was more than happy to accept your invitation to come here, Brother Zhou!" This middle-aged man was one of the sons of the Spirit Advent King, Xu Peng.

"Brother Zhou," he continued, "do you happen to have already come up with a plan on how to deal with him?" The truth was that Xu Peng didn't really feel any enmity toward this Bai Hao. However, in the Wildlands, the position of king wasn't exclusively passed on to sons. It could also go to daughters. And the Spirit Advent King had many, many sons. It was also common knowledge in the Wildlands that all the princes and princesses in Spirit Advent City feared Xu Shan the most.

After coming to find that Xu Shan had a good impression of Bai Hao, and then having received the invitation from Zhou Hong, Xu Peng decided that it was the perfect opportunity to better his own position. Of course, since he had never met this Bai Hao before, he was also prepared to back out of the situation if Zhou Hong's plan was too dangerous.

Chapter 731: Stuck In The Middle

Zhou Hong looked askance at Xu Peng. Considering what he knew about Xu Peng's personality, he knew that it wouldn't be possible to change his mind.

Unfortunately, Gongsun Yi had refused his invitation with a sarcastically worded message explaining that he didn't need to resort to plots and schemes to earn back the face he had lost, that he would do so with his own battle prowess.

Although Zhou Hong wasn't too pleased about that, afterward, he had been left with no other option than to meet with Xu Peng. After all, he had certain misgivings about the Junior Champion King, and didn't want to get involved with him.

“Don't worry, Brother Xu, this Bai Hao has already reached a dead end. I know we can't kill him, so my plan is to simply humiliate him and make sure he won't stick around in Arch-Emperor City. We just need to drive him back to Giant Ghost City.” That really was what Zhou Hong wanted. Having this Bai Hao stuck in Giant Ghost City, out of sight and out of mind, was much different from having him right in Arch-Emperor City, making a big scene. Besides, the former would give him the chance to achieve even greater success eventually.

Right now, the political climate in Arch-Emperor City was very unstable, so if Bai Hao managed to consolidate his power, it could make him very difficult to deal with later.

“Oh?” Xu Peng said with a smile. “I'd love to hear the details.” With that, he looked over expectantly.

“Well,” Zhou Hong replied, “I haven't thought through all of the specifics yet, but we can't just let him do whatever he wishes around here. His shop is getting really popular, right? My plan is to call over one of the top grandmaster necromancers from Nine Serenities City and set up a shop right next to Bai Hao's.

“When it comes to battle prowess and fighting, Bai Hao is definitely incredible. But I refuse to believe that he’s just as good at doing business. If we cut off his source of income, he’ll get desperate enough to start making mistakes, and then we’ll have the advantage.”

The truth was that Zhou Hong had already worked out a complicated plan, but didn’t want to reveal that fact to Xu Peng. He was actually still disgruntled that he couldn’t just attack Bai Hao and deal with him directly. Unfortunately, he couldn’t beat him in a fight, and therefore had to resort to schemes to get his revenge.

Xu Peng listened attentively, and in the end, gave an enigmatic smile. He was no fool, and knew that Zhou Hong must have other plans that he wasn’t revealing. However, Xu Peng still wanted to try to take advantage of the situation for his own benefit, and in any case, there couldn’t be any harm in opening a shop. In fact, it might even help out the situation. Finally, Xu Peng nodded.

“That sounds like a good idea, Brother Zhou. In fact, how about I invite a grandmaster necromancer from Spirit Advent City? We can both open shops, right in Borough 89!”

The two of them laughed heartily, and then went about making the arrangements.

Half a month later, Bai Xiaochun was still in the middle of researching the formula for seventeen-colored flame. Bai Hao was finished with his improvements to the techniques, but still needed to work out some of the particulars.

Business kept getting better, and there never ceased to be a line going out the door. It was also during that half a month that the two shops on either side of Bai Xiaochun’s changed ownership.

After closing briefly for renovations, they both re-opened, larger and more luxurious than ever before. In terms of the specific businesses involved, they sold soul medicine and offered spirit

enhancement services!

Most shocking of all were the names attached to the signs above the shops.

One was Sima Tao, the other was Sun Yifan!

When those two names were revealed, it caused a big stir in Borough 89. It only took a short period of time before people were talking, not only about Bai Xiaochun's shop, but about these two newly opened shops!

“Sima Tao.... He's a grand elder from the Sima Clan in Spirit Advent City! And he's also a celestial necromancer. He's adept at spirit enhancements, and is widely accepted as the number one spirit enhancer in Spirit Advent City!”

“He's so famous! Everybody says that he's one of the few necromancers who might actually break through into the earthly rank!”

“Sun Yifan is no ordinary individual either. He's a rogue cultivator without a clan, but who earned the favor of the Nine Serenities King. After that, he achieved a meteoric rise to his current rank of celestial necromancer!”

“You know what I heard? Supposedly, he was so grateful to the Nine Serenities King that he agreed to become his high counselor. In terms of his skill in necromancy, it's on par with Sima Tao's!”

The entire city was shaken by these two names, and despite the incident which had occurred with Chen Xiong, many people began to pay much closer attention to see what would happen. After all, Borough 89 wasn't in Arch-Emperor City's central district; it was located more toward the fringes of the city. For two grandmasters to suddenly set up shop in a place like that was very telling.

“They're making a move on Bai Hao....”

“One from Nine Serenities City and one from Spirit Advent City.... They're challenging him without making any open moves.

I smell a plot.”

Bai Xiaochun was angered by this new development, which immediately cast him in a bad light. Despite the fact that he could perform a fifteenfold spirit enhancement, in terms of both cultivation base and reputation as a spirit enhancer, he could only be considered someone of the Junior generation to these two.

Almost immediately, business began to shift to the shops operated by the two grandmasters. The soul medicine being sold there was high-grade, and every portion was marked with an official seal guaranteeing its level of quality, which also made the medicine something of a collectible. As far as spirit enhancements went, both necromancers had enhanced multiple magical items to the point of a fifteenfold enhancements. In fact, Sun Yifan's masterwork was a magical device he had enhanced sixteen times for the Nine Serenities King!

Bai Xiaochun was stuck right between those two other shops, and it only took three days for his business to take a critical hit.

Bai Xiaochun was not happy at all. Upon walking out to inspect the two other shops, he found that they were indeed larger than his. When you added in how their work was guaranteed by means of a seal, it really made his own shop seemed too simplistic.

“What's the meaning of this!? Can't beat me in a fight so now they're going to try to put me out of business!?” Both of the other two shops were completely bustling, and although his shop wasn't completely empty, it was nothing like it was before. “Nine Serenities City... that must be Zhou Hong. And Spirit Advent City. Hmm. I didn't take any life force from Xu Shan. Why would she have it out for me?”

Quite a few people noticed that Bai Xiaochun had walked out onto the street to look at the other shops. Even Sima Tao and Sun Yifan noticed, but seemed to view him as little more than business competition, and didn't pay him much heed.

As far as they were concerned, Bai Xiaochun might have impressive battle prowess, and even have a Nascent Soul cultivation base, but in terms of spirit enhancement and necromancy, he couldn't compare to them. They had spent the majority of their lives immersed in necromancy, and had vast amounts of experience. There was no way that some up-and-coming brat could even come close to their abilities.

After sizing up the situation, Bai Xiaochun stalked angrily back into his shop. Although he hadn't originally cared too much about this spirit enhancement shop of his, considering that his future cultivation was tied to multi-colored flame, and he needed to do a lot of research, it meant that he had a greater need for vengeful souls than ever. In fact, the number involved was difficult to even process mentally.

He couldn't go back to Giant Ghost City, and there was no way to shake down any clans. Mistress Red-Dust wouldn't be of any help at all. That meant that the only other possible way to get souls was to beat people in fights, which was far too dangerous as far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned.

Without souls, he couldn't conjure flame, and without multi-colored flame, he couldn't increase his cultivation base. Without a higher cultivation base, he would never be able to get out of the Wildlands. That, coupled with all the pressure from Mistress Red-Dust, had him feeling very anxious.

He was alone, with no clan to back him up, and without any stipend of souls from the Giant Ghost King. If he wanted to conjure flame and improve his cultivation base, then he had to rely on vengeful souls.

His hope had come to rest in his shop, and he had originally assumed it would be able to support him to the point where he could increase his cultivation base and leave the Wildlands.

But now that these two new shops had opened up, Bai Xiaochun's

plan was completely wrecked. Besides, if things kept going on the way they were, the other chosen in the city would surely get involved. If things got to the point where he had no business at all, then he would be in very serious trouble, and might even get killed.

“No, I have to think of a way!” Back in his shop, he sat there thinking, a frown on his face as all sorts of ideas ran through his head. However, no matter what ideas he came up with, they had flaws that he couldn’t deal with, considering how weak he was overall.

Off to the side, Bai Hao looked at his Master, and then at the people outside going mostly to the other two shops. After a moment, he said, “Master, I have two plans that can resolve the situation!”

Chapter 732: Nothing But Business Warfare

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, a bit taken aback. “Two plans?”

In the short time he had been together with Bai Hao, he had already come to see that he was extremely talented, so much so that he qualified to shake all of the Wildlands.

Without Bai Hao, Bai Xiaochun would have faced nearly insurmountable difficulties when it came to flame conjuring.

However, it wasn't just Bai Hao's skill in flame conjuring that was impressive. Although Bai Xiaochun definitely had something to do with the success of the shop, much of it had to do with how Bai Hao handled everyday business. Overall, Bai Xiaochun was very pleased by the arrangement.

However, he had noticed a weakness in his apprentice. Bai Hao always thought of things in a very limited way. He simply didn't match up to Bai Xiaochun, who thought grand thoughts and carried out dashing plans....

Looking very serious, Bai Hao lowered his voice and said, “Master, these two plans of mine are currently in the early stages of planning. If you want more details, I'll need to put a bit more thought into them and work everything out. Or I can come up with some other ideas.”

Bai Xiaochun waved his hand dismissively and said, “No, that's fine, tell me your ideas.”

Then he looked at his apprentice with eager anticipation.

Looking thoughtful, Bai Hao continued. “Master, Sun Yifan from Nine Serenities City and Sima Tao from Spirit Advent City are both celestial necromancers. One of them is a high counselor to a king, and the other comes from an aristocratic necromancer clan. On the surface, it seems like they're cooperating, but the truth is... as grandmaster necromancers, they're both very arrogant. There's

no way that they truly get along.”

The truth was that Bai Hao really had put a lot of thought into the situation, and was not just shooting his mouth; he was providing a fairly accurate analysis.

“Because of that, it doesn’t really matter who is behind the scenes organizing all this. All we have to do is make it so that these two grandmasters stop following orders, which should be possible as long as they aren’t acting directly on behalf of their respective kings. You see, both of them view their reputation as being all important. Although they are currently holding back, the two of them definitely are interested in outdoing the other.... We just need to throw some fuel on the fire, and the two of them will start squabbling with each other!” Bai Hao’s eyes glittered, and his tone grew more sinister.

“Master, all you have to do is make that happen, then suck it up a bit and get on the good side of one of them by acknowledging him as superior. Not only would that improve your own reputation, you also could use it as an attack on the other. In terms of all the complicated things that need to happen behind the scenes, I can handle that. By following this plan, it will only take a short period of time to achieve the first measure of success.” With that, Bai Hao stopped talking and looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times as he considered the matter. Pretending to bow his head to one of the two newcomers was something he could accept. However, even as he pondered Bai Hao’s words, his own thoughts brought him back to a situation which had occurred when he first got to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Bai Hao could tell that his Master suddenly seemed a bit distracted. Feeling a bit hesitant, he continued with his second plan.

“There’s another plan I came up with,” he explained. “This one is

a bit more direct, and also a bit more high profile. It will probably lead to more situations that have to be dealt with. You could participate in a competition with Sun Yifan and Sima Tao regarding necromancy and spirit enhancement, and then crush them. It could lead to other problems. However, if we managed to get them to challenge you, Master, then as the accused party, you could strike back with impunity.”

Afterward, Bai Xiaochun remained silent and thoughtful for a bit. Then his eyes glittered, and he suddenly looked very excited.

“Hahaha! Well done, apprentice. Those two plans are excellent. However, I actually have a better way to deal with the situation!”

Bai Hao’s eyes widened. “Master....”

His heart began to pound when he thought about how Bai Xiaochun had handled matters in the past. For some reason, he was already getting a bad feeling about the situation.

“Fear not, my apprentice, Master has a lot of experience handling situations like this. Just watch and learn!” With that, Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet, looking very excited and confident. To him, the sky already looked bluer than it had before.

The truth was that if Bai Xiaochun hadn’t mentioned having experience, then Bai Hao would actually have felt a lot better. But now, he got a very sinking feeling about what was to come. At that point, Bai Xiaochun produced a transmission jade slip from his bag of holding.

“Hmmmphh! I don’t care if this is business warfare, do you really think I’m afraid of you? Back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, Lord Bai was unparalleled under heaven. When it comes to fighting wars without landing blows, nobody can beat me!” Feeling quite proud, he quickly sent a message to Zhou Yixing back in Giant Ghost City.

The task he had in mind for him was something that Zhou Yixing

would easily be able to handle. Furthermore, considering that Zhou Yixing still had the restrictive spell in him, his life and death could be controlled by a single thought from Bai Xiaochun.

He hadn't contacted Zhou Yixing since coming to Arch-Emperor City, the reason being the death of Li Feng. Obviously, Bai Xiaochun had heard of the incident which had occurred during the battle with the savage tribe.

He had immediately begun to suspect the significance of the event, and had eventually come to realize what it meant about Zhou Yixing.

It had put Bai Xiaochun on guard, and he had decided to leave Zhou Yixing to his own designs for a short time before deciding what to do with him.

**

Zhou Yixing was currently in a mansion he owned in Giant Ghost City, looking very gloomy. Things had gone well for him after Bai Xiaochun's departure, and everyone had treated him respectfully. But as time went on, relations with the powerful groups in the city had cooled, and were not like they had been in the past.

Not all of them were distancing themselves, and Zhou Yixing still had his ways to assert his power.

However, he was feeling very conflicted about being left behind in Giant Ghost City. He wanted to be with Bai Xiaochun in Arch-Emperor City, and yet, Bai Xiaochun had apparently gotten too busy to think about him.

“Could it be that I really made the wrong choice...?” That was a question he asked himself more and more often nowadays. However, there was nothing he could do but stick to his guns and wait to see what happened. If enough time passed and Bai Xiaochun didn't contact him, then he could always take the initiative to send a message.

Even as he sat pondering these issues, the transmission jade slip in his bag of holding suddenly vibrated. After pulling it out anxiously, a stream of divine sense entered his mind, and he heard Bai Xiaochun's voice.

“Zhou Yixing, come to Arch-Emperor City!”

Heart bursting with excitement, he didn't delay for even a moment. After making all the necessary arrangements, he headed toward the teleportation portal.

Before long, he was in Arch-Emperor City. It was his first time in the place, and he was immediately awed by its grandeur. It took a long moment for him to calm down and then find the inn that Bai Xiaochun had instructed him to stay at.

That evening, Bai Xiaochun slipped into the inn unnoticed and found Zhou Yixing.

“Milord!” Zhou Yixing said, shooting to his feet, clasping hands, and bowing deeply. Although he was very excited, he kept it out of his voice and facial expression. Instead, he put a serious expression onto his face that said he would climb mountains of daggers and swim through seas of flames if Bai Xiaochun asked him to.

Bai Xiaochun handed a bag of holding to Zhou Yixing and then lowered his voice and said, “Take these vengeful souls and other resources. Go to the shops run by Sima Tao and Sun Yifan and buy as many of the high-grade soul medicines they have that are marked with their seals!”

Zhou Yixing immediately bowed his head in agreement, a very serious expression on his face. Although he had just arrived in Arch-Emperor City, he had been receiving some reports about Bai Xiaochun's activities, and was generally aware of the situation. As such, he immediately understood what Bai Xiaochun was talking about.

“Don't worry, milord,” he said with decisiveness that could sever

nails and chop iron. “I’ll handle it all immediately!”

A smile appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face. He offered a few more words of encouragement, and then gave the formula for thirteen-colored flame to Zhou Yixing, along with some advice on how to use it. Bai Xiaochun had done similar things back in Giant Ghost City, the result being that Zhou Yixing was already a terrestrial necromancer skilled with twelve-colored flame.

Combined with the special advice Bai Xiaochun had given, this formula was essentially the most precious of treasures to Zhou Yixing, whose heart swelled with gratitude.

Although the advice from Bai Xiaochun couldn’t match up to personal experience, it would at least make things easier. More important was that it indicated to Zhou Yixing how Bai Xiaochun felt about him.

Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun also promised him that as soon as he mastered thirteen-colored flame, he would give him the formula for fourteen-colored flame, along with some personal advice. At that point, Zhou Yixing felt more certain than ever that he had made the right decision.

Chapter 733: Poison....

After making the arrangements with Zhou Yixing, Bai Xiaochun stopped worrying about the two new shops. Instead, he hurried back to his own shop, exhilarated and in very high spirits.

“After this, those two old fogies won’t be underestimating me! The more experience you have in life, the sharper you get.... Take me for example. After everything that happened between me and that Whatchamacallit Society back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, how could I not think of using this method?! Hmmmphh! It’s simple, but effective. I’ll just do the same thing!”

Bai Xiaochun had never forgotten what the malevolent Celestial Sky Society did with his Ultra Fasting Aid Pill. The way they took that special pill which he had used to replace spirit food, and completely ruined it, had caused him to slip into a deep depression.

“Since these two necromancers have come looking to cause problems for me, then they can’t blame me for being vicious and merciless in return!” With that, he settled down cross-legged to meditate. As he did, the light spilling in through the door cast him in stark shadow... making him look completely ambitious and ruthless.

The next day, Zhou Yixing went to work with the vengeful souls Bai Xiaochun had given him. Of course, he didn't do it himself. He hired people to go to the shops operated by Sima Tao and Sun Yifan, disguised as ordinary patrons, to purchase plenty of high-grade soul medicine.

High-grade soul medicine was expensive stuff, but Bai Xiaochun was clearly determined to come out on top. For the following several days, Zhou Yixing did the same thing, using different agents every time. Eventually, half a month went by, and he had quite a large collection of high-grade soul medicine.

Each and every portion was marked with the seal of either Sima

Tao or Sun Yifan. Just having those marks on the soul medicine made it more expensive than before.

There were also some portions of mid-grade soul medicine that were marked with the grandmasters' seals. Zhou Yixing bought all of them. A few more days went by, and finally, he ran out of the vengeful souls that Bai Xiaochun had given him.

At that point, he made contact with Bai Xiaochun. Late in the night, they met again in the same inn. Without even a moment of hesitation, Bai Xiaochun gave Zhou Yixing enough vengeful souls to buy an entire second collection of soul medicine, and then took the first collection away.

The next day, Zhou Yixing went to work again.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was back in his shop, hustling about as he prepared to get to work. Off to the side, Bai Hao watched, and soon had a fairly good idea of what exactly the plan was.

“Obviously, Master is buying up the competition's soul medicine, and then tampering with it. Afterward, he'll secretly distribute it, and when people start having problems, they'll blame Sima Tao and Sun Yifan.

“It's a simple plan, and matchlessly vicious. However, that soul medicine was well-made, and won't be easy to tamper with. If people pick up on any of the clues, we could be shooting ourselves in the foot.” After a bit of hesitation, Bai Hao voiced his concerns to Bai Xiaochun.

“Don't worry, my apprentice. Master knows what to do. This will work perfectly!” Sticking his chin up proudly, he went into the back room and pulled out all of the soul medicine Zhou Yixing had purchased. After examining it closely, he had to admit that these two necromancers deserved their reputation. The medicine all abounded with soul power.

“Well, I don't have any other options. You were the ones who

provoked me.” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and a strange glint appeared in his eyes. He had reached a critical stage in the operation; he knew that if he tampered with the medicine and people realized it, then it would be exactly as Bai Hao had reasoned. However, Bai Xiaochun was confident, and it all went back to what had occurred back when he first arrived in the Wildlands and worked with soul medicine.

Back then, he had tried to treat soul medicine like medicinal pills, and combine Wildlands necromancy and the apothecary techniques from the Heavenspan River region to create a shocking type of soul pill.

However, despite wracking his brains and performing all sorts of tests, he realized that his idea was nothing more than wishful thinking. It was fundamentally impossible to combine the two different branches of study. However, he hadn't come off completely empty-handed. He had [discovered a way to insert toxic elements into soul medicine](#) in a way that was completely undetectable. After all, because the two branches of study were completely different, it would be impossible for anybody unfamiliar with the apothecary arts to detect the foreign substance.

The only person who might notice would be someone who was both a grandmaster necromancer and a grandmaster apothecary. In the wildlands, necromancers were numerous, but apothecaries were essentially nonexistent!

The reason for that was that the plants and vegetation in the Wildlands were not suitable for use in medicines. It was for a similar reason that spirit enhanced magical devices were much more rare in the Heavenspan River region.

“I never thought that my previous failure would actually turn out to be a powerful tool.” Eyes flickering thoughtfully, he further pondered the idea of imbuing the soul medicine with toxic gas, and at the same time, doing so in a way that would not be lethal. After

all, Bai Xiaochun was not the type who would rise to success by trampling upon mountains of innocent corpses.

“Aphrodisiac Pill? No, that pill is too cruel. Fantasy Pill...? No, that won't work either. It got too famous. If the same effects show up here, people might think of my true identity. Besides, if the situation blew up, it would be difficult to get under control.”

After deliberating for a bit more time, his eyes began to shine.

“That green smoke from the Blood Stream Sect that gave people diarrhea would be perfect! Besides, if the situation blows up, there would be plenty of ways to get it back under control!” Pursing his lips to suppress his laughter, he thought back to the green smoke which had resulted when he tried to concoct the Misty Spirit Incense on Middle Peak in the Blood Stream Sect.

“[Misty Spirit Incense, a tier-4 spirit medicine...](#) I could concoct something like that with my eyes closed.” He immediately began to rifle through his bag of holding. Although he didn't have very many types of plants and vegetation, as a grandmaster apothecary, he had plenty of ways to alter medicine formulas. As a result, it wouldn't be difficult for him to get the result he wanted. After a bit more thought, he used the powers of his mask to shield himself from the outside, then pulled out a pill furnace and set it down in front of him.

“It's been a long time since I did any pill concocting.” After taking a moment to settle his qi and clear his mind, he set to work concocting some pills, and then began to take the green toxic gas that resulted and imbue it into the soul medicine.

The night passed uneventfully, and when he walked out of the room the following morning at dawn, Bai Hao could see that, despite his exhaustion, he was very excited. In fact, he was even laughing loudly.

“You want to fight me, Zhou Hong!? There's nothing that Lord Bai hasn't experienced in life!” Thankfully, he had plenty of

restrictive spells set up, ensuring that his voice didn't go outside of the shop.

Worried about the situation, Bai Hao hurried over and was about to say something when Bai Xiaochun held out a portion of soul medicine.

“Here, my apprentice,” he said proudly. “Use every trick you know to study this portion of soul medicine and see if there's anything wrong with it.”

A serious look appeared in Bai Hao's eyes as he looked at the high-grade soul medicine. However, after studying it for a long moment, he couldn't see anything out of the ordinary. He even performed an incantation gesture and waved his finger, studying the soul medicine in every way he could think of. In the end, he had to admit that it looked like nothing more than an ordinary portion of soul medicine.

Looking quizzically at Bai Xiaochun, he said, “Master, did you really tamper with this soul medicine? Or did you take out the wrong one?”

Bai Hao was both a ghost cultivator who existed as a soul body, and also a genius when it came to flame conjuring. If he couldn't identify something unusual about the soul medicine, then it would be hard to find someone else in the Wildlands who could.

At first, Bai Xiaochun was worried that he had pulled out the wrong soul medicine, but after looking it over, he laughed heartily and said, “That's the right one! Within one month, those two shops' names will be ruined!”

When he thought back to his own miserable defeat at the hands of the Celestial Sky Society way back when, he knew that he was pulling a vicious and dirty trick. However, his opponents had really forced him into a corner....

“When I make a move, I frighten even myself!” Rushing out of

the shop, he contacted Zhou Yixing to set up another meeting. After handing over all of the tampered soul medicine, he gave some warnings and instructions that Zhou Yixing accepted without question. Afterward, Bai Xiaochun left in a wonderful mood.

Zhou Yixing was definitely a skilled follower. He had only been in Arch-Emperor City for a short time, but had plenty of men and resources at his disposal back in Giant Ghost City. Therefore, it was relatively easy for him to make certain connections in his new home. Almost immediately, he began to arrange for dealers to distribute the soul medicine.

This soul medicine was high-grade, and had the marks of grandmasters on them. Furthermore, no amount of inspection would reveal any flaw in them. Considering that they were being offered at a discounted price, it made them easy to sell. In fact, were it not for the fact that Bai Xiaochun had expressly forbidden it, it would have been possible to sell the entire batch of soul medicine in one go.

It only took about a day to get the high-grade soul medicine distributed within Arch-Emperor City. Not too long after that, the second batch that Zhou Yixing had purchased was finished, and also began to filter out into the city. More and more soul cultivators were getting their hands on it....

Of course, Zhou Yixing made sure that most of it went to soul cultivators from Borough 89 and the surrounding boroughs.

Before long, a third batch was being sold, then a fourth and a fifth.... during the half month that passed, more and more cultivators acquired such medicine. And then, gradually, very strange things began to happen....

Bai Xiaochun created the method to insert toxic elements into soul medicine back in chapter 579

The incident with concocting the Misty Spirit Incense was in

chapter 224

Chapter 734: Keep Your Voice Down!

The first incident occurred at Little Wolfgod's house. Little Wolfgod himself sat stock still and completely expressionless on a balcony, watching two soul cultivators dueling in the courtyard below.

Whoever prevailed in the duel would win Little Wolfgod's favor, and would be able to join him as a follower.

To Little Wolfgod, it wasn't a very important matter, but to the two cultivators involved in the duel, it was quite the opposite. That was especially true of the weaker of the two opponents, who was a middle-aged man named Zhou Chenwu. In fact, the duel was so important to him that he had bought a portion of high-grade soul medicine and consumed it right before the fighting started. That had pushed him to much higher levels of power.

The duel had been going on for some time when, all of a sudden, that Zhou Chenwu's face suddenly flickered. Then he fell back, a look of complete incredulity on his face. He looked like he was about to say something, but before he could, his opponent moved in for the kill.

"Hold on, Li Linsen, I--" His opponent completely ignored him, unleashing a magical technique before Zhou Chenwu could even finish speaking. Zhou Chenwu anxiously dodged to the side, but that motion apparently put pressure on his abdomen, and as he moved away, a shocking phhhhhrt sound echoed out.

In addition to the amazingly loud sound, Zhou Chenwu's pants... suddenly expanded outward as if they were being filled with air or gas.... Moments later, the most noxious of odors imaginable began to spread out in the area.

Zhou Chenwu's opponent Li Linsen was nearest, and was immediately blasted by the odor. Li Linsen had a Core Formation cultivation base, and would generally not be affected by toxic

gases. However, this odor was so strong that his face fell, and he immediately felt sick to his stomach.

Everyone watching the duel was stunned, and Little Wolfgod, who had closed his eyes moments before, suddenly opened them and looked over in shock.

“What was that sound...?”

“This can’t be right. Cultivators of our level don’t eat food.... Unless... maybe Zhou Chenwu is using some kind of special divine ability?”

Most of the audience was simply looking on in wide-eyed shock.

As for Li Linsen, he had to suppress the urge to vomit as he angrily said, “What are you doing, Zhou Chenwu?!?!”

Face scarlet, Zhou Chenwu replied, “Let’s end things for today, Fellow Daoist Li. We can reschedule the duel for another day.”

Inside, he was nearly going crazy. Completely unsure of what was happening, he turned to leave, howling miserably in his heart. He could feel his abdomen churning, and could even hear loud gurgling noises coming from the same area, noises that were completely embarrassing.

“What’s going on? What’s happening?!?!” Even as Zhou Chenwu turned to leave, Li Linsen in his humiliation let out a shout and prepared to attack again. At this point, Zhou Chenwu’s back was to him....

“Stay away!” Zhou Chenwu shouted urgently. “I can’t hold it in!!”

But he was too late.... Li Linsen closed in and hit him on the back. At that point, Zhou Chenwu truly couldn’t hold on any longer, and a thunderous phhhhhrt rang out, followed by a burst of some gaseous substance.... Before Li Linsen could do anything, the gas blasted into him.

The noxious nature of the odor was even more intense than the last time, and Li Linsen was even closer. A scream erupted from his mouth, and he tumbled backward miserably.

“You’re pushing things too far, Zhou Chenwu!!!”

Face burning red, Zhou Chenwu fled. As he went along, the phhhhhrt sounds continued to echo out, and left behind clouds of gas the entire way....

It was only after he was gone that the soul cultivators back in Little Wolfgod’s home finally got around to reacting. When the noxious gas reached them, they immediately devolved into a hubbub.

“Was that... was that a fart?!?!”

“Zhou Chenwu must have done it on purpose!”

Chaos ensued, and Little Wolfgod was immediately enraged. And that was only the first incident. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, there was a second incident somewhere else in Arch-Emperor City. Then a third, and a fourth....

The fourth incident was particularly shocking. In one bustling market in Borough 87, a beautiful female cultivator was surrounded by a cluster of male cultivators. The entire group was chatting merrily when, without any warning, the woman’s face fell, and a loud phhhrt sound escaped into the open.

The male cultivators all gaped in shock, and some blurted, “What was that sound?”

Then, an indescribably noxious odor caused all of their faces to flicker. As for the female cultivator, she simply couldn’t stop more thunderous phhhhhrt sounds from exploding out....

It sounded like a booming drum originating directly from the female cultivator. Eyes went wide, and numerous jaws dropped. As for the female cultivator, she began to scream, and tried to prevent what was happening, but was completely incapable.

Phhhhhrt! Phhhhhrt!! Phhhhhrt!!!

Clouds of foul, noxious gas spread out in all directions into the crowded marketplace, causing numerous shouts of alarm to rise into the air. Panic ensued as people scrambled to escape.

Such scenes played out not only in Borough 87, but also in Borough 88, Borough 86 and Borough 85. And even more incidents occurred in Borough 89.

Chaos spread as the phhhhhrt sounds and the foul gas began to fill the city. Anyone who encountered that odor felt as if they were being infected.

Before long, clouds of gas covered large areas of the city....

And yet, the most unimaginable aspect of the disaster was yet to come. Soon, the soul cultivators with the upset stomachs found that after expelling the gas, they started having diarrhea. The lucky ones were struck by the diarrhea when they were alone. Unfortunately, many were out in the open. Soon... agonized shrieks of madness began to fill all of the areas near Borough 89.

“What exactly is going on here!?!?”

“This isn’t a sneak attack is it? It doesn’t seem like it is!!”

“Who did this? Who’s behind it!? I’m gonna kill ‘em!!”

Miserable screams and roars of rage filled Arch-Emperor City.

Bai Xiaochun soon heard about what was happening, and even saw a soul cultivator outside of his shop unleashing an overwhelming stench onto the street. As the foul gas spread out, people scrambled to avoid it.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide, and Bai Hao looked completely taken aback.

“Something’s wrong,” Bai Xiaochun muttered. “That smoke I added was supposed to cause diarrhea. Why is everyone farting...?” Nervous, he backed away from the gas, worried he might be

infected. Then, his eyes went wide as he saw a second soul cultivator emitting phhhhhrt sounds.

Before long, a third could be seen, and then a fourth....

In the time it takes an incense stick to burn, eight people on the street near his shop were all struck, and were sending foul gas out in all directions. Cries of alarm rang out as the passersby fell into pandemonium.

His next-door neighbors Sima Tao and Sun Yifan also looked on in shock, and quickly ascertained that the gas would be impossible to dispel. Both necromancers were very unsettled.

Suddenly feeling very nervous, Bai Hao looked out at the crazed populace, then turned to Bai Xiaochun and said, “Mas-Master... I'm pretty sure all of those people had high-grade soul medicine in their hands. Could it be that--”

“Keep your voice down!” Bai Xiaochun interrupted. Rushing forward, he slammed the door shut.

“Don't tell me that I've gotten rusty at concocting medicine? It was supposed to be diarrhea. Why is everybody farting? That odor is almost unbelievably noxious!” Shaking his head gloomily, he thought back to all of the various accidents that had occurred back when he was into medicine concocting.

“I really didn't do it on purpose this time.... Who would ever have thought that things would turn out so crazy!?” Heart pounding, he looked out through the door crack at the gas filling the street, and the fleeing soul cultivators. Some of them weren't able to take the stench, and began to pass out. When Bai Xiaochun saw that, his fear mounted.

Trembling, he murmured, “That stench is so powerful! It affects everybody, regardless of their cultivation base....”

Chapter 735: Stop, All Of You!

The cataclysmic nature of the event was thanks in large part due to how well Zhou Yixing had gone about distributing all of the soul medicine. He had hired a lot of people to help, and had sold the medicine just as Bai Xiaochun had indicated, focusing mostly on the area around Borough 89. After all, if the effects were too scattered, they couldn't be considered a true catastrophe.

Borough 89 and the surrounding areas were very densely populated. Therefore, as the various patches of foul gas spread and combined, they slowly became something like a dark fog that gripped the entire area in its clutches.

It all came as a complete shock to Zhou Yixing. However, he had followed the plan which had been set in place, dismissing all of the people he had hired, and then changing his disguise and going into hiding. However, he didn't forget the final step of the plan. Even as he lay in hiding, he gritted his teeth and pulled out a portion of high-grade soul medicine that had been tampered with, then consumed it.

Before long, he also became a source of loud phhhhhrt noises. Face ashen, he began to shout in a gruff voice.

“Damn this high-grade soul medicine! The symptoms only appeared after I consumed this medicine! Dammit, it even had the mark of Sima Tao on it!”

Other soul cultivators in the area heard him. They had already been gripped by rage, but after hearing Zhou Yixing's words, they initially hesitated, but then came to the realization that they had also consumed such soul medicine. Immediately, angered shouts began to sing out.

“It's the high-grade soul medicine! I consumed a portion that had the mark of Sun Yifan on it! That's when all of this started happening! It's his fault!!”

“That’s right! I had some of that high-grade soul medicine too! The kind with Sima Tao’s mark on it!!”

“He’s in on it too!”

More and more such accusations began to fly, and the howls of rage and humiliation began to reach a fever pitch.

At first, people began to search for the dealers who had sold them the high-grade soul medicine, but Zhou Yixing had long since ensured that they couldn’t be found. Naturally, the attention of the victims quickly became focused on Sima Tao and Sun Yifan.

“Let’s find Sima Tao! He’s the one that concocted this soul medicine, and it was obviously defective! He’s trying to get famous at the expense of the common people!!”

“Don’t forget Sun Yifan. It was his soul medicine that I ate. He’s a grandmaster! How dare he try to run a scam on us!!”

“Find them!!”

It didn’t take long before a huge mob was pouring through the streets of Borough 89. Soon, they were on the very street where Bai Xiaochun’s shop was located, a river of countless soul cultivators, only a small portion of which were people who had actually consumed the soul medicine. The rest had only been affected second-hand. Righteous indignation burned within the crowd as they rushed toward the shops owned by Sima Tao and Sun Yifan.

Borough 89 was in complete chaos. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was the one truly responsible for all of this, and the sight of what was happening had him trembling in fear. Furthermore, he knew that it would not be easy to sate the anger of this crowd. After all, he had personally experienced many situations just like this in which the crowd had been after him.

“You people forced me to do this!” he muttered nervously. “I really had no choice.”

As he crouched there in his shop, he would occasionally open and

close the door to fan the gas away.

Bai Hao watched everything happening, sighing and musing that this unreliable Master of his really did have a knack for making people feel helpless. In fact, Bai Hao almost couldn't believe that he was really a Nascent Soul expert.... And yet, somehow that made Bai Xiaochun seem more down-to-earth to him, instead of some lofty and unreachable person. Bai Hao smiled wryly at the realization that it actually made him feel closer to his Master.

As Bai Hao sighed, Bai Xiaochun nervously peeked outside to see how events played out. The enraged shouting seemed to be peaking. The foul gas made it difficult to see, but people were already relying on divine abilities and magical techniques to try to drive it away.

As the mob grew larger, Bai Xiaochun was able to detect with his divine sense that people had burst into the two shops on either side of him. Instantly, cursing and shouting could be heard inside.

“What are you people doing!?!?”

“What are we doing? More like what did you do!? This soul medicine has your mark on it, doesn't it Sima Tao?!”

“I'm gonna kill you, Sun Yifan!!”

“Stay your hand! Listen to me! That soul medicine doesn't have anything to do with me!”

Booms and crashes could be heard, and Bai Xiaochun's divine sense clearly revealed to him that the two shops on either side of him were a scene of utter chaos. People were completely trashing both shops, and both signs had already been torn down and ripped to pieces.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times. Although things seemed to be going well, the anxiety in his heart continued to mount. Even as he started pondering how to defuse the situation, his divine sense revealed to him that certain people from the crowd were now

rushing in the direction of his shop.

“Not good! They must know I'm responsible!” That was his initial thought, but he quickly realized that it couldn't be the case. “No. There's no way they could know that....”

A boom rang out as the door to his shop was blown to bits, whereupon a large group of soul cultivators stormed in.

Standing tall and straight, he glared at the soul cultivators and shouted out in a thunderous voice, “What do you people think you're doing!? I'm not Sun Yifan. And I'm not Sima Tao either! This shop belongs to me, Bai Hao. This is The Number One Spirit Enhancement Shop Under Heaven!”

He even unleashed some of the power of his cultivation base, causing incredible pressure to weigh down in his shop.

The soul cultivators froze in place, and their faces fell. They immediately began to apologize, then rushed back out. The truth was that it wasn't a case of mistakenly identifying the wrong shop; they had hoped to take advantage of the riot outside to do some looting! After all, in addition to the victims, there were also many unscrupulous individuals in the mob. Bai Xiaochun's shop wasn't the only one to be targeted; others in the area also fell victim.

When Bai Xiaochun realized what was happening, his anxiety mounted. However, despite the fact that he had caused the foul gas to appear, he couldn't control it. In that moment of crisis, Bai Hao's eyes lit up, and he leaned over and whispered, “Master, I have a plan....”

Bai Hao quickly explained his idea. Having no time to think about it at length, Bai Xiaochun nodded and then rushed out the front door. Looking around at the countless people milling about in the foul gas, at the ruins that were the two adjacent shops, and at all the other shops in the area, from within which echoed the sounds of yelling and fighting, he unleashed the power of his cultivation base.

Then he blurred into motion, appearing in front of one of the nearby shops. Backing his voice with all of the power he was capable of, he bellowed, “Stop, all of you!”

He even drew upon some of the energy of the Undying Emperor’s Fist to cause his voice to boom out in a way that seemed highly threatening. At the same time, he waved his hand, causing all of the rioters inside to fly out into the street.

Facing the employees that remained, he said, “Come with me immediately! Let’s put an end to this chaos!”

Of course, everyone in the affected shop was furious at how they were being unfairly dragged into such a bad situation. Having been saved from the rioters, they were profoundly grateful, and immediately joined Bai Xiaochun with the intention of helping calm the situation down.

Before long, Bai Xiaochun and his group appeared in front of a second shop, where they quickly quelled the chaos. Then they moved on to a third shop. More and more soul cultivators joined him. Furthermore, he acted with utmost heroism and bravery, taking the initiative to attack the rioters. Before long, all of the shops in the area were banded together under his leadership, and were restoring order.

“Stay your hand!”

“If you have an issue, explain yourself calmly. Anyone resorting to violence will be executed according to the law!!”

“This is Arch-Emperor City, don't even think of staging a revolt!!”

Under Bai Xiaochun’s leadership, the shops suppressed most of the chaos. Soon, they had about as many people on the streets as the angriest of the soul cultivators in the mob. That, coupled with the fact that Bai Xiaochun himself was so powerful, and that they also occupied the high ground in terms of the law, ensured that the

rest of the soul cultivators gradually calmed down.

As a result, everyone from the local shops looked to Bai Xiaochun with eyes that shone with gratitude. Although many of them had felt ill will toward him in the past, as of now, his actions in this moment of crisis led them to feel much respect toward him.

Chapter 736: Controlling The Rhythm Of Things

Although the chaos had been brought under control, there was no way that the angered soul cultivators would simply disperse. Their gazes flitted back and forth between Bai Xiaochun and the ruined shops of Sima Tao and Sun Yifan. Clearly, if Bai Xiaochun hadn't been there to interfere, the mob would still be attacking those two shops.

Despite feeling nervous and a bit guilty, Bai Xiaochun shouted, "Listen to me, everyone. I, Bai Hao, guarantee that I will get you the explanation you deserve!"

"Fellow Daoist Bai, we are not at fault today. It's them! Sima Tao and Sun Yifan!"

"That's right! Those two shameless fellows sold us counterfeit soul medicine! The embarrassment we have endured today must be avenged!!"

"It's good that you're here, Fellow Daoist Bai. We'll follow your lead as you resolve this issue!"

The soul cultivators all knew that although the riot hadn't affected a very large area, this was Arch-Emperor City, and if things went on for too long, the city guard would definitely arrive at some point.

Although they were all furious at Sima Tao and Sun Yifan, they gritted their teeth and forced themselves to remain calm. Some of them even wondered why the city guard hadn't arrived already.

After all, every borough was overseen by a contingent of city guards, who were responsible for keeping the peace. However, not a single city guard was visible.

"Don't worry, everyone. I, Bai Hao, as well as the other Fellow Daoists at my side, will ensure that you get your explanation!" He

even thumped his chest in emphasis. The other shop owners and employees who were with him acted similarly.

Seeing that the crowd had calmed down left Bai Xiaochun feeling quite relieved. He had worried that things had gone overboard, and that it would result in misfortune. But now, he was the one the crowd expected to render judgement, something he found to be outrageously ironic.

With that, he called out, “Fellow Daoist Sima! Fellow Daoist Sun! Please come out for a chat!”

In response, Sima Tao and Sun Yifan emerged from the rubble of their shops, unsightly expressions on their faces. Although they both had profound cultivation bases, there had simply been too many enraged and maddened soul cultivators to deal with. Before either of them had even been able to react, their shops were destroyed. Therefore, not only were both of them angry, but they also cast piercing glances at Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Hao,” Sima Tao said, “the soul medicine they’re talking about has clearly been tampered with. Give me even one portion, and I’ll bring the truth to light!”

“As for who the true culprit is,” Sun Yifan said coldly, “we’ll figure out soon enough, and announce it for everyone to hear!”

These two necromancers had been brought there to put Bai Hao in check. Therefore, this turn of events left them feeling very unsettled. At the same time, they couldn’t help but harbor some suspicion that Bai Xiaochun was actually the one behind it all.

And yet, if that was true, they still couldn't imagine how he had managed to alter the soul medicine in the way he had.

However he had tampered with it, there was no way he could have done it without leaving evidence. They were both sure that they could find the clues. After exchanging a glance, they both confirmed their mutual intention to drag things out until Zhou

Hong arrived.

In fact, they had both contacted Zhou Hong as soon as the incident began. He was the reason the city guard hadn't appeared; considering how things had gotten out of hand so quickly, he didn't want to get implicated.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, mostly in admiration of his apprentice's intellect. After all, everything he was doing right now was according to Bai Hao's plan. In the heat of the moment, he had been given no other choice than to go with that plan, and now that he was seeing the results, it caused his eyes to shine.

He had quickly gone from being in the passive position to being completely in charge of the situation. Furthermore, he was now in a position to decide the fate of the reputations of Sima Tao and Sun Yifan, all with a single word.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, his heart began to pound with excitement. However, he kept a very somber expression on his face.

“Fellow Daoists, the two of you are necromancers, and therefore... I believe you! There's no way that soul medicine concocted by necromancers such as you two would cause such outrageous side-effects!”

Sima Tao and Sun Yifan were clearly shocked by how firmly Bai Xiaochun seemed to be standing by their side, and both of them immediately felt as if something fishy were going on.

The other soul cultivators in the area began to stir, and even shout out angrily.

“What do you mean by that, Fellow Daoist Bai?!”

“You believe them!? What, you think we're stirring up trouble for no reason?!”

Bai Xiaochun immediately waved his hand to interrupt the shouts of the crowd.

“I also believe the rest of you!” he said loudly. “You wouldn’t have come here for no reason at all. Please, allow me to tell you how I truly feel. Although I know how things ended up, I don’t know why they happened. All of you say that you consumed soul medicine concocted by these two grandmasters, which was what led to the various incidents. Does anyone have one of those portions of soul medicine that I could examine?”

His words seemed to pacify the crowd for the moment. Then, a middle-aged cultivator snorted coldly and tossed out a portion of high-grade soul medicine.

Bai Xiaochun caught it in his hand and then peered down to examine it. After a moment passed, he frowned and looked up at Sima Tao and Sun Yifan.

“Fellow Daoists, the two of you definitely outrank me in terms of necromancy. Pray forgive my ignorance, but I really can’t see any signs of tampering.” With that, he handed the soul medicine over to Sima Tao.

Snorting coldly in his heart, Sima Tao took the soul medicine. He had heard earlier that the cause of the disaster was his own soul medicine, but hadn’t been able to get his hands on one of the offending portions.

After taking it, his eyes shone as he began to examine it closely. However, as the moments ticked by, his eyes widened, and his heart began to pound. He even performed an incantation gesture, drawing upon the power of his cultivation base to perform a very thorough investigation. After all of that, though, he was unable to identify any problem areas. Soon, beads of sweat began to pop out on his forehead.

Furthermore, he could tell that this soul medicine really was the work of his own hand. No matter how he looked at it, he couldn’t find any traces of tampering. Slowly, he began to pant, and his heart began to quiver with a sensation of profound foreboding.

Sima Tao's behavior was also getting Sun Yifan nervous. In the end, he grabbed the soul medicine and used his own methods to examine it. Soon, his face turned just as ashen as Sima Tao's, and a look of incredulity could be seen in his eyes.

“Impossible!” Sun Yifan thought. “This soul medicine really was concocted by Sima Tao! But I don't see anything wrong with it! There's plenty of soul power inside, and it seems completely stable.... Don't tell me that this is just an ordinary portion of soul medicine, and they're intentionally using it to try to fool us?”

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Sun Yifan prepared to speak, and yet, was beaten to the punch by Bai Xiaochun.

“Fellow Daoists, I wasn't able to find anything wrong with that portion of soul medicine, nor find any traces that it's counterfeit. In fact, I suspect that it is just an ordinary portion of medicine. I think we need to perform a test!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, Sun Yifan chimed in. “That's right. This medicine is definitely not counterfeit!”

Sima Tao's eyes glittered. He refused to believe that a portion of soul medicine that he had concocted could be tampered with without him being able to tell. The only person who could possibly do something like that would be an earthly necromancer. And yet, if an earthly necromancer really wanted to cause problems for him... he wouldn't need to do it in such a complicated way. An earthly necromancer could have him expelled from Arch-Emperor City with a single word.

With such thoughts on his mind, he looked at the soul medicine again, and then pointed at one of his shop clerks, a young man he had brought with him from Nine Serenities City.

“You test it!”

The clerk hesitated for a short moment, then walked forward and

took the soul medicine. After taking a deep breath, he sat down cross-legged and then began to absorb the soul power from the medicine through his palm.

With so many people watching him closely, there was no way he could pull a fast one in this situation. Everyone simply waited to see what would happen. Before long, the clerk opened his eyes, and the soul medicine was completely absorbed. As he rose to his feet, he seemed completely normal, leading Sima Tao to breathe a sigh of relief. Then he opened his mouth to speak when, all of a sudden, a loud phhhhhrt erupted into the open, followed by a cloud of foul gas.

All of the soul cultivators present who had been affected earlier immediately erupted into howls of rage.

“So that soul medicine is defective! What were you just about to say, huh Sima Tao?!”

“Sun Yifan, you and he are both completely out of line!!”

“Impossible!” Sima Tao blurted, his face draining of blood as he staggered backward. “This is impossible! I checked it myself. There were no problems....” However, he was at a complete loss as to how to defend himself.

Sun Yifan was physically shaking, and knew that the game was up. He and Sima Tao had been thoroughly defeated: their soul medicine really was defective!!

Bai Xiaochun shook his head silently, seemingly at a loss for words. As for the other shop owners and clerks, they all began to sigh.

The shouting from the crowd began to grow more intense.

“Alright, Sima Tao and Sun Yifan. We have proof now. You’d better compensate us for all of this!”

“Give us our compensation, otherwise, we won’t let you go even if you call for help from the Arch-Emperor!!”

“Once this story gets out, everyone in the Wildlands is going to know that Sima Tao and Sun Yifan are knaves through and through!”

Sima Tao and Sun Yifan were so nervous they were sweating rivers, when, all of a sudden, a grim voice cut through the shouting of the crowd.

“I, Zhou Hong, will provide the compensation!”

Chapter 737: Good People Go The Extra Mile

Along with the words came a beam of light, slicing through the air. It was none other than the heir apparent from Nine Serenities City, Zhou Hong. He wasn't alone either. He was flanked by dozens of henchmen, as well as a group of several hundred cultivators wearing black armor.

The black-armored soul cultivators had expressionless faces, and completely ignored everyone present as they spread out in the area, performing incantation gestures as they set up a spell formation.

As soon as the spell formation was activated, a massive gravitational force appeared, which immediately sucked away all of the foul gas in the area.

The sight of the gas vanishing filled the other soul cultivators in the area with complete shock.

“The heir apparent of Nine Serenities City....”

“It's Zhou Hong....”

The truth was that Zhou Hong was actually feeling very nervous. Even the smallest incident in Arch-Emperor City could have profound implications outside. He might be an heir apparent, but that didn't mean he had the luxury of letting his guard down. After all, relations between the four heavenly kings weren't very good at the moment.

At the moment, it didn't matter whether or not Sima Tao and Sun Yifan were truly responsible for what was happening. The soul medicine had their mark on it, which meant that they couldn't extricate themselves from the situation. Furthermore, neither could Zhou Hong. The truth was that Zhou Hong was even more worried than Bai Xiaochun was about things getting out of control.

After all, this was Arch-Emperor City!

In his anxiety, he had called in some favors to stop the city guards from getting involved. After all, once they did, it would be impossible to prevent reports from going up the chain of command.

That didn't mean that a lack of a report would keep the matter hidden. However, once someone did report the matter, formal action would have to be taken.

After ensuring that the city guard would wait a bit before taking action, Zhou Hong quickly came over with members of his father's own personal guard, who used a powerful spell formation to get rid of the foul gas.

It had been a lot of things to take care of in a short time, and he was feeling extremely frustrated about the matter. However, there was nothing he could do. As soon as he arrived on the scene, he called out, "It doesn't matter how all of this happened. It was probably just a mistake. Don't worry, everyone, I will provide compensation that will surely leave you feeling very pleased!"

Immediately, his henchmen spread out and started taking care of everything.

Those who had been directly affected by the soul medicine were given handsome compensation, and actually ended up profiting quite well. Furthermore, everyone understood that this hefty remuneration was also a way to buy their silence.

The other soul cultivators who had been affected by the disaster were also given compensation, and although it was less than what the actual victims received, they were all very satisfied. As for Zhou Hong, although he was loath to pay such a heavy price, he really had no other options.

Bai Xiaochun watched through narrowed eyes, unable to hold back his admiration for how quickly Zhou Hong had taken care of

everything. Apparently, Zhou Hong was even more nervous than he was about causing a larger disaster.

After seeing how happy everyone was at the compensation, Bai Xiaochun looked up in thought for a moment, then cleared his throat, lowered his voice, and spoke to the other shop owners behind him. “Our shops were damaged too!”

The shop owners all began to grumble and then complain aloud. Not too far away, Zhou Hong's heart felt like it was dripping blood as he forced himself to calm down. Gritting his teeth, he waved his hand, sending a person over to Bai Xiaochun and his group to discuss the matter. Before long, a bag of holding was given to Bai Xiaochun.

At this point, everyone felt very pleased, although Bai Xiaochun was feeling a bit guilty. Considering how badly everyone had suffered, he took his own share and began to distribute it among those who had been directly affected by the soul medicine, leading more and more people to cry out his name in admiration.

The smiles on the faces of everyone in the crowd sent stabs of pain into Zhou Hong's heart. Never could he have imagined that his little scheme against Bai Xiaochun would not only fail, but also cause great injury to himself.

“Well, at least things are all worked out now,” he told himself comfortingly. He was just about to open his mouth to speak to the crowd when he saw all of the soul cultivators who had been given compensation rushing over to clasp hands to Bai Xiaochun.

“Grandmaster Bai, many thanks to you for taking a stand for justice!”

“You're a great person, Grandmaster Bai!”

“Fellow Daoist Bai Hao, I owe you a big favor for what you did today!”

They weren't the only ones to react in such a way. The shop

owners also clasped hands and offered expressions of gratitude. Moved, Bai Xiaochun immediately announced that everyone present could have a discount the next time they came to his shop, which made people even more happy.

Zhou Hong was the one who actually gave out the compensation, but the person everyone thanked was Bai Xiaochun. It left Zhou Hong's mind spinning, and he simply couldn't control his emotions. Profound hatred for Bai Xiaochun immediately blossomed in his heart.

Unfortunately for him, he could only wrestle it into check. After all, he didn't want to dig himself further into a pit. After a long moment, he simply left. And thus it was that the incident with the foul gas was resolved.

Bai Xiaochun stood there looking at the crowds dispersing, his hands clasped behind his back. Then, feeling very pleased with himself, he walked back into his shop, musing that his apprentice's plan really had been amazing.

"Beautifully executed final move!" he said, laughing heartily and giving Bai Hao a look of praise. Bai Hao felt both embarrassed and pleased. After all, his Master was the only family he had, and his approval left Bai Hao feeling wonderful.

Bai Xiaochun spent some time bragging and boasting, then went into the back room, very pleased with not only having avoided disaster, but also coming off with a bit of profit.

Savoring the victory, he took out the formula for seventeen-colored flame and continued his work with it.

Three days passed by in a flash. During that time, Zhou Hong was run ragged dealing with the aftermath. He spread bribes high and low, and put out fires left and right. When everything was said and done, nobody came looking to ask questions.

It was on the evening of the third day that he finally called Sima

Tao and Sun Yifan over to discuss the matter. After the three of them were seated in a locked chamber, he grimly asked, “Did you find out what happened? Was it Bai Hao?!”

Sima Tao and Sun Yifan didn’t say anything at first. A moment passed, and then Sima Tao braced himself and bitterly said, “The two of us used every trick in the book. We even asked for some help from some fellow experts we know. We really can’t find any signs that the soul medicine was tampered with.”

“No signs at all?” Zhou Hong replied angrily. “Then what’s wrong with it? Don’t tell me the two of you really are responsible!?!?” He wasn’t being polite at all. Normally speaking if he had spoken like this, Sima Tao would have been very displeased, and would have immediately rebuked him. After all, he wasn’t a mere counselor to the Nine Serenities King, he was a grand elder from the Sima Clan in Nine Serenities City.

Even Sun Yifan would have responded with little more than a cold snort. After all, he was a high counselor to the Spirit Advent King, and would be well within his rights to scold a prince from Nine Serenities City.

But in the current circumstances, both of them had little choice but to accept the treatment.

Wording things carefully, Sima Tao said, “To be able to tamper with soul medicine and leave behind no evidence is a level of necromantic skill that neither of us has ever even heard of before. The only way it could be done is with some legendary secret magic of some sort or another.”

“Although we weren’t able to learn anything from the soul medicine itself,” Sun Yifan added through gritted teeth, “we did come up with another clue. All of the soul medicine in question was purchased from our shops, and after looking into our records, Brother Sima and I were able to determine that over the course of the last month, we had quite a few suspicious customers!” Bones

aching with hatred, he pulled out a jade slip that he handed over to Zhou Hong.

Zhou Hong's eyes flashed as he accepted it and looked it over. Then he rose to his feet and left to make various arrangements. Soon enough, the full power of the heir apparent of Nine Serenities City was on display as a massive investigation was carried out. Over the course of the following few days, clues were unearthed one by one.

Although all of the suspicious people who had purchased the medicine were wearing disguises, Zhou Hong's network ran wide and deep. Soon, he uncovered the fact that on the day of the disaster, every person in that suspicious group had used Arch-Emperor City's teleportation portal to travel to Giant Ghost City!

Soon, it was also uncovered that the entire group of people had originally teleported into Arch-Emperor City on the same day!

Although the exact times were staggered, it was obvious that they were working together.

"I don't care if I can't prove it directly, Bai Hao, I'm convinced that this was all your doing!!" Anger burning, Zhou Hong gritted his teeth and sent messages to Sima Tao and Sun Yifan.

Once Sima Tao and Sun Yifan got the news, their minds reeled, and their fury also began to rage.

"You framed us, Bai Hao!!"

"How shameless, Bai Hao!!"

The mere thought of Bai Xiaochun's act that day got their blood boiling, and they immediately rushed out of their shops and headed toward Bai Xiaochun's.

Chapter 738: I Challenge You To A Duel!

After the recent disaster, Zhou Hong had spent a lot of time and resources smoothing things over.

Unfortunately, business for Sima Tao and Sun Yifan had been seriously damaged, and few customers came their way. Thanks to the efforts of Zhou Hong, much of the news of the events in Borough 89 and the surrounding areas had been stifled. And yet, it was impossible to prevent word from spreading completely.

Nobody seemed interested at all in Sima Tao and Sun Yifan. In contrast, the way that Bai Xiaochun had taken action on the day of the disaster ensured that many people approved of him more than ever. Almost immediately, a steady stream of customers was flowing into his shop.

The other shops in the area who had helped Bai Xiaochun also benefited, so whenever soul cultivators arrived wanting high-quality spirit enhancements, they would refer them to Bai Xiaochun's shop.

Bai Xiaochun was doing business like crazy, even more so than when he had initially become popular. Bai Hao was constantly running around, busier than ever. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was very pleased with everything, especially with how perfectly the plan had been executed. Clearly, Bai Hao was very useful when it came to coming up with plots and schemes.

Bai Xiaochun was currently in the back room of his shop, doing research into seventeen-colored flame.

It was with great contentment that he went about researching seventeen-colored flame. Thanks to his several months of hard work, he now felt that he understood this type of flame much better than before. As of this point, there were only two main problem areas that, once he resolved, meant that he could formally start trying to conjure the flame.

Suddenly, his eyebrows danced up and down with delight as he finally resolved the first of those main problem areas. Everything made sense now that the problem faded away.

However, it was in that very moment that, out in the main part of the shop, Bai Hao let out a cry of alarm.

Then, two rumbling sounds like thunder echoed into the shop from the street. The entire shop vibrated, and cracks even appeared in the walls and ceiling, as though the shop might collapse at any moment.

Bai Xiaochun was instantly startled out of his good mood. Irritated, he burst out of the back room just as the angry voices of Sima Tao and Sun Yifan rang out.

“Get the hell out here, Bai Hao!!”

“Bai Hao, you contemptible rascal! You were the one who tampered with that soul medicine! How dare you slander our names! Things are not over between you and us!”

Their voices were so laced with rage that other shops in the area also began to tremble and vibrate.

Everyone who heard the words being spoken were shocked, and looked over hesitantly.

“Bai Hao tampered with the soul medicine?”

“Well he certainly had the motive... but I don't think he's good enough to do something like that.”

Bai Xiaochun had originally been extremely irritated at having been interrupted, but then he heard the words being spoken, and his heart lurched with nervousness and guilt. Unfortunately, there was no time for thought or planning; he couldn't leave Bai Hao out there on his own.

The shop was already in complete disarray. Thankfully, Bai Hao hadn't been hurt. However, Bai Xiaochun had put a lot of hard

work into this shop, so to see someone else messing it up felt just the same as if someone had broken into his home. At this point, his anger began to burn.

Eyes bloodshot, he shouted, “So, repaying kindness with enmity, huh Sima Tao, Sun Yifan? You’ve ruined your reputations and now you’re trying to drag me down with you? How despicable!

“If I hadn’t stepped in during the disaster, you two might have lost your lives! I calmed everyone down and gave you time to explain yourselves. I’m the one who resolved the whole situation!

“If you don’t want to show your appreciation, fine. But now you dare to slander me? You two... are complete bullies!!” Bai Xiaochun made his voice as loud as possible, causing it to echo out clearly throughout the area. He was aware that it was possible that Sima Tao and Sun Yifan had actually come up with some clue to implicate him, and therefore, he decided to try to overawe them with an intimidating display.

Sima Tao’s fury grew hotter, and he retorted, “Bai Hao, you--”

“I what?!” Bai Xiaochun interrupted, glaring at him. “When you opened up a shop right next to me in open competition, Sima Tao, did I ever ask you to stop? Did I ever go and threaten to tear it down? Did I ever curse you to your face?

“I accepted the humiliation silently. I swallowed my complaints. And why? Because I, Bai Hao, am a nobody here, and I didn’t dare to provoke you!

“I didn’t even do anything when you clearly tried to take advantage of how nice I was being. Even when you were in a really bad situation and I could have taken advantage of it, well, I have my bottom line, and I know that there are just some things I can’t do!

“I couldn’t just stand around and watch all of the other Fellow Daoists from the other shops in the area get dragged into the

situation, and that's why I helped you. But now, you actually come here to wrongly accuse me? Sima Tao, do you have no heart? If so, then dig open your chest to prove it. But if you do, then, how evil-hearted you are!

“Not only are you ungrateful, you are the type who oppresses the good and timid people in the world. You are completely and utterly selfish, and in fact, don't even qualify to speak a single word to me!” Bai Xiaochun spoke with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron, in a manner as grand and lofty as the highest clouds in the sky.

Bai Xiaochun's words were like a razor-sharp sword that cut deeply into Sima Tao. His face fell, and he was so shocked he took a few subconscious steps backward. Mind numb, he stared at Bai Xiaochun with the desire to respond. He even opened his mouth. And yet, not a word came out.

Seeing how Sima Tao was trembling in shock because of Bai Xiaochun's words, Sun Yifan shouted, “Cut the crap, Bai Hao!”

“You can just shut up this instant, Sun Yifan!” Bai Xiaochun shot back. “Do you really think that Lord Bai doesn't know that you and Sima Tao are as thick as thieves? You set up shop on either side of me, you villains. You had the backing of an heir apparent, and used your seniority as old-time necromancers to try to put me out of business!

“You know, there's a question I've been wanting to ask this whole time. Did I ever do anything to offend you?!?! No! I didn't! For mere profit, you attempted to prevent me from making a living. Alright, fine. I can deal with that. But now you want to plant false evidence against me to try to earn your reputation back? Well let me tell you, I have nothing to hide in anything, and I certainly don't fear evildoers like yourself!”

Bai Xiaochun's words were spoken with complete frankness, and flowed out as smooth as a river. They made Bai Xiaochun seem

more impressive than ever, and caused both Sima Tao and Sun Yifan to freeze in place, their hearts pounding with anger, but unable to say anything in response.

Everyone else in the area was surprised. This was their first time realizing how sharp-tongued this Bai Hao could be. It was almost as if his words were weapons, making this spectacle even more dazzling than an actual fight.

Even Bai Hao was stunned. This was also his first time witnessing how glib his Master could be, and it left him gaping with surprise. It was only now that he finally realized what it must have been like to see Bai Xiaochun during the Bai Clan's ancestral ceremony. If words were swords, then speeches like this could kill!

“You... you....” Sun Yifan was furious, and his mind was spinning, but he could hardly speak. Neither he nor Sima Tao were proficient in battles of words. Furthermore, to people like them, reputation was everything, and they had long since come to believe that as grandiose Nascent Soul experts, they couldn't possibly act like newbie cultivators who battled with words.

And yet... here was Bai Hao, a Nascent Soul expert, an elite cultivator with shocking battle prowess, whose sharp words left them feeling completely helpless.

Sima Tao was the first to recover. Gritting his teeth, he said, “At this point, Bai Hao, words are meaningless. It doesn't matter whether you admit it or not, today... I challenge you to a duel! Not a duel of magical techniques, but a duel of flame conjuring! Whoever loses will get the hell out of Arch-Emperor City, and never conjure a single flame again for all time!”

At this point, Sun Yifan also recovered. He knew that the incident with the soul medicine was something very damaging that had to be recovered from. Right now, the most important way to go about doing that was to get revenge. If they could crush this Bai Hao once and for all, they could wipe away their disgrace, and

slowly recover from the humiliation of recent days.

With such thoughts on his mind, he shouted, “That’s right, Bai Hao. I also challenge you to a duel. Since you're good enough to tamper with soul medicine, then let’s see how good you actually are at flame conjuring!”

Chapter 739: A Wager!

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered slightly. If it were a competition of spirit enhancement, then as long as he had enough flame, he could be completely confident. However, Sima Tao and Sun Yifan were obviously aware that he had defeated Chen Xiong in just such a competition, and that he could perform fifteenfold spirit enhancements. Besides, when it came to spirit enhancement, because of how success rates worked, no one could ever be absolutely confident in winning.

That was why they didn't mention spirit enhancement. And when all was said and done, necromancers also had to be proficient in the other skills of flame conjuring and soul medicine concocting. And because flame conjuring was how one went about concocting soul medicine, the foundation of everything came down to flame conjuring.

However... Bai Xiaochun was not completely confident when it came to flame conjuring. At the moment, he still couldn't conjure seventeen-colored flame, and even had problems succeeding consistently with sixteen-colored flame.

And thus, his expression flickered slightly.

Although Sima Tao and Sun Yifan couldn't compete with Bai Xiaochun in a battle of words, they had both lived many years and experienced many things. As a result, they could instantly tell what he was thinking.

Seeing that, Sima Tao added, "If we're going to compete, then we also need to have a little wager. The stakes are the right to stay in Arch-Emperor City! If you lose, you have to get the hell out of the city, never perform spirit enhancements again, and also give up your shop! If you win, then I'll hand my shop over to you!"

"And mine as well!" Sun Yifan said with a cold smile. "Since it's two on one, we won't try to take advantage of you!"

“If it’s a wager you want, then I guess I’ll have to gamble a bit!” Bai Xiaochun said, clasping his hands behind his back and emphasizing his words with a cold harrumph. As far as he was concerned, it didn’t matter that Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were Nascent Soul cultivators. Bai Xiaochun had a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, and had defeated over a hundred top chosen. He had even come out victorious over the half-deva Junior Champion King. Considering all that, these two necromancers shouldn’t be a problem at all.

Just as he was contemplating whether or not to drive them away, Sima Tao apparently realized what he was thinking. If this Bai Hao wasn’t already a legend for his bravery and ferocity, Sima Tao would have simply challenged him to a fight, instead of bringing up the matter of flame conjuring. But now that he could tell that Bai Xiaochun was contemplating escalating things to outright fighting, he knew he had to do something.

“Bai Hao, you’re a Nascent Soul necromancer, and a famous one at that. If you try to beat us up, we might not be able to fight back. But resorting to violence will only delay things today. And there will always be a tomorrow! Even if you don’t agree to our challenge today, we’ll come back a second time!” Sima Tao had experienced a stroke of inspiration due to his nervousness, and it immediately caused Bai Xiaochun to frown.

“Fine, Bai Hao,” Sun Yifan jumped in, “I’ll also put up 1,000,000,000 vengeful souls! If you win, you can have them all!” Obviously, Sun Yifan had also realized that Bai Xiaochun wasn’t completely confident when it came to flame conjuring, and that it was important to force him into the challenge no matter what!

Sun Yifan had thought his plan out well. He knew that if he caused a big enough scene, and attracted enough attention, then if Bai Hao wanted to continue to do business in Arch-Emperor City, he would have to take the challenge seriously.

And when it came to attracting attention from an audience, the

best way to do it was offer huge stakes in a bet. It was exactly the same thing that had happened with Chen Xiao.

And that was why he offered up 1,000,000,000 vengeful souls!

As expected, his words caused an immediate stir. After all, 1,000,000,000 vengeful souls was a mind-boggling number. It was the same number that had propelled Bai Xiaochun to the rank of major general back on the Great Wall. Even the true spirit back there had been completely shocked and moved by that number.

“Another shocking wager is taking place because of Bai Hao's shop. Last time it was 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine, and this time it's 1,000,000,000 vengeful souls!!”

“This is monumental!” There was already a clamor of conversation, and many people were excitedly taking out jade slips to send message to their friends.

Meanwhile, Sima Tao realized what Sun Yifan was thinking. Gritting his teeth, he said, “I'll also throw in 1,000,000,000 vengeful souls!”

His words only served to throw oil onto the fire; numerous cries of astonishment could be heard erupting from the crowd.

“Heavens! Another 1,000,000,000!?!?”

“That's 2,000,000,000 vengeful souls! That number... is staggering to even think about!!”

“This goes way past the 800,000,000 portions of soul medicine. Hurry, this news is priceless! We have to spread word!” More and more soul cultivators began sending messages to friends, and it didn't take long before all of Borough 89 was shaken. Other surrounding boroughs were similarly affected. By this point, Bai Xiaochun's neighborhood, which had once been a relatively remote and out-of-the-way location, was now getting packed with excited crowds.

When Bai Xiaochun looked around and saw that people were

rushing into the area from all over, he suddenly felt a lot of pressure, and his eyes even turned a bit bloodshot. Looking back at Sima Tao and Sun Yifan, he realized that he had been backed into a corner. If he didn't accept the wager, then these two would be free to spread rumors about him tampering with their soul medicine, which would get the whole city mad at him.

“Alright,” he said through gritted teeth. “How are we going to do this?”

Sima Tao chuckled coldly in his heart at how they had forced Bai Xiaochun's hand. Voice tranquil, he said, “We'll set a certain type of flame, and a time limit. Whoever can conjure the most during that time will be the winner. Brother Sun. Bai Hao. What do you think?”

Generally speaking, there were two main types of competitions that would occur between necromancers. One was to see who could conjure the flame with the most colors, the other was to see who could conjure more flame in a given time period.

The first type would show what overall level the necromancers had achieved, and the second would show how skilled they were in it.

Although Sima Tao had come up with the idea for a competition on the spur of the moment, he had abundant life experience as a necromancer, and knew that, considering this Bai Hao could perform fifteenfold spirit enhancements, he was obviously at the celestial rank, just like himself and Sun Yifan.

He had never even considered that he could be an earthly necromancer. After all, the number of earthly necromancers who existed in the Wildlands could be counted on one hand. Furthermore, they were the type of people who wandered from place to place and were rarely seen.

Celestial necromancers couldn't conjure eighteen-colored flame. At most, they could handle seventeen-colored flame. Of course,

even those who could only do it with difficulty, making that type of flame unsuitable for wagers.

Sixteen-colored flame was a different story, though. Sima Tao was very familiar with sixteen-colored flame, and could produce it quite consistently. Considering his level of experience and skill, he was very confident in being able to win a competition involving that type of flame.

Sun Yifan was essentially thinking the same thing, and quickly nodded in response.

“Let’s compete in sixteen-colored flame,” he said, smiling coldly inside. “How about this: we can all start from one-colored flame and work up to sixteen-colored flame. Whoever can conjure three flames first will be the winner!”

Sima Tao laughed heartily. “Perfect! That’s an even more simple method than the usual one. And fairer too. All of the Fellow Daoists who are here to watch can serve as witnesses!”

Although they had made a show of giving Bai Xiaochun the option of giving an opinion, they had spoken so quickly that he had been given no such opportunity.

And yet... nobody present was willing to point that out. After all, the method suggested by Sun Yifan was just as Sima Tao had said, very fair.

The truth was that both Sima Tao and Sun Yifan were people who had been famous for years already, and had deep reserves of skill. In contrast, Bai Xiaochun was a newcomer to the necromancy scene, and nobody would think to describe him as being very skilled.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart thumped when he heard the details of the wager, and he immediately got a bad feeling. When it came to fifteen-colored flame, he was actually very confident. In fact, he could succeed with virtually one hundred percent certainty. But

sixteen-colored flame was different. Even with the improvements Bai Hao had made to the formula, he was still only capable of roughly a thirty percent success rate.

Furthermore, he hadn't had the opportunity to discuss the matter of flame conjuring with anyone else besides Bai Hao. Although Bai Hao was skilled, not even he had ever been in much contact with other celestial necromancers. Therefore, not even he was sure of what success rates were common when it came to sixteen-colored flame.

After all, success rates were not often discussed by necromancers with outsiders. Usually, they kept things like that a secret.

Most other people in this situation would either bow their head in defeat, or impulsively take the bet. But not Bai Xiaochun. He blinked a few times, then looked at Sun Yifan and Sima Tao and angrily said, "That's not a fair bet. I can only manage a twenty percent success rate with sixteen-colored flame! How am I supposed to win like that!?"

His words caused many jaws to drop in the audience. After all, many people had at least heard of the supposed success rates for sixteen-colored flame. Although none could be absolutely certain, they at least had a general idea.

"Twenty percent success rate? Seems a bit exaggerated."

"Sixteen-colored flame is one of the most advanced forms of multi-colored flame, and has a very low success rate. Only earthly necromancers can produce it consistently. Celestial necromancers are all different, but for the most part, they can't make it very easily."

As the audience chattered, Sima Tao threw his head back and laughed sarcastically. "Nice try, Bai Hao! To tell you the truth, I only have a twelve and a half percent success rate when it comes to sixteen-colored flame. Brother Sun is a bit more adept than me, but even he can't get past fifteen percent."

Sounding utterly serious, Sun Yifan said, “If you can manage a twenty percent success rate, then you don’t have to worry at all. You’ll definitely win!” With that, he looked at Bai Xiaochun as if to say, what, did you really think that was going to scare us or something?

“Fine, you’re on!” Bai Xiaochun said, eyes glittering.

Chapter 740: Evenly Matched

Bai Xiaochun's comportment immediately caused Sun Yifan and Sima Tao to hesitate, and even exchange glances. Although it seemed like he was simply trying to put on a brave front, they were now more on guard than before. The truth was that Simao Tao had actually held back a bit of the truth. Both he and Sun Yifan could achieve success rates of nearly seventeen percent!

In fact, if they got lucky they could sometimes reach twenty percent! However, that was the limit for a celestial necromancer when working with sixteen-colored flame. The only exception would be... if they managed to improve the formula they worked with!

But doing something like that was incredibly difficult. All necromancers in the Wildlands knew that even earthly necromancers who tried to alter flame conjuring formulas would have to spend a huge amount of time and energy to do so, and even then might not succeed.

After all, the current formulas had been derived by constant refining and augmentation from generation to generation. Countless tests and confirmations ensured that the current formulas were the most reliable.

Considering all of that, Sima Tao and Sun Yifan calmed themselves, and immediately called for help to set up a competition arena in front of the three shops.

It wasn't a large arena, and had just enough space for the three of them to do their work. In that short time, however, so many soul cultivators showed up that there were now row upon row of them waiting to watch what would happen.

There were even people floating in the air to observe. By now, there were definitely more than 100,000 people present, with more beams of light appeared every moment. The city guard was

shocked, and immediately dispatched a few hundred people to make sure that order was kept.

Zhou Hong was present, of course, as were Little Wolfgod, Li Tiansheng, Miao Lin'er, and even the second prince. Virtually all of the chosen that Bai Xiaochun had kidnapped in the Necromancer Kettle had arrived.

There were also other chosen and heirs to the noble and aristocratic houses, people like Chen Xiong who hadn't been in the Necromancer Kettle. Everybody came to watch and comment on Bai Xiaochun's performance.

This competition was already sizing up to be much bigger than the previous one. Not only was the audience larger, but the fact that there were so many chosen present got everyone else in the audience even more excited.

Chen Manyao was also there, alone in the crowd and away from the second prince and the other chosen. She stood there by herself, quietly watching Bai Xiaochun.

To see so many people crowded together watching him made Bai Xiaochun a little nervous. Although he was capable of a thirty percent success rate with sixteen-colored flame, that still didn't leave him completely confident. And yet, there was nothing else he could do.

"Too bad we can't compete in fifteen-colored flame!" he thought. Although he wasn't feeling very confident, he had to brace himself and hope that Sima Tao and Sun Yifan weren't capable of much more than fifteen percent or so.

Bai Xiaochun's visible nervousness caused Sima Tao and Sun Yifan to feel more relaxed than ever. They sat cross-legged on either side of him, meditating to settle their qi and clear their minds.

Before long, the audience started to quiet down. Zhou Hong

hovered in the air above them, eyes flashing. After casting a brief glance at Bai Xiaochun, he loudly announced, “It is a great honor to have been invited here today by Grandmaster Sima and Grandmaster Sun, to preside over this competition of flame conjuring. Very well, enough with the introductions. Let the competition... begin!”

As his words rang out, countless eyes came to focus on the competition area, and the three necromancers sitting there.

The eyes of both Sima Tao and Sun Yifan snapped open, and without the slightest hesitation, they casually performed double-handed incantation gestures, causing soulhoarding pagodas to fly out of their bags of holding. Then, with the wave of a finger, they each summoned hordes of vengeful souls.

Neither of them delayed in the least bit. They began their conjuring work, creating something from nothing as they started with one-colored flame, which would be the foundation upon which they worked all the way up to sixteen-colored flame!

They were clearly both very familiar with the process. They were both celestial necromancers with significant skill sets, and that was fully on display right here. Both of them had suffered severe blows to their reputation recently, and knew that this wager was critical to repairing some of that damage. Therefore, neither of them held back at all.

Within the space of a few breaths of time, both of them closed their fingers down, then almost simultaneously, opened them again to reveal tongues of one-colored flame.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun had also produced his soulhoarding pagoda as soon as Zhou Hong officially began the competition, and he was no slower than Sun Yifan and Sima Tao! In the end... all three of them produced a tongue of one-colored flame at the same time!

Everyone watching the competition was stunned.

“It only took them a few breaths’ of time to produce a one-colored flame!!”

“They clearly deserve to be called grandmasters, and definitely deserve to be celestial necromancers!!”

Neither Sun Yifan nor Sima Tao revealed any reaction to what had just occurred. They knew that since this Bai Hao was in the celestial rank, he must be very familiar with the process of conjuring one-colored flame. Were he not, then he wouldn’t deserve to be their opponent.

Soon, all three of them were at work again, producing two-, three-, four-... all the way to ten-colored flame!

The entire time, they all seemed to be racing neck and neck. The fact that they were all keeping the same pace was a bit worrisome to Sun Yifan and Sima Tao, and yet, at the moment, all it did was cause their hearts to tremble slightly.

Next came eleven-, twelve-, and thirteen-colored flame. When Sun Yifan and Sima Tao saw that Bai Xiaochun was still keeping pace, serious expressions appeared in their eyes.

Everyone in the audience watched with bated breath, their hearts pounding. It wasn’t that the onlookers had never seen people conjuring flame before. In fact, many in the audience were necromancers themselves.

However... it was not an everyday occasion to be able to see celestial necromancers conjuring flame.... Considering that most earthly necromancers were wanderers who nobody ever encountered, that meant that celestial necromancers were the ostensible peak of the necromancy world.

“Celestial necromancers... are terrifying! They went from one-to thirteen-colored flame with ease. And the speed! Furthermore, all three of them seemed to be on almost exactly the same level!”

“Heh. These three are definitely not ordinary celestial

necromancers. They're all at the very peak of their rank!”

“I feel like my eyes have been opened! Just watching them work is beneficial... I’ve already resolved a few areas I had problems with in the past.”

Bai Xiaochun ignored all of the discussions. He was now completely immersed in the flame conjuring, and sparing no effort in the process. Usually, he preferred to have all of the variables under control when he worked, but this time, he had no such luxury. The only thing he could do was maintain complete focus in the hopes that he wouldn’t lose.

Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were equally focused on their work, and completely ignored the crowd. Currently, they were now working on fourteen-colored flame, and couldn't afford any distractions.

Moments later, it was for the first time that the audience saw... a difference between the three necromancers!

Although the methods used by Sun Yifan and Sima Tao varied slightly, they were mostly the same, and followed the prescribed pattern everyone was used to. Sima Tao followed the soul ratios precisely, and Sun Yifan mostly ignored the sea of fire, and focused on feeding the souls into it.

Occasionally, ripples of multi-colored light would glow off of them, which came from the flame conjuring secret magics that they employed to increase their speed. However, Bai Xiaochun’s method of conjuring fourteen-colored flame was completely different.

He used the thirteen-colored flame to consume all of the tens of thousands of vengeful souls in one moment, which caused gasps to rise up in the audience.

“Bai Hao’s conjuring methods are unprecedented!!”

“He fed tens of thousands of vengeful souls into the fire at once! Isn’t he worried that the tongue of flame will collapse?!”

However, it was to everyone's wide-eyed shock that, not only did Bai Xiaochun's flame not destabilize, but it actually grew stronger. Furthermore, because of how he fed all the souls in at once, his speed greatly surpassed the secret magics used by Sun Yifan and Sima Tao!

This time, the three necromancers didn't all finish at the same time. However, the disparity wasn't very dramatic; they all finished within roughly ten breaths of time of each other.

After the fourteen-colored flame appeared, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath to calm himself. Not even bothering to look around, he continued with his work, sending vast amounts of vengeful souls out to be consumed by the sea of fire. Gradually, his fourteen-colored flame rose to the level of a fifteen-colored flame!

After Bai Xiaochun's flame appeared, Sun Yifan and Sima Tao succeeded as well. By this point, the pressure was on the other two necromancers, as they had to admit that Bai Xiaochun's abilities in flame conjuring were unique and shocking.

Expressions flickering as they contemplated what was at stake, they exchanged a glance. However, that was when they found to their shock that Bai Xiaochun hadn't stopped; he was going on directly to sixteen-colored flame!

"This Bai Hao is too young and inexperienced. That's not the way to go about conjuring. You need to get plenty of fifteen-colored flames built up, that way your chances of success will increase."

"We're definitely going to win."

Exchanging a smile, Sun Yifan and Sima Tao felt more confident than ever.

Chapter 741: Flame Harmony!

Many of the people watching frowned sadly when they saw what was happening.

“Well, there’s not much suspense now about how this will end. Although Bai Hao is good at flame conjuring, he obviously doesn’t have much experience!”

“Although I can’t personally conjure sixteen-colored flame, I’ve heard that the best way to do it is to get a large collection of fifteen-colored flames, and then proceed. You’ll lose a few of the flames in the process, but once you find the sweet spot and get into a rhythm, you’ll succeed instantly. That way, the overall chances of success are improved.”

“Yeah, that’s right. If you just try with one flame, and then fail, you have to start again from the very beginning. How will you ever find the sweet spot that way?” Everyone else was sighing, but Bai Hao was off to the side, looking on with complete approval. He knew that his Master’s choice was the correct one. Now that he was working with Bai Hao’s improved sixteen-colored flame formula, there wasn’t a need to rely on luck or sweet spots.

Bai Hao’s improved formula broke down the steps involved with sixteen-colored flame into tens upon tens of thousands of specific steps. Every successful step in the right moment built upon itself, so as long as Bai Xiaochun followed the exact routine and didn’t slip up, then theoretically speaking, his success rate should be one hundred percent!

Of course, following those steps correctly required a very draining usage of augury techniques and divine sense. Although it seemed simple, it involved a level of difficulty that was almost impossible to describe. Even Bai Xiaochun could only do it because of his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, and divine sense that bordered on the level of a deva’s.

“You can do it, Master! You’ve followed all of the steps perfectly so far!” Of course, Bai Hao had been paying very close attention to everything that Bai Xiaochun had been doing the entire time.

As for Sun Yifan and Sima Tao, it was with very casual motions that they placed their recently concocted fifteen-colored flame off to the side and started to work on new tongues of one-colored flame. Their goal, of course, was to build up enough fifteen-colored flame to be completely confident in conjuring sixteen-colored flame.

Another two hours passed. By this point, Sima Tao and Sun Yifan had both taken their second tongue of flame to the fourteen-colored level. As for Bai Xiaochun, sweat poured down his face as his fifteen-colored flame continued to consume vengeful souls. He was now down to the very last step.

Not bothering to wipe the sweat off of his face, he looked at the flame with glittering eyes and then let out a shout. His right hand then clamped down, causing a blast of heat to spread out. People shouted in surprise as the sea of fire sank down into Bai Xiaochun’s palm and then disappeared between his fingers.

Zhou Hong was feeling very nervous. Little Wolfgod, Li Tiansheng, Miao Lin’er, the second prince, and all of the other chosen craned their necks forward to look. Even Chen Manyao was covered with a sheen of sweat because of her nervousness.

Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were both visibly shocked, and were looking over in nervous expectation. As for Bai Hao, his eyes were wild with joy. He was the only one who knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that his Master had not made any mistakes.

Tens of thousands of eyes were glued to Bai Xiaochun as he slowly opened his fingers!

The instant he did, fiery light exploded out, and the silence erupted into pandemonium.

“Sixteen-colored flame!! Heavens! This Bai Hao did it in a single shot!!”

“What kind of luck is that!? He did it on the first try!!”

“Awesome! This guy is awesome!!”

Countless expressions of praise rang out. However, unsightly expressions could be seen on the faces of Zhou Hong and the other chosen. The only exception was Chen Manyao, who was smiling broadly.

As for Sun Yifan and Sima Tao, the blood drained from their faces as they stared at the sixteen-colored flame in Bai Xiaochun’s hand. After a moment passed, though, they gritted their teeth.

“Well, he certainly got very lucky. However, I refuse to believe that he’ll be lucky enough to do that a second time!!” That was how both of them tried to comfort themselves. And yet, the pressure was mounting, and as such, they didn’t hold back any of their secret magics as they continued their conjuring work.

Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief, and a smile broke out on his face. He really had gone all out, and thankfully, hadn’t slipped up a single time. Finally wiping his forehead clean of sweat, he produced some more vengeful souls and then started working on a one-colored flame.

Time passed. Although watching people conjure flame wasn’t the most exciting thing, everyone was still completely wrapped up in what was going on. Some people were just enjoying the commotion, others were taking advantage of the situation to learn a bit about flame conjuring. By the time Sun Yifan and Sima Tao finished with their third tongue of fifteen-colored flame, Bai Xiaochun had his second!

Once that happened, everyone began to watch with even more excitement. Even Sun Yifan and Sima Tao looked over to watch, wondering if he would do the same thing he had last time, and go

straight from a one-colored flame all the way to a sixteen-colored flame.

Before long, more excited shouts split the air, and the eyes of Sun Yifan and Sima Tao went as wide as saucers.

Just like last time, Bai Xiaochun had chosen to go straight to sixteen-colored flame!

“This guy is crazy!”

“Dammit! Why is he doing this? What does he hope to accomplish!?”

There was no way that Sima Tao and Sun Yifan couldn't be gripped with anxiety by this point. Although his previous success had been shocking, they were both ninety-nine percent sure that he would fail the second time, but they still had to wonder: what if he succeeded?

Zhou Hong's heart was racing as he looked down at Bai Xiaochun. He felt like his head was swelling from the pressure, just like it had back in the Necromancer Kettle. Little Wolfgod and the other chosen all had similar reactions. The fact that this Bai Hao went about things differently from everyone else was actually completely terrifying.

What if he actually succeeded in the end...?

“There's no way he'll succeed a second time in a row!!” Sun Yifan shouted inwardly, his eyes bright red as he put down his third fifteen-colored flame and started with a fourth one-colored flame!

Sima Tao could hardly control his own breathing, and yet he gritted his teeth and also started working on a one-colored flame. However, neither of the necromancers could stop from glancing over occasionally at Bai Xiaochun and cursing him.

Unfortunately, their cursing seemed to be very ineffective. Bai Xiaochun was working even faster than before, and actually felt less pressure than with the previous flame. He was more familiar

with all the complicated steps, and also understood the augury technique even better. Even Bai Hao was stunned by how smoothly he worked.

“It seems Master is even better with sixteen-colored flame than he was before.”

Nobody understood Bai Xiaochun’s flame conjuring techniques better than Bai Hao, and in this situation, he was completely correct. Bai Xiaochun had indeed improved. Perhaps it was the pressure of the occasion, or perhaps it was some measure of enlightenment he had received due to his study of seventeen-colored flame. Either way, he was definitely much better at working with sixteen-colored flame than he had been in the past.

In this second flame of the competition, he was completely lost in his work, and had even forgotten where he was. He was completely focused, reveling in the feeling, his hair disheveled and his eyes completely bloodshot.

He seemed to be descending into madness, much the way he would when concocting medicine back in the Heavenspan River region. It was a state he had not often entered here in the Wildlands, but the current circumstances were perfect.

The fifteen-colored flame in his palm almost seemed alive, as if the flame had a spirit. It seemed to be dancing in high spirits as it consumed numerous vengeful souls. As the flame swirled around him, Bai Xiaochun began to exude an indescribable air, as if he were somehow the sovereign of all flame!

As for the audience, everyone held their breath as they watched. Not a single person spoke a word, as if they were worried that doing so would end the spectacular scene they were beholding.

Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were shaking as they looked at the maddened Bai Xiaochun, their eyes shining with the utmost level of disbelief.

“Flame Harmony....” hissed Sun Yifan. From the look in his eyes, he was clearly completely shaken.

In the Wildlands, there were different realms of flame conjuring, and Flame Harmony was one of them. It was a state in which one’s mind became one with the flame, in much the same way that a deva would become one with all creation. In fact, the various secret magics employed by necromancers were all imitations of this very realm.

Sun Yifan and Sima Tao had never heard of celestial necromancers who could achieve Flame Harmony; according to their understanding, it was something that only earthly necromancers could do!

As of this moment, the sky grew dim, almost as if all light in the area were fading away because of Bai Xiaochun. He was the focus of all creation as the dancing flame converged into his palm. In the blink of an eye, another color appeared. It was now a sixteen-colored sea of fire!

However, Bai Xiaochun didn’t converge the sea of fire into a sea of flame. His eyes were currently sparkling with the light of augury as he contemplated the formula for seventeen-colored flame. All of a sudden, he was focused on the two different possibilities his apprentice had mentioned regarding the formula for eighteen-colored flame!

Chapter 742: Breaking New Ground

Bai Xiaochun was immersed in the depths of augury. However, as for everyone else in the audience, when they saw the sixteen-colored sea of fire surrounding him, they erupted into pandemonium.

“A sixteen-colored sea of fire! All Bai Hao has to do is finish the last step, and he’ll have a second tongue of sixteen-colored flame!!”

“This is completely fantastic. He's breaking new ground! I never would have thought that someone would do something so spectacular with flame conjuring!!”

“Is that... wait, don’t tell me that’s the legendary Flame Harmony?”

The clamor wouldn't stop; people really were completely and utterly shaken by what they were witnessing.

Tens upon tens of thousands of voices all clamored together, creating a rumbling sound that was as loud as thunder. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun was in a little world of his own, surrounded by a sea of fire and completely immersed in augury. Otherwise, the thunderous sound would likely have distracted him.

Zhou Hong’s eyes shone with mysterious light. Even Little Wolfgod and the other chosen could tell that something odd was going on. They even considered doing something to interrupt Bai Xiaochun, but knew that doing so would provoke too much public outrage. Besides, who knew whether or not Bai Xiaochun would do something drastic in response. Therefore, they were forced to simply watch broodingly.

“Dammit,” Li Tiansheng said through gritted teeth. “Since when did we have to be so worried about making a move on someone!?” However, he could do nothing but sit there bitterly. Based on the

glint in Zhou Hong's eyes, Li Tiansheng could tell that he had already decided it wasn't worth it to try to interrupt Bai Xiaochun.

“This guy is crazy,” Zhou Hong murmured inwardly. “I could do something to interrupt this session of enlightenment, but for all I know, he might disregard all propriety and do something unspeakable....” Gritting his teeth, he shook his head. The truth was that virtually all of the Wildlands had been shaken by what Bai Xiaochun did in the Necromancer Kettle, and all of the chosen who had been part of it had been profoundly affected.

Meanwhile, Sun Yifan and Sima Tao both had looks of despair in their eyes. As celestial necromancers, they had more insight into the situation than anyone else present, and could tell that, given the current state Bai Xiaochun was in, there was no way they could compete with him.

When everyone else looked at the sixteen-colored sea of fire around Bai Xiaochun, they assumed he was preparing to form it down into a sixteen-colored flame. However, Sun Yifan and Sima Tao could both tell that Bai Xiaochun's level of control over the sixteen-colored flame had reached an unimaginable level. They knew that all it would take would be a single thought on his part to form that flame!

“How do we compete with this...?” That was what both of them were thinking. At the same time, neither of them were willing to just give up. Eyes crimson, they each looked down at the four fifteen-colored flames they had conjured up to this point, and knew they only had one chance.

To throw caution to the wind!!

If they went all out, they might get lucky and succeed in transforming their current batch of fifteen-colored flames into sixteen-colored flames, all in one shot!

Although there was only a minimal chance of success, it was their only hope.

“Time to go for broke!!” Sun Yifan murmured through gritted teeth. Sima Tao’s eyes were just as bloodshot as his. Both of them seemed ready to put their lives on the line to come out on top in the wager.

However, even as they made up their minds, Bai Xiaochun suddenly looked up and started laughing like a maniac. He threw his hands up above his head in delight, and his eyebrows danced with joy as he shouted, “I understand! I get it now! This technique will work!! I'm gonna try it out. I have to try it out!!”

His mind was currently filled with the two different methods his apprentice had come up with regarding the formula for eighteen-colored flame.

One method involved getting a large collection of seventeen-colored flame and transforming them into something new. With that method, the focus was not on vengeful souls, but on the seventeen-colored flame itself.

The other method was to take a seventeen-colored flame and spread it out into a sea of fire, and slowly add another color by using flame itself. When the eighteenth color appeared in full, then the sea of fire could be formed back into a tongue of flame.

The second method was actually very shocking, and was something that had never been done before. It went completely contrary to the traditional way of conjuring flame.

After all, the formula for eighteen-colored flame was very rare. Not even the Giant Ghost King had it. Anyone who succeeded in conjuring eighteen-colored flame... would instantly become an earthly necromancer! And earthly necromancers were the rare among the rare in the Wildlands!

All earthly necromancers occupied incredibly high positions that were no weaker than the heavenly kings. In fact, the Wildlands currently only had three earthly necromancers in total. They were even more rare than demigods.

Bai Xiaochun was bursting with excitement, and yet he forced his breathing under control. At the moment, he had completely forgotten about the competition, and was completely focused on flame conjuring. With that, he waved his right hand, causing the surrounding sixteen-colored sea of fire to rapidly form down into a true sixteen-colored flame!

Before any exclamations of praise could be heard, and before Sun Yifan and Sima Tao could even begin to try to conjure sixteen-colored flames, Bai Xiaochun turned his attention on them, and the fifteen-colored flames which hovered around them.

Eyes shining, and mind abuzz with the new technique, he completely ignored Sun Yifan and Sima Tao as he waved his sleeve, causing the power of his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul to sweep out. He instantly created a windstorm that Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were completely unprepared for, and sent them tumbling backward out of the competition area.

“What are you doing, Bai Hao?!?!”

“Bai Hao!!”

Blood oozed out of the corners of their mouth as they reeled in confusion about what was happening. As for the audience, they were shouting in alarm, completely stunned by Bai Xiaochun’s actions. Only Bai Hao seemed to know what his Master was thinking, and his eyes shone brightly as a result.

Bai Xiaochun didn’t even hear the words uttered by Sun Yifan and Sima Tao. Instead, he focused on the eight tongues of fifteen-colored flame they had left behind. Waving his sleeve again, he collected them up, even as Sun Yifan and Sima Tao shouted out in rage.

Countless eyes went wide with disbelief as people tried to figure out what was happening.

“What are you doing, Bai Hao!?”

“What’s... what’s... what’s going on?!”

“Isn’t this a competition? What are you suddenly stealing our flames for?! What kind of a competition is this...?” Although Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were yelling angrily, secretly they were breathing sighs of relief. Bai Xiaochun’s impulsive action had actually resolved any feelings of embarrassment they had before, and gave them plenty of ammunition with which to attack him later.

Zhou Hong and the other chosen were immediately bursting with joy. That was especially true of Miao Lin’er, who knew that this stupid move on the part of Bai Hao would definitely give people plenty of ground to talk about him negatively, no matter what he did from this point out.

Chen Manyao looked on nervously. However, there was no way to take back what had been done, nor any way for her to resolve the current situation. Even as everyone was completely shocked by Bai Xiaochun’s actions, all of a sudden... his two sixteen-colored flames suddenly spread out and then combined.

It was one giant sea of sixteen-colored fire, which sent blistering heat out in all directions as it rose high into the sky. Everyone in the audience was backing away in fear.

“I need ten tongues of sixteen-colored flame....” he murmured, eyes shining with madness. Based on the inspiration he had just received, he tossed the eight tongues of fifteen-colored flame into the sixteen-colored sea of fire.

Instantly, intense rumbling sounds exploded out, sounds that could be heard quite a distance away. Furthermore, the way the flame filled the sky ensured that everyone could see it!

Cries of alarm could be heard as people scrambled away. Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were no longer beside themselves with joy, and their scalps were tingling with fear.

“What is he going to do?!?!”

“Heavens! If that sea of fire destabilized, something very, very bad would happen!!”

The city guards seemed the most nervous of all as they spread out, not only trying to quiet people down, but also setting up a spell formation to contain the area Bai Xiaochun was in.

The guards knew that Bai Xiaochun could not be disturbed. If he did, and the sea of fire exploded, mass chaos would ensue. As they tried to contain the situation, they all sent messages to their superiors.

Zhou Hong’s eyes flickered malevolently, but he quickly abandoned any ideas of trying to interfere. The trouble that would happen as a result was too much for even him to be able to handle.

As everyone watched nervously, Bai Xiaochun remained in the middle of the spell formation, hands flashing in a double-handed incantation gesture as he controlled the sea of fire. It was almost as if the sea of fire had a spirit that was meekly responding to all of his orders. As he fed the eight tongues of fifteen-colored flame into the sixteen-colored sea of fire, they unexpectedly became... part of the sixteen-colored sea of fire!!

The sight of so much sixteen-colored fire was completely and utterly unbelievable.

“Sixteen-colored fire.... I can’t believe all those fifteen-colored flames became part of a sixteen-colored sea of fire!!”

“If he formed that sea of fire back down into tongues of flame, then he would have... ten tongues of sixteen-colored flame! Heavens! How is this even possible!?!?”

Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were as ashen as death as they stood there, gazing blankly at the shocking sixteen-colored sea of fire.

Of course, things weren’t over yet!

Chapter 743: Shaking The Whole City!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes sparkled brightly as he manipulated the shocking sixteen-colored sea of fire. Although his aura was calm, his heart was bursting with excitement. He felt very similar to how he used to feel back in his medicine concocting days, when he would suddenly be struck by inspiration. His heart prickled as surely as if tiny hands were tickling it.

“Seventeen colors!” he roared, throwing both hands wide in a double-handed incantation gesture. The sixteen-colored sea of fire instantly began to spin, and without the addition of any other vengeful souls, began to grow vastly hotter.

And then, as everyone watched, it began to shrink down!!

Soon, it was only 30,000 meters wide, and rapidly shrinking. The power of fire within it was shocking, and the heat caused the air to distort wildly. Nobody in the audience dared to say a single word, and all of them continued to back away anxiously.

Even more cultivators further away could feel the blistering heat, and more city guards were mobilizing to lock the area down.

Bai Xiaochun had become a source of ultimate terror, and everyone knew that if he lost control of the sea of fire, and it exploded, the consequences would be unimaginable.

Zhou Hong trembled in nervousness. Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were also shaking, and looked as ashen as death. At the same time, though, traces of excitement could be seen in their eyes. Although they viewed Bai Xiaochun as competition, they were also celestial necromancers, people who devoted themselves to the study and understanding of flame conjuring. To see a completely unheard-of technique being used right in front of them was definitely a source of major excitement.

Everybody had forgotten about the competition, and were now

completely and utterly focused on that figure within the sea of fire!

As the sea of fire spun, rumbling sounds echoed forth, and the fire shrank down. 24,000 meters. 18,000 meters. 15,000 meters. 9,000 meters. Soon, it was only 3,000 meters wide!

It was at that point that within the sea of fire... another color appeared! Under the eyes of all spectators, it became... a seventeen-colored sea of fire!!

All onlookers were struck with shock. Although many of them had guessed that this would happen, to see it occur right in front of them drove them to near madness.

People didn't even know what to think! This was completely overturning all previous traditions; this was a new page in the history of flame conjuring!

At this point, people couldn't refrain from calling out in surprise.

“He didn't need any souls to add a seventeenth color to that flame!!”

“Am I seeing things? This is unheard-of!!”

“This Bai Hao is definitely going to be completely famous in the Wildlands! He's creating a new paradigm!!”

As for Sun Yifan and Sima Tao, they were shaking physically; the events of this day would be certain to alter their future path of flame conjuring.

Because everyone was focused on Bai Xiaochun, nobody was paying much attention to Bai Hao, who remained off to the side as he had the entire time. His eyes were fixed on his Master, and they gleamed with excitement and satisfaction. He couldn't have been happier that his Master was proving that his own theories about the formula for eighteen-colored flame were correct.

It was a critically important factor, and for the sake of the eighteen-colored flame formula, Bai Hao was burning every last

detail of these events into his mind. As of now, he was completely confident of being able to finish that formula!

“Eighteen-colored flame....” When it came to that formula, he didn’t really care about the glory or honor that would go with it. He cared mostly about how useful it would be to his Master. With that formula, his Master could become an earthly necromancer!

Although he had come to realize that his Master was somewhat unreliable in certain things, nothing had changed between the two of them. Bai Xiaochun was Bai Hao’s only family!

At this point, numerous streams of deva-level divine sense locked down on the area, and their owners were all completely shaken by what they saw.

However, even as people reacted to what was happening, the cries of astonishment suddenly increased.

“He’s not stopping....”

“He’s not forming it into a tongue of flame. Is he going to...?”

“Don’t tell me he’s going to....”

“If he conjures an eighteen-colored flame, he’ll break out of the celestial rank and become... the fourth earthly necromancer in the Wildlands!!” In the blink of an eye, the pandemonium increased by tenfold.

“Earthly rank.... Is Bai Hao really going to become an earthly necromancer?!”

“He’s going to make a breakthrough with tens of thousands of people watching!?!?”

“It actually doesn’t matter if he succeeds. This boldness is worthy of admiration!!”

Sun Yifan and Sima Tao stood there in the middle of the pandemonium, their chests heaving as they breathed, and their hearts filled with shame. By now, they seemed to truly be

convinced that Bai Xiaochun was their superior.

“What spirit! He's doing something that we could never do.... This guy is a genius among Wildlander necromancers. How could we possibly do anything to offend him...?” The two of them exchanged a glance, and each could see that the other was thinking the same thing.

Even as speculation ran wild, Bai Xiaochun looked up, his cultivation base surging with explosive power as he spoke in a voice that boomed like thunder, “Eighteen colors!!”

As his voice echoed out, the sea of fire spun down rapidly, accompanied by intense rumbling sounds.

3,000 meters. 2,400 meters. 1,800 meters.... Eventually, the heat radiating out filled everyone with sensations of intense danger.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

In the blink of an eye, the sea of fire was only 900 meters wide!!

Bai Xiaochun was shaking, his divine sense waning dramatically. Even his cultivation base was having trouble sustaining the conjuring. After all, this type of flame conjuring required the use of the cultivation base to shrink down the flame. His fleshly body power also sustained the effort; were it not for the incredible strength he possessed in that aspect, he would not be able to do this.

“I can still keep going. I'm sure that this method can take the flame from seventeen colors to eighteen.... Even if that eighteenth color is faint... it will prove that my apprentice Bai Hao's method really is viable!” Eyes completely bloodshot, he threw his head back and roared at the top of his lungs as he forced the 900-meter sea of fire to shrink down.

Intense rumbling sounds could be heard as the sea of fire grew smaller and smaller. 600 meters. 300 meters. 150 meters... 90 meters. 30 meters!

It was at that point that the colors in the flame flickered, making it impossible to tell exactly how many colors it held. However, the power of the fire was clearly undergoing some shocking transformation!!

Nobody in the audience was able to speak a single word. Everyone was completely and utterly focused on the sea of fire as it continued to shrink!

21 meters. 15 meters. 9 meters.... Soon, it was only a single meter across!

It had shrunk from a size of 30,000 meters all the way down to a single meter! It was also clear that the flame no longer had seventeen colors in it. Instead... a new color had appeared, something holy and indescribable!

An eighteenth color!!!

Up above, the clouds surged away to make way for a new set of clouds, heavenly tribulation that instantly caused intense pressure to weigh down on all of Arch-Emperor City!

The entire city trembled, and countless powerful experts could sense the danger. It was at this point that cries of alarm could be heard.

“That’s....”

“Eighteen-colored flame!!!”

Out in the Giant Ghost Legion, Mistress Red-Dust was shaken by the glow of fire which lit up the sky above Arch-Emperor City. When her divine sense locked onto Bai Xiaochun, she was immediately shaken, and almost didn’t dare to believe what she was seeing.

High in the sky in the imperial palace, the Arch-Emperor Dynasty’s Grand Heavenmaster sat in Heavenmaster Hall. His eyes opened, and he looked down at Bai Xiaochun.

“Whoever the Hell-Emperor selects... should be able to conjure eighteen-colored flame. Not a simple feat. Could this person actually be Bai Xiaochun?” A long moment passed, and then the Grand Heavenmaster closed his eyes again. “Ah, Hell-Emperor, just what are you up to...?”

As the winds raged, Bai Xiaochun drew upon his cultivation base all the way to the limit. He was being completely drained as the eighteenth color appeared, and the sea of fire shrank down. However, he could only hold on for three breaths of time... whereupon the sea of fire vanished.

The eighteen-colored flame disappeared as if it had never existed!

Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun’s mouth, and he staggered backward. Everyone looked on silently for a moment. Then, their eyes burning with passion and respect, they clasped hands and bowed to him. Even the city guards!

Although he had failed in the end, he had still done something completely glorious!!

After all, only earthly necromancers could conjure a divine, eighteen-colored flame. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun had a unique path of flame conjuring, his own way of doing things that didn’t restrict him to using the formulas of others!

He was now half a step into the earthly rank!!

His eighteen-colored flame had only existed for three breaths of time, and had been faint, but it was still shocking to behold. Furthermore, although he could only conjure a faint eighteen-colored flame right now, it was entirely likely that at some point in the future, he would fully succeed! Then he would truly be the fourth earthly necromancer in the Wildlands!!

Chapter 744: Grandmaster Bai!

The people who had been watching were extremely moved. Although they had only been able to glimpse eighteen-colored flame for a brief moment, it was still...

Eighteen-colored flame!

Very few people in the Wildlands had ever seen eighteen-colored flame. To most soul cultivators, it was a thing of legend, something holy that could only be talked about.

But now... they had actually seen it!

A deep desire had been fulfilled, and everyone present would remember this moment for as long as they lived!

Off to the side, Bai Hao looked on in utter excitement. Although he had been the one to break the new ground, and had spectacular talent for flame conjuring, he also knew that he could never have done it with his current cultivation base. Only his Master could possibly have taken the theory and turned it into reality. The process had simply been too difficult.

Furthermore, Bai Hao had seen something in his Master that other people had, but not to the same degree.... Focus!!

Bai Hao did not feel as though his own prestige had in any way been diminished by his Master. As long as he could help his Master shine, then he was completely happy.

He wasn't a wildly ambitious person, and in life, had cared mostly about family love. After being brought back to life as a soul, that aspect of his personality had remained. Bai Xiaochun was his Master... and his family.

There was someone else in the crowd who looked on with mixed emotions, and that was Chen Manyao. Before, she had felt about eighty percent sure that this person was actually Bai Xiaochun, but now she was starting to hesitate.

She knew that Bai Xiaochun was skilled in concocting medicine, but conjuring flame was completely different. This Bai Hao was clearly outstanding when it came to flame conjuring, and she didn't dare to lightly come to the conclusion that he and Bai Xiaochun were one and the same.

“Is he really Bai Xiaochun...?” she thought.

As everyone looked at him with various thoughts running through their heads, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and settled his cultivation base. It had been extremely draining for him to conjure the eighteen-colored flame, and now, waves of exhaustion were sweeping through him. Prickles of pain also filled his fleshly body.

He slowly slipped out of the Flame Harmony state, and his mind gradually emerged from the trance he had entered while conjuring. All of a sudden, he remembered that he was supposed to be in the middle of a competition. Then he recalled everything he had just done, and his eyes went wide with shock.

“Er... um... what did I do...?” he thought. Looking around nervously, he saw that everyone had looks of respect and veneration in their eyes as they stared at him. He blinked a few times, and then suddenly started to get excited. “I conjured an eighteen-colored flame! Heavens!”

Excited, he took a deep breath, clasped his hands behind his back, and stuck his chin up. Aware that he was the center of attention, he decided that it would be completely appropriate to say something profound. As he scrambled to come up with the exact words, someone within the crowd of noble chosen suddenly moved forward. It was Zhou Hong, who appeared to be completely livid as he looked down at Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Hao,” he said, eyes flashing, “you tried to win by interfering with the conjuring efforts of Sun Yifan and Sima Tao. You broke the rules, and therefore... you lose!”

When people heard that, they suddenly came back to their senses, and remembered that Bai Xiaochun had just been in the middle of a competition with Sima Tao and Sun Yifan. What Zhou Hong had just said did seem to make sense, and suddenly... everyone began to hesitate.

The truth was that Zhou Hong was feeling very nervous. Never could he have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would put on such a stunning performance, that he would break tradition and manage to conjure a faint eighteen-colored flame.

He could already imagine how difficult it would be to deal with Bai Xiaochun in the future. Unless the top members of the nobility and aristocracy directly opposed him, he would be almost untouchable.

However, because of everything that had occurred in the Necromancer Kettle, Zhou Hong decided that he had to take advantage of the moment, however inappropriate it was!

After all, what Bai Xiaochun had done really did violate the rules of the contest!

Almost as soon as Zhou Hong spoke, Little Wolfgod and Li Tiansheng voiced their agreement.

“That’s right, Bai Hao is definitely the loser!”

“He interfered with the flame conjuring of Grandmaster Sun and Grandmaster Sima. Even if he did conjure a faint eighteen-colored flame, he definitely lost the competition!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide. Knowing full well that he was currently at the crest of a wave of glory, he prepared to offer a retort to Zhou Hong. However, even as he opened his mouth, Sun Yifan rushed out of the crowd, stood before him, and bowed formally.

Both his expression and the way he carried himself seemed utterly sincere, and not the least bit an act. He was acting

completely and utterly respectful.

“Grandmaster Bai, I’m completely convinced! I concede defeat!”

Murmurs began to ripple through the crowd. At the same time, the chosen up above began to get nervous.

“Grandmaster,” Zhou Hong said, “you--”

“Your Highness, please, it's fine. I, Sun Yifan, am a person who understands his place. When it comes to skill in conjuring flame, I am no match for Grandmaster Bai!” Sun Yifan’s words were spoken with incredible decisiveness. He truly did not want to offend Bai Xiaochun. He knew that it was extremely likely that he would eventually become an earthly necromancer... a position vastly above himself and virtually everyone else.

Now that he was on that path, he couldn’t be restrained, and the best thing to do was acquiesce to him.

Sun Yifan wasn't the only one to reach this same conclusion. After a short moment of silence, Sima Tao got his breathing under control, stepped forward, and bowed deeply to Bai Xiaochun.

“Grandmaster Bai, I, Sima Tao, also concede defeat. I truly hope you can overlook my many previous faux pas.”

The audience swelled with even more conversation at this development. Up in midair, Zhou Hong and the other chosen looked on with ashen faces and sullen hearts.

Zhou Hong’s face was nearly purple with rage, but there was nothing he could do about what was happening. If Sun Yifan and Sima Tao conceded defeat, there was little he could do. Having no face to remain behind, he swished his sleeve and turned into a beam of light that shot out of Borough 89. Little Wolfgod, Li Tiansheng, and the others all followed suit. The second prince remained behind for a moment longer before also leaving.

Bai Xiaochun was actually surprised at what was happening. The situation had been resolved without him having to do a thing. Sun

Yifan and Sima Tao took the initiative to work things out with him. In fact, Bai Xiaochun actually felt a bit bad for them. After all, everything had happened because he really did tamper with their soul medicine.

“Grandmasters, please, enough with this,” he said, hurrying over to pull them up from their bows. “When it comes to the Dao of necromancy, seniority is the most important thing. Without Senior members of the Wildlands necromancer community working hard from generation to generation, devoting their lives to their work, then we Juniors would have nothing to work with. It is only with the foundation of the previous formulas that we can create something new!

“I conjured that faint eighteen-colored flame completely on accident, and only because I happened to be next to you Seniors, and was able to catch a glimpse of the grandeur of the heavens.

“I definitely did not win the competition today, nor did you two grandmasters lose. It was with the help of you two that I made significant advancement. Without your assistance, Grandmasters, I would never have been able to conjure that faint eighteen-colored flame. Many, many thanks to you!” Bai Xiaochun really had a way with words when he needed to, and even felt a bit guilty about everything. Furthermore, as he spoke, he backed up and bowed deeply at the waist to Sun Yifan and Sima Tao, in even more sincere fashion than they had bowed to him.

The fact that this was happening in front of tens of thousands of spectators, and numerous streams of deva divine sense, caused the hearts of Sun Yifan and Sima Tao to tremble. Their earlier apologies had essentially been acts of helpless desperation. In contrast, Bai Xiaochun was sincerely humbling himself in a moment of great triumph. As a result, Sun Yifan and Sima Tao were so moved that they got a bit choked up.

Furthermore, not only would this resolve the issue of the soul medicine, but it would actually serve to improve their reputations

a bit.

The two grandmasters looked at Bai Xiaochun, then each other, and then began to laugh heartily. With Zhou Hong out of sight and out of mind, they headed toward Bai Xiaochun's shop to chat and exchange pointers about necromancy. The only thing they regretted was that they hadn't done this earlier.

Everyone present, including the devas who were watching via divine sense, couldn't help but praise Bai Xiaochun's actions. His way of resolving the situation was truly admirable.

“Now that's how grandmasters are supposed to act! The old expression says to turn weapons of war into gifts of jade and silk. It's not easy to do, but he pulled it off perfectly. Really incredible!”

“That's the way to conduct oneself.... No wonder he became so famous in Giant Ghost City!”

“I bet the only reason he got that notorious reputation was because people spread false rumors.”

“I like this Bai Hao!”

Chapter 745: Back Again....

After Bai Xiaochun went inside with Sun Yifan and Sima Tao, the crowd began to disperse, discussing the events as they did. Everyone was very excited, many of them using transmission jade slips to send the soul-shaking news to friends and family.

It was easy to imagine how short of a time it would take for the name Bai Hao to be the talk of Arch-Emperor City.

Furthermore, the smooth way he had worked things out in the end led to expressions of admiration high and low. However, it also caused a strange glint to appear in the eye of Chen Manyao, who up to this point had been vacillating about his identity.

“Wait a second.... From what I remember, that’s exactly how Bai Xiaochun usually does things! He’s very smooth, and loves to resolve hostilities.... Back when the Blood Stream Sect and the Spirit Stream Sect were about to go to war, and everyone was sure it was going to happen, Bai Xiaochun smoothed things out....” She continued to contemplate the matter as she left with the crowd, and was soon almost home. However, before she arrived, she suddenly stopped in place, her eyes shining.

“And then there was what happened with that soul medicine. It would make perfect sense if it were him.... After all, back in the Blood Stream Sect, people called him Plaguedevil.... However, the biggest clue is that what he did is exactly what the Celestial Sky Society did to him back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!!”

Chen Manyao stood there, shaken as she thought back to how he had acted in the Necromancer Kettle when she tried to probe him for information. When combined with the Celestial Sky Society clue, everything made perfect sense. She smiled.

Of course, Chen Manyao was a beautiful girl, so her smile was like the blossoming of a hundred flowers. Many passersby noticed, and their eyes sparkled.

“He’s... definitely Bai Xiaochun!!” she thought. For some reason, joy suddenly welled up in her heart, and she turned to look back toward Borough 89, and Bai Xiaochun’s shop. Another moment passed, and she left.

Bai Xiaochun had no way of knowing that his smooth behavior and unique tactics had revealed his identity. If he did, he would have been scared witless, and would have been marveling at how terrifying women were. That sort of careful attention to detail was something that men were almost powerless to defend against....

He was currently in his shop having a light conversation with Sun Yifan and Sima Tao. All three of them felt wonderful as they exchanged stories about their experiences with flame conjuring, and certain tricks they had come up with. In addition, the owners and clerks in the other shops and stores on the street were finally sighing with relief.

The next day, Sun Yifan and Sima Tao clasped hands respectfully to Bai Xiaochun. Very pleased with what they had learned recently, they cheerfully bid him adieu, and then headed back to Nine Serenities City and Spirit Advent City. They also invited him to come visit as soon as he could, whereupon they both would attempt to pay the debt they owed him because of the wager.

Bai Xiaochun agreed, and then Sun Yifan and Sima Tao left for the teleportation portal.

Bai Xiaochun sighed as he escorted them out the door and watched them leave. Their night-long discussion had been of benefit to Sun Yifan and Sima Tao, but had also been of great help to Bai Xiaochun. Bai Hao had been by his side the whole time as well. Overall, they had all received significant enlightenment regarding flame conjuring techniques.

Bai Hao was more impressed than ever with how his Master conducted himself, and was also convinced that he himself wasn’t capable of such things. If he had been the apprentice to a Master

like this back when he was in the Bai Clan, then his situation would surely have been much better, and his prospects for the future would have greatly improved.

Sighing emotionally, Master and apprentice went back into the shop. Seven days passed in a flash. During that time, they discussed many things, and delved deep into their research. Bai Xiaochun pondered seventeen-colored flame, and Bai Hao continued to perfect his formula for eighteen-colored flame.

Of course, business was booming, leaving Bai Xiaochun feeling very pleased. By now, this little shop of his truly did feel like home.

Every time this Master and apprentice team clashed with any outsiders, the struggles they went through led to them becoming more famous in the city.

Not much time had passed, but they had experienced a lot together. Whenever Bai Xiaochun thought about all of the twists and turns, he sighed. And yet, he was coming to find out that, apparently, he wasn't fated to be able to live a calm and peaceful life. Whenever he felt most pleased and content, that was when the unexpected always occurred....

In fact, before he could even enjoy more than ten days of peace and quiet, things got annoying again. And that was because of... Chen Manyao.

Three days before, she had come to his shop for the first time. He had been sprawled out on the counter, seemingly asleep, but actually wrapped up in thinking about seventeen-colored flame. He had suddenly experienced a strange feeling, and had looked up to find Chen Manyao looking at him. His first reaction was stunned shock.

She had given him an enigmatic smile, and instead of challenging him regarding his identity, had merely asked to have a spirit enhancement performed....

Scowling, he had considered refusing, but could tell that she wasn't going to give up easily. Therefore, he braced himself and did the spirit enhancement. However, to his anxiety, she came back the next day....

Now, for the third day in a row, she was back. As soon as they opened for business, she glided into the shop, lighting it up with her incredible beauty.

As soon as he saw her, he said, "Big Sis Chen... what are you doing back so soon?"

Almost immediately, he felt like slapping himself for addressing her in that way.

"Oh, you're calling me Big Sis now, huh? Alright. What's wrong, Little Bro Bai.... Not happy to see me?" She looked very charming as she stood there in front of him, and he could smell the sweet fragrance of her perfume. However, he was in no mood to admire her looks, and merely smiled wryly.

At this point, it seemed highly likely that she knew who he was, and was simply not saying anything. And yet, he didn't dare to bring up the subject, and therefore could only continue to play dumb.

Although most other people might be fooled by his act, Chen Manyao had observed his work up close in the past, and therefore, saw through him in an instant. Of course, she found it all very amusing.

She rather enjoyed not saying anything and watching him squirm in front of her. She was in no hurry. If Bai Xiaochun wanted to avoid her, then she was more than happy to just stick around the shop and help Bai Hao receive customers.

Of course, Chen Manyao was quite famous in Arch-Emperor City. Not only was she an apprentice of the Grand Heavenmaster, she was also spectacularly good-looking. Because of that, she had

countless suitors in the city. And yet, here she was in Bai Xiaochun's shop....

If she had only come once, it probably wouldn't have caused any stir. But to see her here acting the way the wife of the shop owner would, taking care of new customers, was something that struck shock into the hearts of all of the soul cultivators who noticed. In fact, they were all struck by how this Bai Hao was even more incredible and manly than any of them had realized.

News spread rapidly, much to Bai Xiaochun's alarm. It was also the same with Bai Hao. Everything had been going fine for the Master and apprentice team until this woman suddenly showed up. Not only was she beautiful, but Bai Hao could tell from the way she looked at his Master that there was something between them....

"Don't tell me she's Master's wife!?" he thought, his anxiety mounting. However, he didn't dare to try to get confirmation. Although he made some vague inquiries, Bai Xiaochun was in no mood to discuss the matter.

And yet, the frustrations were only beginning....

On the eighth day after Chen Manyao made her first appearance, another woman visited the shop.

She was just as beautiful as Chen Manyao, with a spectacular figure, and unique violet gloves. Although she appeared to be petite and delicate, there was something explosively violent about her....

This termagant was none other than that Spirit Advent City's Princess Xu Shan!

Xu Shan was obsessed with Bai Hao. After her father the Spirit Advent King had taken her away from Giant Ghost City, she had immediately brought up to him the possibility of arranging a marriage.... The Spirit Advent King was stunned, and the whole

thing caused his anger toward the Giant Ghost King to grow even more. In order to correct his daughter's thinking, he had kept her activities restricted the entire time since.

But Xu Shan was persistent, leaving the Spirit Advent King completely helpless. Eventually, she managed to escape confinement. Her original intention had been to travel to Giant Ghost City to find Bai Hao, only to hear along the way about all the things that were happening in Arch-Emperor City. Exhilarated, she had immediately come over....

Xu Shan was good-looking in a different way than Chen Manyao, and had a unique, violent personality. As soon as she stepped into the shop, she looked over at Bai Xiaochun and yelled, "I love you, Bai Hao!"

Tears nearly sprang out of Bai Xiaochun's eyes, and as for Bai Hao, he immediately began trembling, especially because of how his Master had ruined his name so badly....

As for Chen Manyao, she simply frowned.

Chapter 746: Whos Blackie?

Xu Shan's bluntness made Bai Xiaochun feel like his head might explode. Here he was, a major general from the Great Wall, the majordomo of Giant Ghost City, a famous celebrity in the Wildlands, kidnapper of a hundred chosen, fighter of devas, slapper of demigod kings... and yet completely flummoxed when it came to such matters of love.

He really had no idea how he was going to get through this day, and was fairly certain that conflict was going to explode between Xu Shan and Chen Manyao....

Although it was difficult, he managed to provide enough distractions to last until evening, when he closed the shop. After Xu Shan and Chen Manyao left, he stood there staring at the ceiling, his face a mask of grief and indignation.

"But I'm Love Saint Bai Xiaochun...." he moaned, thinking back to the title he had given himself. Unfortunately, at the moment, he had no idea what to do.

Beating his chest in lamentation, he continued, "How could this be happening? Years ago it was Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei who almost drove me to my grave.... Now here I am in the Wildlands, and despite how careful I've been, my outstanding nature continues to attract young women. I'm... I'm even using my apprentice Bai Hao's face, which isn't nearly as attractive as my own. Why...? Why does everyone fall in love with me...? Dear heavens, why do you have to treat me this way?" He truly felt as though his supplications to the heavens were falling on completely deaf ears.

Off to the side, Bai Hao looked on with wide eyes. Looking somewhat depressed and helpless, he rubbed his face with his hand, and pondered whether he should offer a response to his Master. In the end, he decided that considering how strange his

Master was acting, it would probably be better to hold back.

“Could it be that I really am just too outstanding?” Bai Xiaochun mused aloud. “I look different, and it's a different time and place. I've cast the past aside! I can only rely on my mettle and my soul to strive forward. I guess that's what causes countless young women to go crazy for me....”

“Don't tell me that I, Bai Xiaochun, have really reached such a supreme, ultimate level.... What should I do? It's not my fault I'm so outstanding!” As he stood there shaking his head, Bai Hao finally reached the point where he couldn't just stand idly by any longer.

“Master,” he said, “Are you... are you really blaming yourself? Or are you just showing off!?!?”

Bai Xiaochun spun in place and cast a glare at his apprentice.

“Apprentice, can't you see that Master is truly wrapped up in bitterness? Ai. You just don't understand. Did you know that I even had to deal with annoying things like this back in the mortal world? All of the girls in my village liked me. There was Kitty, and Lassie, and even Blackie! They chased me constantly, and I had to reject them over and over again....” As Bai Xiaochun thought back to the past, his face filled with more bitterness.

Bai Hao stood off to the side, a bit stunned. For some reason, it sounded to him like Kitty was a cat's name and Lassie was a dog's name. However, he couldn't for the life of him figure out what family would name a daughter something like Blackie.

Completely unaware of what Bai Hao was thinking, Bai Xiaochun continued, “Originally, I thought that pursuing the path of immortality would free me from the curse of girls being attracted to me. But you know what happened? Almost immediately, Hou Xiaomei fell for me, and then my boo. I eventually went into hiding in the Blood Stream Sect. Who would have thought that that's where Song Junwan would fall for me...?”

“What was I supposed to do? I didn’t want any of it, and in the end, just left it all behind. But never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that after I got back to the River-Defying Sect, tens of thousands of female disciples would give me love letters....

“Why, my apprentice? Why did the heavens make me so outstanding!? What’s the reason for it all?!?!” When Bai Xiaochun had first begun talking, he really had seemed upset about the situation. But the longer he talked, the more it seemed like he was savoring sweet memories.

Bai Hao smiled wryly. He didn’t actually believe much of what his Master was saying. And yet, little did he know that his Master had been waiting for that exact facial expression to appear. As soon as the disbelief touched his face, Bai Xiaochun smacked his bag of holding, and a loud rustling sound filled the air....

Thousands upon thousands of colorful love letters poured out, forming a small mountain right there on the floor. Many of them were even folded into the shape of hearts.

“See!” Bai Xiaochun said, masking the pride in his voice with bitterness.

Bai Hao was so startled that his jaw dropped and his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. Mind spinning, he stared in disbelief at all of the love letters.

His vanity sated by the wonderful expression on his apprentice’s face, Bai Xiaochun carefully collected the love letters back up and contemplated how it would be possible to use them again in the future. He also mused about how important it was for his apprentice to view him with awe, and to realize how truly amazing he was.

Ignoring Bai Hao, he stood there disconsolately for a moment before moping into the back room. Despite spending much time in thought, he couldn’t come up with any ideas about what to do, so eventually, he sighed and went back to thinking about seventeen-

colored flame.

However, this was not an issue that would go away by ignoring it. The next day, Xu Shan and Chen Manyao were back. Xu Shan was the more candid of the two, and simply walked in and sat down next to Bai Xiaochun. If he moved, she moved with him. She seemed to be announcing to everyone that he belonged to her. Occasionally, she would also cast threatening glances at Chen Manyao.

An unsightly expression could be seen on Chen Manyao's face, and occasionally she made some biting comments. Of course, Xu Shan wasn't a match for her in words, so she would simply curse back and then leap up to start fighting. Each time, Bai Xiaochun would struggle to pull her back, trembling in fear the whole time.

Bai Hao was also feeling quite apprehensive. However, he was supposed to be a 'stiff' soul slave, and therefore, didn't dare to interfere in matters between the two women.

"So," he thought, "it seems this Xu Shan is also Master's wife...." With that, he focused fully on maintaining the expressionless face of a soul slave.

Bai Xiaochun was in no mood to pay much attention to Bai Hao, and felt his hair turning gray from the effort of trying to keep the peace. After all, he had put his heart and soul into this shop, and if these women started fighting inside, it would cause a lot of damage! Perhaps he could keep things calm over the course of a few days, but if things kept going like this.... Half a month later, Bai Xiaochun felt like he was going insane, and the tension between Xu Shan and Chen Manyao was more intense than ever.

One day, the conflict finally erupted.

"What did you just say, Chen Manyao, you slut!?"

"Other people might worry about you because of your status, Xu Shan, but as far as I'm concerned, you're nothing but a stupid girl

who doesn't know how to do anything except fight!" As they faced off angrily on the verge of blows, the soul cultivators in the shop dropped back to watch the scene. Even some of the passersby outside noticed, and craned their necks to see what was happening. Apparently, people had grown used to exciting things happening at Bai Xiaochun's shop.

Bai Xiaochun was in the back room, working on seventeen-colored flame. When he heard the row outside, he shivered in fear, and almost started crying. But then, he hurried out and placed himself between Xu Shan and Chen Manyao, where he tried to calm the situation down. However, nothing he said worked, and it seemed like the two women were just about to start fighting. Bai Xiaochun had been holding things in for half a month already, so at this point, he finally lost control.

"Enough!!" he shouted, his voice echoing like thunder. The customers and other onlookers were in high spirits as they wondered what scene would play out now.

Stunned by the volume of Bai Xiaochun's voice, Xu Shan and Chen Manyao both turned to look at him.

Taking a deep breath, he turned to Xu Shan first and said, "Xu Shan, tell me right now what it is you like about me...."

Originally, she had been fuming, but as soon as she heard his words, a flush touched her face, and she looked down shyly.

"But there are so many people watching...." she said softly.

Head pounding, he grabbed Xu Shan by the shoulder, looked her sternly in the eye, and said, "Tell me. What do you like about me? I'll definitely change it...."

When the onlookers heard that, they couldn't hold back from chuckling aloud.

As for Xu Shan, her eyes went wide, and suddenly, Bai Xiaochun felt like maybe this wasn't how he should treat a girl who had

fallen in love with him. But then, Xu Shan suddenly smiled.

“This is what I like about you!”

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped....

Even as she spoke, she lifted her hand, causing him to lose his grip on her shoulder. Then she grabbed him, leaned forward and whispered into his ear, “From now on, you’re mine.”

Then she stepped back and cleared her throat. Bai Xiaochun truly wanted to weep. Xu Shan had thoroughly defeated him, and as he turned to Chen Manyao and saw the enigmatic smile on her face, he suddenly felt even more alarmed than before.

Sighing, he said, “If you want to fight... just do it outside....” When it came to matters of love like this, he was truly helpless. Turning dismally to return to the back room, he decided that he wouldn't come back out no matter how fierce the fighting got.

Chapter 747: Get Rid Of The Evil Scourge!

Strangely enough, after Bai Xiaochun made up his mind, Chen Manyao and Xu Shan did not start fighting. Instead, they staked out their own territory within the shop itself. From the look of it, they were less interested in paying attention to Bai Xiaochun, and more interested in having a competition between the two of them.

It was a simple type of competition.... They would see who could sell the most soul medicine.... The customers who entered the shop had two choices. Go with the beloved apprentice of the Grand Heavenmaster, or with the cherished daughter of one of the heavenly kings.

Thankfully, Bai Hao was also present, and was often swarmed with customers because of the situation.

That got him very nervous. Unfortunately, in this case, the act he was putting on for safety purposes actually ended up forcing him to stay right in the middle of a deadly situation. After all, he was supposed to be an expressionless soul slave. Such a soul slave would not retreat to the back room to ask for help, and therefore, he had no other choice but to brace himself, suppress the shivers he felt because of the incisive gazes of the two young women, and receive the customers.

The business was in utter chaos by this point.... Chen Manyao and Xu Shan were sticking to their guns, and were even calling on their connections both in Arch-Emperor City and Spirit Advent City. Many soul cultivators who would normally never patronize the shop were now flocking to it to buy soul medicine, many of them in boldly large quantities.

Of course, profits skyrocketed. Bai Xiaochun was always shocked to hear the nightly reports from Bai Hao about the day's business. And considering how things were playing out, he was more determined than ever to not step out of the back room for even a

moment. Thanks to his continued work with seventeen-colored flame, he was becoming more and more confident and proficient. He even did a few experiments, and although all of them failed, he was confident that success was just around the corner.

Unfortunately, the situation with Chen Manyao and Xu Shan only continued to escalate. Half a month later, the two young women had called upon so many friends to come buy soul medicine that even the nobility and aristocracy got involved.

Obviously, both Chen Manyao and Xu Shan were extremely influential. Whether it was their personal status, their place in the power structure of the Wildlands, their cultivation bases, or their good looks, they were both among the best of the best. It was only natural that women like them would have plenty of potential suitors.

Some people actually placed Chen Manyao and Xu Shan in the same league as Mistress Red-Dust, and regarded the three of them as the three celestial goddesses of the Wildlands. It wasn't that there weren't other women who were similarly good-looking, but when all of the factors were considered, those three occupied the pinnacle.

Even some of the imperial princes were taken with them. It was almost impossible to estimate how many young men had their eye on them.

When it came to Bai Xiaochun, many young women had originally discounted him because of his connection to Mistress Red-Dust. They knew that the Giant Ghost King had intended for the two of them to be Daoist partners. However, that plan was clearly not working out very well. Now that Chen Manyao and Xu Shan were openly vying for him, many other young women finally began to make their own secret inquiries about the matter. And many of them went over to Borough 89 to confirm for themselves what was happening.

When they personally saw Chen Manyao and Xu Shan in such open and hostile competition, it really got people thinking. Many people realized that Chen Manyao was acting very differently than she usually did. At the same time, feelings of envy and jealousy toward Bai Xiaochun began to grow even more prominent. Thankfully, he had quite a reputation. Whether it was because of the incredible battle prowess he had put on display in the Necromancer Kettle, or the faint eighteen-colored flame he had produced, many people feared him.

However... it was roughly at this time that rumors began to spread. They started within the nobility and aristocracy, and slowly began to become more widespread. And of course, with each telling, they got more sensational....

According to one rumor, Chen Manyao hadn't fought Bai Hao in the Necromancer Kettle. She had been captured by him, and then taken to a secluded location.... That alone might not have meant much. However, Bai Hao had a horrible reputation in Giant Ghost City. He was a wife-stealer, and clearly a perverted person. And according to what everybody said, those descriptions were no exaggeration. For a man like that to be alone with a sexy woman in a secluded location.... Well, there was little question as to what would happen.

And that was the perfect explanation for why Chen Manyao, who was normally a quiet and docile girl, would suddenly act so brashly after Bai Hao came to Arch-Emperor City.

Rumors spread about Xu Shan as well. Supposedly, Bai Hao had used some mysterious method to topple her defenses and win her heart.

Of course, it only went to prove how incredible he was. After all, he had actually vanquished two of the top three celestial goddesses in one fell swoop.

Although the rumors started out between only a few people, they

spread rapidly until all of the chosen were talking about them!

In reaction, some of them howled in rage, and others gritted their teeth angrily. Overall, most of them hated Bai Xiaochun down to their marrow. Furthermore, whenever anyone refuted the rumors, there were always people who would vehemently assert that they were true.

“What kind of a person is this Bai Hao? He steals wives and then kidnapped the peerlessly beautiful Chen Manyao for several days? I think we all know what must have gone on between the two of them during that time.”

“Yeah, the evidence is conclusive. There’s no other explanation for the strange behavior of both Chen Manyao and Xu Shan. Dammit, this guy is a walking scourge!!”

The gossip intensified, until eventually there were people claiming that they had actual evidence. And of course, it didn’t take long for the rumors to spread beyond the circle of the nobility and aristocracy. Soon, even the lowliest soul cultivators had heard. It was a scandal that was the talk of the town....

When Chen Manyao and Xu Shan heard the rumors, they were enraged. However the explanations they provided did no more to stop the flood of rumors than a pebble could stop the tide from coming in.

Eventually, things reached a breaking point. The Spirit Advent King was so angry that he sent one of his subordinates, his deva-level earthly duke, to Arch-Emperor City to bring Xu Shan home.

Almost at the same time, Chen Manyao’s Master, the Grand Heavenmaster, issued orders requiring her to return to him, after which he placed her on lockdown.

Although one might think that the matter would end there, the gossip only intensified. Eventually, the chosen members of the nobility and aristocracy in Arch-Emperor City reached the point

where they couldn't control their rage.

“This Bai Hao has to die!! Rid the people forever of this evil scourge!!”

It was hard to say who took up the call first, but before long, all of the chosen were up in arms. Of course, not all of them were mindlessly going along with the mob. Some of them, such as Little Wolfgod and Li Tiansheng, knew exactly what was going on. They were actually hoping to take advantage of the situation to their benefit.

They egged people on, and also fanned the flames of the rumors. Before long, a crowd of chosen that was about half Nascent Soul cultivators and half Core Formation was marching toward Bai Xiaochun's shop in Borough 89, killing intent burning!

Zhou Hong was among them, his eyes glittering coldly. “Let's see how you fight back this time, Bai Hao! It won't matter how incredible your battle prowess is.... This isn't the Necromancer Kettle, so if you hurt or kidnap people, their clans will definitely fight back with full force! If you piss off the upper echelons of leadership in Arch-Emperor Dynasty, then even if the Giant Ghost King wants to save you, he'll have to pay a heavy price!

“And if you aren't on top of your game, then this time... you'll be cut down like the stray dog you are! Whether you make the first move or not, you're going to lose, and nobody will be able to save you!”

Zhou Hong was more excited than ever. He was definitely the type who would seek revenge over the smallest grievance, and being crushed by Bai Xiaochun in the Necromancer Kettle was a humiliation and a nightmare that he could never be rid of. He hated Bai Xiaochun with a passion, and all of his efforts at revenge had failed. But this time, he was certain that he would succeed.

“I had almost nothing to do with this mob. I just got the ball rolling. If there's an investigation, I won't be implicated.... The

truth is that he really just pissed too many people off. Maybe I did pull a few strings, but Bai Hao's true killer won't be me, it will be all of Arch-Emperor City! Heh heh!" Chuckling sinisterly, Zhou Hong sped along with the mob.

Hundreds of figures could be seen streaming through the city streets, completely ignoring the city guards as they descended onto Borough 89!

When people realized who made up that mob, they were completely shocked, even the city guards.

"Was that Chen Xiong?!"

"Hey, that's Little Wolfgod, Li Tiansheng, and... Zhao Dongshan!! They're all top chosen!!"

"What are they doing!? It looks like something really important!!"

Chapter 748: Xiaochun Gets Pissed Off!

It was late at night, and the moon shone down brightly over Arch-Emperor City. Coupled with the lamp light streaming out of various buildings, it didn't quite reach the same level as daylight, but was perfectly sufficient for cultivators to see clearly.

Hundreds of people were rushing toward Bai Xiaochun's shop, which had already closed for business. In the back room, Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao were currently working together on conjuring some seventeen-colored flame.

Bai Xiaochun had resolved almost all of the current issues. Although several of his recent conjurings had failed, they had also served to increase his confidence.

The Flame Harmony state he had entered when conjuring the eighteen-colored flame had given him significant inspiration. He had also benefited greatly from the subsequent discussion with Sun Yifan and Sima Tao. Because of those factors, his work with seventeen-colored flame had sped up significantly.

The most important factor was Bai Hao's help. Master and apprentice would discuss all of the problems that cropped up, and would work together to solve them. As Bai Xiaochun went about the actual conjuring, Bai Hao would watch with rapt attention, ready to point out any mistakes that he saw. By this point, Bai Xiaochun had reached the point where he made virtually no mistakes to begin with. However, Bai Hao continued to stand watch in all earnestness.

The sight of his Master working so hard at flame conjuring, his expression focused and serious, caused Bai Hao to sigh inwardly.

“Although Master usually seems fairly unreliable, he really takes flame conjuring seriously. That's an area where a lot of other people fall short. He also has incredible levels of control. He won't even think about working on the actual conjuring until he

completely understands it first. Then he focuses on solving every last little problem. That's one of the reasons why he succeeds where others fail." Bai Hao knew that, while it was true that he was offering a lot of valuable help, such help would not be very useful to another person. Only someone of his Master's level and ability could benefit from it.

"Master, I'm definitely going to help you become... a heavenly necromancer!!" Bai Hao wasn't even concerned about his own cultivation anymore. Although he couldn't be sure if there were other ghost cultivators in the world, for all he knew, he was the only one. Because of that, no cultivation techniques existed for ghost cultivators. Bai Xiaochun was aware of that problem, and had even made some secret inquiries in Arch-Emperor City. Unfortunately, he hadn't turned up any clues.

However, he had other ideas about what to do, and told Bai Hao not to worry. He would definitely find a set of ghost cultivator techniques for his apprentice to use.

When Bai Hao thought about that, he felt a lot better. Although he knew his Master was unreliable in some respects, if he made a promise, he would do everything he could to keep it.

Putting away such thoughts, he focused on helping his Master as he conjured the flame. As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun was at a critical juncture; the sea of fire was contained in a specific way, and the vengeful souls were being carefully fed into it. As time passed, a seventeenth color slowly appeared within the sixteen-colored sea of fire.

"It's gonna work!" Bai Xiaochun almost couldn't contain his joy, and was just about to proceed with the final bit of conjuring work when, all of a sudden, a huge boom shook everything. Then, enraged shouting could be heard that was clearly laced with killing intent.

"Your life is over, Bai Hao!!"

The front door of the shop exploded, and the roof caved in as more than a dozen cultivators blasted their way inside. Bai Xiaochun's heart lurched with shock; this really was a critical moment in the conjuring of the seventeen-colored flame, and to have more than a dozen interlopers suddenly appear left him stunned.

The sea of fire was connected in some ways to Bai Xiaochun's mental state, and immediately destabilized. And in the same moment that he lost control, the door to the back room of the shop was blasted open.

“Dammit!” Bai Xiaochun's face fell, but there was no time to ponder what to do. As he lost control of the sea of fire, intense rumbling sounds filled the air. He had no time to do anything other than grab Bai Hao and then hide under his turtle wok!

In almost the same moment that the turtle wok settled down, the multi-colored sea of fire exploded outward in all directions.

More than a dozen chosen were in the middle of bursting into the back room, and before they could react, intense heat blasted against against their faces. Although they tried to leap backward, there was no time, and they were immediately swept over by a seventeen-colored sea of fire.

Miserable screams echoed out as the chosen burst into flames. Three of them had been so slow to pull out defensive items that the shocking intensity of the fire reduced their fleshly bodies to nothing but ash!

After that, the raging fire then wiped their souls completely out of existence!

They were dead!!

Those who had managed to retreat looked on in astonishment as the sea of fire engulfed the shop. In an instant, the back room, the courtyard, and the main part of the shop... were reduced to

blackened rubble. Furthermore, other nearby shops were also affected.

As the glow of fire rose into the sky, shouts of alarm filled the area. Dozens more chosen were flying toward the area from further away, and when they saw what was happening, they gasped in shock. Never could they have imagined that something like this would happen, and yet, they had already started down this path, and couldn't back down now.

Little Wolfgod was in the crowd. He had originally intended to hold back a bit, and then join in the action toward the end. But now, he gritted his teeth and shouted, "Attack together!"

However, that was when a roar of rage echoed out into the air that caused all hearts to tremble. Bai Xiaochun had lifted up the edge of the turtle wok to find his beloved shop a charred, smoldering ruin. Next to him, his apprentice was shaking in fear. At that point, Bai Xiaochun's eyes became so bloodshot with rage that he couldn't control himself.

This shop was his home, and the only place in the Wildlands that belonged to him and him alone. And now it was gone. A bunch of thugs had come and destroyed it.... Because of that, Bai Xiaochun began to descend into madness.

"Bullies!" he yelled, slowly rising to his feet. "Complete and utter bullies!!" Despite how he was shaking with rage, he first made sure to put Bai Hao away so that he was safe. Struggling for control, he sent his divine sense out and confirmed that there were a few dozen people in the area, with a few hundred more a bit further away, closing in.

That in itself confirmed to him that these people were attempting to kill him. It was made even more clear considering that there were people already preparing to attack.

However, instead of simply starting to fight, he pulled out a transmission jade slip and sent a voice message to the Giant Ghost

King.

When the Giant Ghost King heard what was happening, he was initially stunned. However, he was fundamentally a domineering and haughty person, so after a brief moment of thought, he sent a reply.

“Bai Hao, you’re the son-in-law of the Giant Ghost King! There’s no way you can just stand around and let them bully you! Beat the crap out of them! I’ll handle any consequences. Just make sure not to kill anyone. I’ll tell Mo’er to go help, and will also send a message to the Grand Heavenmaster. Don’t worry, I’ll take all the responsibility....”

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the Giant Ghost King’s response, his courage grew. Looking up, he no longer attempted to suppress his rage, and instead, let it burn as hot as possible. Without any hesitation, he blurred into motion, flying up out of what remained of the sea of fire.

“You cheated me in business, and destroyed my shop! You people have really forced my hand!” Even as his words echoed out like heavenly thunder, he moved with lightning-like speed to appear in front of an incoming Nascent Soul cultivator.

That cultivator was none other than Little Wolfgod, who saw nothing more than a flash of light before Bai Xiaochun was right in front of him, his face twisted with vicious rage.

Trembling, he backed up and said, “Wait, Bai Hao, let me explain! I--”

That was when Bai Xiaochun lashed out with a furious fist strike.

“Got your life force back, didn’t you! Feeling a bit masochistic and decided to come back for more? Fine, get down on your hands and knees!” Little Wolfgod was completely helpless as a scene very similar to the Necromancer Kettle played out again. Blood sprayed out of his mouth, accompanied by an agonized shriek, as Bai

Xiaochun's terrifying fist strike knocked him out of midair to slam into the ground. His nascent soul was shaken so badly that it almost popped out into the open. Then, he passed out.

Chapter 749: Like A Hot Knife Through Butter!

When Little Wolfgod slammed into the ground, a huge boom echoed out, and cracks spread out in all directions. As Little Wolfgod lay there, soaked with blood and completely unmoving, all of the other chosen in the area gasped in astonishment.

Before they could do anything, the enraged Bai Xiaochun vanished as surely as a ghost, to reappear in front of two other soul cultivators.

“You two get down there too!” he shouted angrily. The two soul cultivators prepared to fight back, but instantly realized that their Nascent Souls had been destabilized, and their cultivation base power was weakened. Even as they shouted out in alarm, booms rang out as Bai Xiaochun struck their shoulders with his fist. Cracking sounds could be heard as numerous bones were broken, and they were sent down screaming to slam into the ground next to Little Wolfgod.

Things weren't over yet, though. Bai Xiaochun's fury was now fully ablaze. It would be the same with anyone who watched the shop they had toiled tirelessly over be reduced to rubble. Besides, now that he had been given the go-ahead by the Giant Ghost King, he wasn't scared of anything.

Obviously, he wasn't even close to being done. He next appeared in front of a middle-aged chosen from one of the aristocratic clans, whose face immediately drained of blood as he began to back up.

“Do you truly dare to kill me, Bai Hao?!”

“No, I don't!” Bai Xiaochun replied in an enraged shout. Of course, the words he spoke caused the middle-aged man's jaw to drop. Then, Bai Xiaochun was on top of him, his right hand moving with lightning speed to grab the man by the neck and hurl

him down to the ground.

A boom rang out as blood sprayed from the man's mouth. His Nascent Soul had almost been crushed, and immediately tumbled out from inside of him. At the same time, his five yin organs and six yang organs were shattered, and he lapsed into unconsciousness.

“You think I'm an idiot or something? Killing you would be a waste of plenty of nice life force!” Bai Xiaochun was of the impression that his words were particularly impressive and went to show how incredibly mighty he was. Just when he was about to make another move, the dozens of people in the area finally started to recover from their initial shock at Bai Xiaochun's terrifying actions so far.

All of these people had impressive cultivation bases. Although some of them were only in the Core Formation stage, they were top chosen from their clans, people who surpassed ordinary people at the same cultivation level. Although Bai Xiaochun was clearly mighty, it only took a moment before people started to cry out.

“Attack together!”

“Even if this Bai Hao was more powerful than he already is, it's not like he's superhuman!”

“He's aroused public wrath, so we definitely have to make him pay the price!”

Dozens of people rotated their cultivation bases and performed incantation gestures to unleash divine abilities. Multi-colored light formed something like a huge wave that surged toward Bai Xiaochun.

Within those magical techniques were three soul dragons, as well as numerous tornadoes. There were streams of blade light and sword projections, and even something like a huge peacock, whose tail turned into streams of glowing swords that shot through the

air toward Bai Xiaochun.

Further off in the distance were forty or fifty people who had not yet arrived at the scene of the fight, who were using magical items to shoot at top speed toward Bai Xiaochun.

Behind them were even more people, all rushing in the same direction. Clearly, Bai Xiaochun was thoroughly surrounded.

It was a deadly trap!

Bai Xiaochun was fully aware of the situation, and it caused his eyes to turn even more bloodshot than before. There was no time for thought or planning. Even if he tried to flee from the situation, he would be blocked by the crowd surrounding him.

There was only one option. And that was... to fight!!

He was now relying on his Tempered Bones and powerful defensive powers to fight against a virtual army of chosen cultivators!

Taking a deep breath, he reached out with his right hand, revealing the Eternal Parasol. Of course, because of the powers of his mask, it looked like something completely different.

Without any hesitation, he opened the parasol and thrust it forward to meet the wave of magical techniques and divine abilities. Whether it was the dragons, the tornados, the blade light, the sword projections, or anything else, they were all blocked by the power of the Eternal Parasol.

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and his eyes turned more bloodshot as he was shoved back a few paces, placing him right next to Little Wolfgod and the other three cultivators he had knocked down out of the air. Without pausing for a moment, he stabbed the Eternal Parasol into them, one after another.

Miserable shrieks rang out from their mouths as they regained consciousness to find their fleshly bodies withering up, and their life force pouring into the Eternal Parasol. After the life force was

then passed into Bai Xiaochun, his place within the eighth stratum of the Tempered Bones grew higher.

Little Wolfgod had experienced this same thing before, but the other cultivators had not. They had only heard of Bai Hao's vicious methods.

As for Little Wolfgod, he had it a bit better off considering that this was his second time. After the incident in the Necromancer Kettle, his clan had used numerous methods to help him recover the lost life force. But now that the entire thing was happening again, the bitterness and regret in his heart reached indescribable levels.

Bai Xiaochun's method of using the Eternal Parasol to defend against the attacking magical techniques, and then absorb life force from Little Wolfgod and the others, worked perfectly. He took the life force in one smooth move, and then burst into action again.

The Mountain Shaking Bash exploded out, turning him into a series of afterimages and sonic booms. Then he slammed into a Nascent Soul cultivator, who coughed up a mouthful of blood as he was thrown backward. It was at this point that a particularly reckless and foolish Core Formation cultivator off to the side waved his finger in Bai Xiaochun's direction. Instantly, a green, fist-sized pearl shot into the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered; the sudden appearance of this pearl caused a strange feeling to rise up within him. Obviously, this pearl was no ordinary item. As it neared, he performed an incantation gesture with his left hand and then waved his finger, causing control power to wrap around the pearl and fling it back in the direction it had come from.

The Core Formation cultivator's face fell as he realized that it was too late to try to flee. When the pearl slammed into him, it shattered, creating a green toxic gas of a sinister nature that

immediately caused the entire area around the cultivator to twist and distort. Miserable screams rang out for the space of two breaths of time, after which the cultivator... had been reduced to nothing but blood and gore!

He had been destroyed in body and soul!

The surrounding cultivators gasped, and down below, Little Wolfgod's eyes began to shine brightly!

“He's started killing people, huh...?”

An unsightly expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face as well. He hadn't set out to kill anyone. Although the explosion of the seventeen-colored flame had resulted in a few deaths, this mob was the one coming after him. He couldn't truly be held accountable for either of those situations. However, he also knew that the clans of the people he had killed would not accept such an explanation.

His current situation was different from the Necromancer Kettle. Back then, he had been able to flee into the mists if he wanted. Furthermore, no soul cultivators from the elder generation had been present to interfere.

Now, he was in Arch-Emperor City, and everything was different. There was nowhere to hide, and furthermore, it wouldn't be long before people from the elder generation showed up. That was why he had sent his message to the Giant Ghost King, and also why he had tried hard not to kill anyone.

But now... he was out of options.

“Fine, killing it is. So what?!?! You think that just because the tiger doesn't roar, it means it's a fluffy kitten or something? I didn't want to kill anybody, but you're leaving me no choice!” This group of cultivators had destroyed his home, and because of that, killing intent finally appeared in his eyes. He was like a celestial warrior, or a primeval beast as he... unleashed killing moves!

More rumbling sounds could be heard as numerous magical techniques and divine abilities closed in. As they did, Bai Xiaochun clenched his hand into a fist, unleashing a fist strike that sent a sound wave out in all directions. Then, he was in front of another soul cultivator, whom he stabbed with the Eternal Parasol and sucked dry of life force!

He didn't pause for a moment. Flashing into motion, he began to absorb more life force. Not a one of the dozens of soul cultivators in the area were a match for him at all. No amount of magical techniques or divine abilities seemed capable of doing anything to him, nor of piercing the defenses of the Eternal Parasol.

Wherever he went, he cut through his enemies like a hot knife through butter!

The glow of blood and fire illuminated all heaven and earth!

Chapter 750: Ninth Stratum!

This would be no tranquil night for Arch-Emperor City!

That was especially true of Borough 89, which was currently shining with the light of fire, and filled with hoarse shouts. Bai Xiaochun's eyes were crimson as he looked around. The first wave of several dozen chosen were either dead or completely drained of life force to the point where they were seriously injured. As Bai Xiaochun stood there within the flickering firelight, he looked particularly terrifying!

He hadn't set out to kill anyone, but they had forced his hand and given him no other choice!

He didn't want to cause any trouble, but the trouble came to find him. And not just a single time!

He hadn't been interested in fighting, either. However, they had him surrounded, and there were more enemies approaching every moment, making flight impossible. Besides, he wasn't very familiar with Arch-Emperor City, so even if he did manage to break free from the fighting, it would be impossible for him to escape.

"Bullying me... and pushing me into a corner!!" he murmured, shivering partly with rage and partly with fear. However, there was nothing he could do at the moment other than hope that the Giant Ghost King would be able to save him.... Things were just developing too quickly.

In fact, there were already countless divine abilities and magical techniques closing in on him, as well as the glow of magical items. The second wave of chosen was closing in, with the Core Formation cultivators in the back, and the Nascent Soul experts up front. Although they could already see that Bai Xiaochun was a brutal fighter, the event had reached a critical mass, and none of them were willing to retreat.

More than a hundred soul cultivators were closing in from all directions, and many of them were people familiar to Bai Xiaochun, including Zhao Dongshan, Li Tiansheng, and others.

It was too urgent of a situation for Bai Xiaochun to ponder what to do. Eyes burning with killing intent, he dashed forward, unleashing shocking energy as he charged forth in attack!

RRRUUUUMBLE!

Booms could be heard as fierce fighting broke out. Bai Xiaochun was unstoppable, and it didn't matter who ended up in front of him, they all were thrown backward, blood spraying out of their mouths, completely shocked by Bai Xiaochun's strength and ferocity.

“He's even stronger than he was back in the Necromancer Kettle!”

“So this is Bai Hao, the legendary figure who defeated a hundred chosen!”

“He's strong, but we outnumber him. Besides, we're in Arch-Emperor City!”

Everyone anxiously pressed the attack, and soon, the scene was one of utter chaos. Li Tiansheng was in the crowd, performing an incantation gesture that summoned clouds of toxic gas. He knew how incredible Bai Xiaochun was, and therefore hung toward the back, ready to flee if he had to.

However, before he even realized what was happening, Bai Xiaochun... was looking through the crowd directly into his eyes!

Scalp tingling, he suddenly thought back to how Bai Xiaochun had looked at him in exactly the same way back in the Necromancer Kettle. Bai Xiaochun blurred into motion, sidestepping a random cultivator to suddenly appear just up ahead of Li Tiansheng, looking like something from a nightmare.

Li Tiansheng's heart leapt into his throat, and he immediately

turned and fled. However, Bai Xiaochun laughed madly and used his Mountain Shaking Bash, unleashing extreme levels of fleshly body power to blast through the crowd. Using the Eternal Parasol to defend himself against the divine abilities and magical techniques, he... shot in pursuit of Li Tiansheng!

Bai Xiaochun was like a nightmare in living form to Li Tiansheng, who quickly slapped his bag of holding to produce an actual human heart, dripping with blood. Face twisting with a vicious snarl, he crushed the heart, causing a fragrant odor that resembled a woman's perfume to explode out. Then, the image of a woman appeared, face twisted in agony as she shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered; he could tell that Li Tiansheng was not relying on some ordinary technique. The heart he had just crushed seemed shocking in every way; furthermore, the shadowy woman who was racing toward him seemed to have a hole in her chest where her heart should be.

Bai Xiaochun leaped backward to avoid the woman, but at the same time, threw the Eternal Parasol out in front of him, causing it to become a streak of light that shot toward Li Tiansheng.

Before Li Tiansheng could react, the Eternal Parasol had stabbed directly into his chest!

Life force spilled out, and as the pain filled him, Bai Xiaochun waved his finger, causing the Eternal Parasol to fly back toward him. Then he slammed his hand down into the ground, causing a barrier of sharp spikes to spring up from the ground to defend himself from the incoming divine abilities.

Considering how much life force power was pouring into Bai Xiaochun, his Tempered Bones were rapidly approaching the ninth stratum.

"Just a bit more... and I'll break through!" Even as he reached this point in his train of thought, the spikes around him shattered,

and dozens of cultivators shot toward him. Everything was a blur, but that didn't matter too much to Bai Xiaochun; he knew that everyone in the area was his enemy.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as he relied on incredible speed that bordered on teleportation. By not using his cultivation base, he conserved spiritual power, and could thus keep fighting longer. Besides, there were plenty of people in the area who could help keep his fleshly body power bolstered.

Fierce fighting could be heard, and at the same time, more soul cultivators appeared on the scene. It was getting difficult for Bai Xiaochun to block all of the incoming divine abilities and magical items with his Eternal Parasol, and some began to make contact with him.

However, the attacks landing on him didn't cause him to pause for even a moment. He really was like an immortal devil incarnate; magical techniques from the Core Formation cultivators were like nothing to him, a fact which led quite a few people to gasp in shock.

Even the magical techniques and items of the Nascent Soul experts didn't affect him very much. At most, they caused him to frown slightly.

Considering that he was only dealing with dozens of incoming attacks, his Eternal Parasol could defend him well enough that he was also able to fight back. With each fist strike he used, he sent someone flying, and would then suck away their life force.

Clearly, none of these chosen had ever considered that a Nascent Soul cultivator could possibly be this powerful. It was unbelievable to an absurd level.

His fleshly body power was beyond imagination, and left them utterly shaken.

“Who is this guy? Doesn't he have any weaknesses?!?!”

“Where are we supposed to hit him? His speed, his fleshly body, his endurance, his defenses... they’re all at the highest level! How do we fight this?!”

Considering that fewer and fewer people were left standing near Bai Xiaochun, wooden expressions could be seen on the faces of many of the Wildlanders. None of them dared to unleash any more attacks, and most of them even began to back up. Zhao Dongshan was there on the ground, his heart filled with regret as he fled, terrified that Bai Xiaochun would notice him.

“What was I thinking to come cause trouble for this fiendish killer? Please, please don't notice me!” Even as Zhao Dongshan prayed for a way to get out of the situation, another group of over a hundred chosen was closing in, with Zhou Hong in their midst.

When they got close enough, they could see the carnage in the area, the bodies of numerous chosen strewn on the ground around Bai Xiaochun, whose veins of steel were pumping, and who radiated an air of brutal madness.

Zhou Hong was shocked, but at the same time, delighted. “He finally killed some people!! Nobody can save you this time, Bai Hao!!”

Even as Zhou Hong arrived, Bai Xiaochun pulled the Eternal Parasol out of the body of one of the soul cultivators. With the life force he had just acquired, he could tell that his Tempered Bones were no longer in the eighth stratum, but rather... in the ninth!

With that, he looked up slowly at Zhou Hong.

“Zhou Hong!” he said, his eyes burning with killing intent as he blurred into motion!

Meanwhile, outside of Arch-Emperor City in the Giant Ghost Legion, Mistress Red-Dust was sitting in her red command tent, her brow furrowed grimly. In her hand was a transmission jade slip that sent the Giant Ghost King’s voice echoing into her mind.

“This Bai Hao is a complete disaster!” she murmured through gritted teeth. As far as she was concerned, she had already helped him once. Without her intervention, the heavenly duke from the Chen Clan would definitely have looked into the matter. Although she had been touched by the way she benefited from the situation, that feeling didn’t go very deep, and quickly faded. Now here her father was, yet again asking for her to go protect Bai Hao. Without even thinking about it, she refused.

“If he has a death wish, then just let him die!” Snorting coldly, she was just about to put the jade slip down when another message came from the Giant Ghost King. Only she could hear the furious words he spoke, and whatever they were, they caused her to sit there in grim silence for a moment before rising to her feet.

“I’ll just help him this one last time!” With that, she walked out of the command tent, called a few dozen Giant Ghost Legion soldiers over, and then headed toward Borough 89 in Arch-Emperor City!

By this point, the powerful experts from the noble and aristocratic clans were getting messages from their various princes, princesses, and other young cultivators.

“What incredible gall!”

That was especially true when word of the deaths began to filter through. The clans involved immediately sent people over, and some of the top powerful experts even went personally.

Chapter 751: Imperial Clan Secret Spell Formation

As both Mistress Red-Dust and the almighty figures from the nobility and aristocracy all took to motion, Bai Xiaochun was shooting through the air in a beam of light, his eyes bloodshot as he targeted Zhou Hong with deadly force.

Zhou Hong's face fell. He knew Bai Xiaochun was powerful, and didn't want to actually fight him unless it was absolutely necessary. Therefore, he immediately fell back.

“This Bai Hao has already killed people, and therefore must die. All we have to do is delay for a bit. Everybody, attack together and force him back!”

Everyone could see the truth in his words, especially those who had been a part of the incident in the Necromancer Kettle. They knew that this was the best chance they had to get their revenge. It only took the briefest of moments for another round of even more powerful magical techniques to fill the air, creating a wave that surged unstoppably toward Bai Xiaochun.

In response, Bai Xiaochun opened up the Eternal Parasol and, instead of slowing down, actually sped up! He also slapped his bag of holding, producing his sixteenfold spirit enhanced black spear. Letting out an angry shout, he charged onward, defending himself with the parasol in one hand and stabbing out with the spear in the other.

The spear caused a huge vortex to spring out, which provoked a gasp from Zhou Hong, who fell back again. Off to the side from Zhou Hong was a young man who had been accompanying him. Currently, his expression was grim, and from the look in his eyes, he seemed to be calculating something. All of a sudden, killing intent flared within his eyes, and he pulled out an ancient feng shui compass.

“Fellow Daoists, please pick a position to hold based on the indications of my feng shui compass!” Even as the words left his mouth, brilliant light shot out from the feng shui compass, creating a projected image of the compass surrounding Bai Xiaochun.

Over a hundred glowing dots could be seen, which moved along with him as he attacked. When the chosen in the area saw that, their eyes glittered, and they immediately began to take up the positions marked by the glowing dots.

The first soul cultivator suddenly found himself wearing a suit of shimmering armor. At the same time, the armor caused a misty fog to start building up around Bai Xiaochun. Almost as soon as he was in place, Bai Xiaochun could feel intense pressure weighing down on him.

Within moments, more and more people were arriving, and as they did, suits of armor appeared on them. Each suit of armor was linked to the others by streams of light, which simultaneously caused the misty fog to grow denser.

Incredible pressure was now weighing down on Bai Xiaochun from the spell formation, making it increasingly difficult to move. Furthermore, this was simply crushing weight, not a sealing, which meant that his Undying Hex was completely useless!

When Zhou Hong took a place in the formation, its power grew even more intense. However, not everyone present chose to join in, especially some of the people who had been part of the first two waves of attackers. For example, Zhao Dongshan. They were people who had been shaken by Bai Xiaochun’s battle prowess, and still hesitated to get close to him, even with a spell formation locking him down.

“What a bunch of useless fools!” Zhou Hong thought, snorting coldly. Ignoring Zhao Dongshan and the others, he focused on powering the spell formation and launching divine abilities and

magical techniques.

As for Bai Xiaochun, his expression was unsightly as he remained in the middle of the rotating spell formation, the dense mist around him locking down all creation and making escape seemingly impossible. In addition, the pressure grew stronger by the moment. Then, a hail of sword light began to scream in his direction, provoking a frown on his part as he extended the Eternal Parasol to defend himself. Moments later, booms rang out, and he felt his qi and blood surging inside of him.

At the moment, he couldn't see anyone outside of the spell formation, but those people could see him. Zhao Dongshan and the others who weren't participating watched as the more than one hundred soul cultivators who were part of the formation continued to move, causing the space around Bai Xiaochun to shrink down. It was easy to imagine that, once the spell formation shrank down to a certain point, a deadly attack would be unleashed.

“What formation is that?!?!” Zhao Dongshan thought with a gasp, stunned by what he was seeing.

Zhou Hong simply laughed coldly, feeling the power of his cultivation base being absorbed into the glowing dot of light, and at the same time, watching Bai Xiaochun hesitating inside. Then, his gaze shifted to the young man outside of the formation who held the feng shui compass.

“The young man the second prince sent to offer assistance really is an almighty master of spell formations,” he thought. “Bai Hao, ah, Bai Hao. It's too bad you'll never have the chance to find out that, in addition to myself, the second prince and even the grand prince are all in on this. You offended far too many among the nobility and aristocracy. You even offended... the imperial clan!”

As Zhou Hong chuckled coldly, Bai Xiaochun's facial expression turned more unsightly. Then, he blurred into motion, picking a

direction and drawing on the Mountain Shaking Bash.

A boom echoed out, and the spell formation shuddered. However, a massive backlash also hit Bai Xiaochun, causing his expression to turn even more unsightly. Clearly, the defenses of this spell formation could not easily be broken!

“So it's pooling together the defensive powers of everyone outside the formation....” He continued to dodge the sword light that continued to slash at him, the aura of which was growing stronger every moment!

It wouldn't be long before that sword light... was as strong as a deva!!

Bai Xiaochun sucked in a breath when he realized how powerful this spell formation was.

“This is a pretty spectacular spell formation to form so quickly.... Usually big, powerful formations like this take a long time to put into place.” Frowning, he thought back to the young man with the feng shui compass who had been standing next to Zhou Hong, the one who had set up the spell formation.

He was definitely a stranger to Bai Xiaochun, not one of the people who had been present in the Necromancer Kettle.

“Do you people really think that a crappy spell formation like this can hold me down?!?!” A wild look appeared in his eyes. He knew that this was not a moment to be sitting around wasting time. It was hard to say whether or not the Giant Ghost King could convince Mistress Red-Dust to come help him, and the power of the spell formation was building with every second that ticked by. That in turn meant that the danger to him was growing rapidly.

“Let's see which is more powerful, your spell formation, or my Undying Emperor's Fist!!” He took a deep breath, and as he did his aura, his cultivation base fluctuations, and everything else about him vanished. They shrank down, focusing all of his being, even

his life force, back to its origin!

To any type of divine sense, Bai Xiaochun would appear to be without any aura whatsoever, almost as if he were a corpse.

Zhao Dongshan's eyes widened, and Zhou Hong's face fell.

“He's going to use that fist strike!!”

Zhou Hong and everyone else in the spell formation who had also participated in the events of the Necromancer Kettle were immediately alarmed by what they were seeing, and sent more power flowing out of their cultivation bases. After all, the things they had seen that fist strike do were things they would never forget for their entire life.

The only one who didn't react in such a way was the young man with the feng shui compass. Although he could see how Zhou Hong and the others were reacting, he was fully confident that this spell formation... could not be broken by anyone under the Deva Realm!

“How could this measly Bai Hao possibly break the imperial clan's secret spell formation!?”

Of course, there was no way for anyone, not even Zhou Hong and the others, to know that Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist was actually far different from the version they had witnessed in the past!

Back in the Necromancer Kettle, Bai Xiaochun had used the full power of his fleshly body to power the fist strike.... But now that he was in the ninth stratum of the Tempered Bones, his Undying Emperor's Fist could actually unleash... double the amount of his full fleshly body power!

The previous amount had been shocking, but double... was a level of power that not even Bai Xiaochun was certain about. All he knew was that even Mistress Red-Dust could be injured by it!!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes seemed completely lifeless, and his body looked like a withered tree. However, it was in that moment that

his hand clenched into a fist!

A black vortex sprang up around it, something like a black hole. Distortions spread out through the air, and the incoming beams of sword light were twisted out of existence!!

A terrifying aura sprang out of the black hole that seemed too mysterious to define. As soon as it began to spread out through the spell formation, the people inside felt their hearts pounding with fear, and sensations of deadly crisis.

The young man with the feng shui compass was clearly shocked, and as for the feng shui compass itself, it began to vibrate unstably.

“Impossible!!” he shouted. After all, his opponent had done nothing more than clench his fist....

Chapter 752: Deva-Level Fist Strike!!

Even as the young man with the feng shui compass, Zhou Hong, and numerous other chosen began to cry out in alarm, a massive, domineering air sprang up inside the spell formation!

A huge, shadowy figure appeared, clad in imperial robes, and wearing an imperial crown. Of course, thanks to the power of Bai Xiaochun's mask, that image looked different to the people in the spell formation. However, the domineering air it exuded was still there, and caused even the minds of Zhao Dongshan and others further away to reel.

Gasps could be heard. Everyone felt as if, in front of this shadowy figure, they were nothing more than bugs, looking up with complete powerlessness.

Zhou Hong felt it most clearly of all. Back in the Necromancer Kettle, he had faced Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist, and could immediately tell that this shadowy figure was vastly more shocking than the one from before.

Not only was it more corporeal, it was also more domineering. In fact, the version he had faced in the Necromancer Kettle almost couldn't compare at all to this new version.

"This... this...." Zhou Hong was physically trembling, as were the others who were powering the spell formation. Deep alarm and fear rose up from within their hearts to grip them relentlessly.

In that moment, Bai Xiaochun suddenly looked up, his face expressionless. Then he unleashed a vicious punch onto the fog in front of him!!

In his heart, he uttered three words.

"Undying... Emperor's Fist!"

RUUUUMBLE! CRRAAAAASH!

The enormous, shadowy emperor also struck out with his fist. In fact, from a distance, it wasn't even possible to see Bai Xiaochun. The only thing visible was the shadowy emperor, looking down with the scorn of a paragon as he unleashed a fist strike.

Massive energy erupted out that couldn't be put into words. To Zhao Dongshan, it looked almost like an actual god had descended; the wind screamed, and a powerful will rose up, a will like that which belonged to the heavens!

“D-deva....” he whispered, stunned. Everyone else present felt their hearts pounding in their chests. Intense rumbling sounds echoed out from the spell formation, along with sharp cracking sounds. Everyone who was powering the spell formation, including Zhou Hong, could only watch as the glowing armor that covered them began to shatter.

A mountain-toppling, sea-draining force smashed against them, making them feel like tiny rowboats on a raging sea, completely powerless to fight back.

One of the soul cultivators' glowing armor shattered, leaving him bereft of any defenses. Then, an agonized shriek rang out; it was as if he had been smashed into by a mountain. Gobs of blood erupted from his mouth as he was sent flying down to slam into the ground, completely unconscious!

After all, in addition to the force being exerted by Bai Xiaochun, they also had to deal with the backlash from the spell formation, adding injury to injury in a way that was extremely difficult to sustain.

Soon, a second person was similarly affected, then a third and a fourth.... Within the mere blink of an eye, a twentieth was hit, then the fiftieth, the eightieth.... One by one, the more than one hundred people who had been powering the spell formation screamed miserably as they were sent slamming into the ground, qi and blood in chaos, internal organs smashed. Many of them

nearly lost their cultivation bases from the force of impact. All were seriously injured, and left gasping for breath.

That included Zhou Hong. Although he held out for longer than most of the others, eventually blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he was sent tumbling backward. The spell formation... had been completely destroyed!!

The feng shui compass crumbled, sending a backlash attack into the young man that had been holding it, causing him to visibly age. His hair turned white, and blood sprayed out of his mouth, filled with chunks of internal organs. After all, he had been operating the spell formation, and therefore, was hit with a bigger backlash than anyone else. He had tried throwing his longevity into the spell formation to stabilize it, but failed. Moments later, a bloodcurdling scream rang out as he exploded, killed in body and soul!

A massive blast of wind exploded out from the destroyed spell formation, sweeping out in all directions as Bai Xiaochun took a step forward!

His hair was in complete disarray, and the domineering air which had surrounded him was gone. He didn't seem terrifying like he had moments before, and yet... to everyone present, he was like an immortal devil!

The instant he appeared, Zhao Dongshan let out a shriek of alarm and began to fly backward, not daring to remain in place for even a moment longer. The other chosen who had been rushing toward the area all scattered. At the moment, Bai Xiaochun was simply too shocking and terrifying for them to deal with.

Bai Xiaochun completely ignored the fleeing Zhao Dongshan and other chosen. His use of the fist strike moments ago had completely emptied him, and drained his fleshly body power down to nothing. Thankfully, his cultivation base was still in place, and he could use it to control his body, otherwise he wouldn't have

been able to lift a finger.

As he moved, he rotated his cultivation base, flying toward the nearest of the more than one hundred chosen who had been blasted by his fist strike. All of them were severely injured, and also shell-shocked by Bai Xiaochun's power. With one wave of his arm, he gathered them all together and deposited them onto the ground in front of him.

At the moment, he felt profoundly exhausted. When he let his cultivation base relax, his vision swam, so he bit his tongue to maintain lucidity. Panting, he glared at the more than one hundred chosen.

“Again and again and again!” he said in a hoarse voice. “You people push things too far!” As for the chosen, they stared back at him with completely ashen faces.

Never could they have imagined that this person would be so unbelievably powerful. It was outrageous!

“What divine ability was that.... He's in the Nascent Soul stage! how could he possibly use a secret magic like that? Just what fist strike was that?!?!” Zhou Hong was cursing inwardly, but his face was still deathly ashen. In his bitterness, he realized that this Bai Hao had grown stronger since their last encounter, leaving him far, far behind.

That fist strike had already been the stuff of nightmares, and now, it was even more devilishly horrific than before.

He wasn't the only one to react in such a way. Everyone looked at Bai Xiaochun with scalps tingling from shock and horror. For many, it was their first time actually encountering the Bai Hao that they had heard so much about. And as of this moment, they were thoroughly convinced that his legendary strength was no joke!! He was completely inhuman!!

Bai Xiaochun was currently fighting to get his breathing under

control, but to everyone else, it made him look like an immortal devil chanting forbidden scriptures as he stared at them with bloodshot eyes. He pulled out a Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill and popped it into his mouth. Its miraculous abilities instantly returned his cultivation base to top form, and also returned his body to good condition. Then he took a breath, hefted his Eternal Parasol, and walked over to the nearest terrified soul cultivator.

After stabbing the parasol into the cultivator, life force began to flow into him, further restoring his fleshly body power. The soul cultivator screamed as he withered up, but thankfully for him, Bai Xiaochun's killing intent had ebbed significantly after using the Undying Emperor's Fist. Therefore, after a moment passed, he extracted the Eternal Parasol and moved on to the next chosen.

Everyone looked on with scalps that tingled in terror, and that included both those who had not been present in the Necromancer Kettle, and those who had.

“Look, let's talk this over, Bai Hao. Don't-- AAAAAGHHH...!”

“Don't be like this, Bai Hao! You already sucked me dry in the Necromancer Kettle! You don't have to... hey don't, AGGHHH...!”

“Do you truly dare to kill me, Bai Hao?!?!”

“How dare you! My clan's patriarch is a heavenly duke! This isn't the Necromancer Kettle, Bai Hao. This is Arch-Emperor City!!”

Pleas, curses, threats and all other types of words could be heard. The doors of many nearby shops opened up a crack as people looked out to see what was happening, whereupon gasps could be heard. So far, nobody had dared to look out, but now that they could, a shocking scene met their eyes.

There Bai Xiaochun stood, pulsing with vitality, having single-handedly reduced his enemies to a completely pitiable state. All onlookers felt chills running up their spines. This Bai Hao was uncharacteristically, unfathomably profound!

The truth was that he actually wasn't that indescribably powerful. If the entire group of several hundred soul cultivators had all attacked simultaneously, then he would have been seriously injured or even killed. But because they came at him in three waves, and because some like Zhao Dongshan had actually chosen to flee, he managed to defeat them soundly.

Chapter 753: The Wildlands Beat Me!

In the end, the spell formation had been so troublesome for Bai Xiaochun that he had resorted to the Undying Emperor's Fist to break it, and then used a Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill to recover. Without falling back on that strategy, he wouldn't have been able to prevail.

Feeling more than a bit angry, he quickly went from one chosen to the next and stabbed the Eternal Parasol into them. He made sure to shove it especially deeply into Zhou Hong, and took plenty of life force.

Most people screamed, but Zhou Hong simply gritted his teeth and glared at Bai Xiaochun wordlessly.

"What?" Bai Xiaochun said. "Still think you were in the right? Fudge! You stirred up trouble with me back in the Necromancer Kettle, then you tried to get Sun Yifan and Sima Tao to do your dirty work for you, and now you pull this little stunt?" Bai Xiaochun really did want to just wipe Zhou Hong out of existence right here, but reminded himself that he couldn't forget how powerful Zhou Hong's father was....

"If your dad wasn't a demigod, Lord Bai would have already killed you!" Bai Xiaochun snorted coldly, and sucked even more life force out of him until there was almost none left. At that point, he felt his Tempered Bones beginning to thrum.

Extracting the Eternal Parasol, he cast his senses inward to observe something warm flowing through him, originating within his bones. A tremor ran through him, and then he felt both his defensive powers and his overall strength increase.

As of this moment, he was breaking out from the Tempered Bones level into... the Powered Bones level!

"Hmph! You people have powerful backgrounds, but so do I!"

Normally, his breakthrough in the Undying Bones would have been a cause for joy. But right now, he didn't feel excited at all. Furthermore, despite the words he had just uttered, he was actually feeling very nervous.

“You have to pull through for me this time, Giant Ghost King!” he thought. “I'm really in trouble! I might not be your son, but I'm your son-in-law, right? That counts as being half a son, at least!” Sighing, he pondered that he really had been maligned in this situation. He was innocent! He hadn't done a thing! He had been minding his own business conjuring some flame when these crazy people burst onto the scene and started a fight.

“What was I supposed to do? If I didn't fight back, I would have gotten killed! And I didn't want to kill anybody either. That was an accident!” The more he thought about it, the worse he felt. He wanted to simply flee, and yet knew that there was really nowhere to flee to.

If he was going to end up as a fugitive in the Wildlands, then he might as well just reveal his true identity as Bai Xiaochun.

“If it really goes that far... then I've been thoroughly defeated. The Wildlands beat me! I can't believe that both of my identities are going to be put on the wanted list.” As Bai Xiaochun considered all these matters, he truly wished he could cry. Furthermore, he didn't dare to try to perform another spirit enhancement on his nascent soul right now, otherwise people would easily be able to figure out who he really was.

“What do I do? Ai... what a headache!” Sighing, he finally sent a message to the Giant Ghost King explaining that he had killed a few people. The Giant Ghost King didn't respond at first. Then he cursed Bai Xiaochun a bit, and then went to handle matters.

Bai Xiaochun actually felt a bit better after the Giant Ghost King cursed him, and mused that it was not in vain that he had been so loyal to the man....

“And then there’s Xu Shan and Chen Manyao, they’re the ones that caused this whole mess....” Throughout the course of the fight, many of the people who had come to attack him had specifically mentioned those two young women, which was very telling. “Those two caused the problems, then ran!”

Bai Xiaochun’s thoughts were causing him to feel more and more depressed. It was at this point that his expression flickered, and he looked up into the sky. Intense rumbling sounds were echoing out, and incredible pressure began to weigh down everywhere.

Two enormous faces appeared up above, one of them that of a middle-aged man, the other an older man. Deva auras also erupted out, sealing down the entire area and turning into something like a prison.

“Devas....” he thought, his eyes widening. Obviously, these were people from the clans of some of the chosen who had attacked him, and were two of the ten heavenly dukes of Arch-Emperor City.

In addition to them, there were also numerous auras belonging to half-devas. Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered; it currently felt as if innumerable deadly weapons were all targeting him and him alone.

“Two devas,” he thought, heart pounding loudly in his chest. “Nine half-devas, and countless other soul cultivators....” Arch-Emperor City had the biggest collection of top experts in the entire Wildlands, and as such, devas weren’t exactly a rare sight. However, when considering the Wildlands as a whole, they were definitely not common.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling more nervous than ever. In contrast were Zhou Hong and the other chosen, all of whom sat there looking like nothing more than skin and bones. When they saw the two devas appear, the excitement in their eyes was immediately apparent.

The two devas looked down at Bai Xiaochun and the people

around them. They saw how the life force of the chosen had been damaged, including many of the heirs apparent. At that point, unsightly expressions could be seen on the faces of the devas.

Soon, their gazes locked onto Bai Xiaochun, gazes that were filled with killing intent. Considering their status, they didn't actually need to do anything in this situation; their mere presence here made their attitude clear.

“Seize this Bai Hao!” said the middle-aged deva, his voice booming with heavenly might.

In response to his cold voice, the nine half-deva heavenly marquises all surged with killing intent. Those heavenly marquises were clearly incensed by the sight of their chosen heirs reduced to such pitiable states. There were even two marquises who had members of their clans among the dead.

Within moments of the heavenly duke issuing the order, nine beams of light were shooting toward Bai Xiaochun!

There was no time for thought or planning; Bai Xiaochun immediately fled backward. As he did, the space he had just occupied collapsed into rubble in a crashing boom.

If he had been even a moment slower in evading, he would have been caught in that destruction.

His heart was racing, but at the moment, he couldn't think of what to do. He could only trust that the Giant Ghost King would be able to smooth things over. In the meantime, he had no choice but to flee in the face of the nine half-deva heavenly marquises.

Bai Xiaochun had faced a half-deva in the form of the Junior Champion King, but these people were different. During that fight, the Junior Champion King had just broken through into that level, whereas these nine heavenly marquises had long since stabilized their cultivation bases. They were fully and truly half-devas, and had been for years. They were elites among half-devas!

Each and every one of them would be a match for Bai Lin without question!

If Bai Xiaochun fought them one at a time, he might be confident enough to win. But to face all nine at once left him with no choice other than to simply run.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The nine heavenly marquises didn't hold back at all. They directly used their trump cards, causing brilliant light to shine in the air as magical techniques and divine abilities shook heaven and earth. It was almost as if a bizarre, nine-fingered hand were reaching out to grab Bai Xiaochun!

The hand was so terrifying that Bai Xiaochun was shaking in fear. For some reason, he had the feeling that if that hand touched him, then not even his powerful fleshly body would be able to hold out. He would be killed in body and soul!

"If you don't hurry up and fix this, Giant Ghost King, then my poor little life is going to be over!" He was shrieking inwardly, and sweat poured down his face. He couldn't have been more aware that if he was even the least bit slow, then that nine-fingered hand would close around him!

"If you people have what it takes, come at me one by one!" he shouted angrily. Thankfully, he was capable of shocking speed which, when combined with his cultivation base, made him incredibly fast. Most importantly, he had broken through to the Powered Bones level, which gave him an added bit of speed.

Numerous afterimages appeared as he sped away, making it impossible for the divine abilities of the heavenly marquises to even touch him. However, he couldn't fight back, only buy time.

The nine heavenly marquises frowned. The fact that they had attacked together showed how seriously they took this opponent, and yet, his incredible speed was making it temporarily impossible

to deal with him.

It was at that point that the middle-aged heavenly duke up in midair snorted coldly. The face which represented him rippled inward on itself until it took the shape of the heavenly duke himself. Then, he waved his right index finger at the fleeing Bai Xiaochun.

Even as he began to move his hand through the air, though, Mistress Red-Dust's enraged voice echoed out.

“Stay your hand, Chen Haosong!!”

Chapter 754: Deva Shapes Heavenly Will

The deva who was currently attacking Bai Xiaochun was someone from the elder generation of Chen Xiong's clan. He was one of the ten heavenly dukes of Arch-Emperor City... Chen Haosong!

All ten heavenly dukes were in the Deva Realm, and none of them were ordinary devas.... they were all in the great circle!

Those ten dukes formed a critical reserve power for Arch-Emperor City, something vastly more powerful than Giant Ghost City's three patriarchs and Duke Deathcrier. Not even Mistress Red-Dust was a match for them in terms of cultivation base.

Of course, Mistress Red-Dust was the Giant Ghost King's daughter, which gave her quite a bit of extra confidence. Furthermore, she also had gifts given to her by her father, including... a precious treasure that could power her up to the level of the great circle of the Deva Realm!

However, that precious treasure could only put her in a position to tangle with other cultivators in the great circle. She could not transfer that power to someone else for defensive purposes. Therefore... the fact that Chen Haosong had already unleashed his attack meant that Mistress Red-Dust had no choice other than to try to simply block it.

As for Chen Haosong, his expression flickered into a slight frown. He had owed Mistress Red-Dust a favor before, but had already settled that account. However, despite the fact that she had come here to protect Bai Hao, he knew that she likely was not doing it of her own will, but rather, on the orders of the Giant Ghost King.

"I wonder," he thought. "Will the Giant Ghost King really show up in person because of one person getting killed?" Although this was his first time actually seeing Bai Hao in person, he had long since come to loathe him. After all, the matter of the debt of

800,000,000 portions of soul medicine was something that rankled him deeply.

Ignoring Mistress Red-Dust, he not only didn't pull back his finger, but instead stabbed it toward Bai Xiaochun with more speed than before.

Instantly, Bai Xiaochun's mind began to reel. Earlier, before Chen Haosong had made his move, Bai Xiaochun had sensed that he was at least a bit more powerful than the older deva. But now, his attack caused his face to fall.

As far as he could tell, this was the most powerful deva he had ever encountered. Although the wave of his finger didn't seem to be drawing upon the will of the heavens, Bai Xiaochun was sure... that he would be completely incapable of avoiding the blow!

It was as if... the heavens were conforming to this deva's will!

And that was exactly what was happening! Deva Shapes Heavenly Will! This was the ultimate level within the Deva Realm!

There was no time for Bai Xiaochun to ponder the situation, nor did he have attention to spare for the nine heavenly marquises. He could only concentrate on that monumentally shocking finger attack.

To him, all creation consisted of nothing but that finger, and as it descended upon him with the power to destroy heaven and earth, he felt as if even his soul were about to shatter.

In that moment of deadly crisis, he let out a hoarse shout; he knew that if he didn't manage to fight back against this finger... he would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt!

Without the slightest hesitation, he pulled out the black spear the Giant Ghost King had given him, the one with the sixteenfold spirit enhancement. Then, he threw it with all his might, sending it like a black bolt of lightning toward Chen Haosong's finger attack!

However, there was more. Backing up, he pulled out the Eternal Parasol with one hand and grabbed Zhou Hong with the other.

Although all of these things take some time to describe, they happened within the blink of an eye. In almost the exact same instant that he grabbed Zhou Hong, a massive, ear-splitting boom echoed out.

That was the result of the black spear making contact with Chen Haosong's finger attack.

BOOOOM! CRAAACK!

That black spear was a precious treasure that not even an ordinary deva would be able to destroy. Unfortunately, Chen Haosong was in the great circle of the Deva Realm, and attacked with power that far surpassed regular devas. Therefore, the spear shattered into countless fragments, and as for the finger, although it wasn't destroyed, it was weakened significantly.

After the spear shattered, the weakened finger attack continued onward and then slammed into the Eternal Parasol.

Intense rumbling sounds filled the air as the Eternal Parasol's defensive powers held for a brief moment. But then the parasol's canopy began to rip into pieces. The enigmatically smiling ghost face that the powers of the mask had kept concealed let out a shriek as it ripped itself off of the crumbling canopy and bit down onto the finger, almost like a snake.

After that, the ghost face shattered, and the parasol's canopy was destroyed. Thankfully, the shaft of the parasol was constructed from some unknowable material that survived.

Mourning the state of the Eternal Parasol, Bai Xiaochun put it away, simultaneously borrowing the force of the blow to shoot backward. The finger strike had been weakened twice in a row, and now it had almost completely faded away. Meanwhile, Zhou Hong let out a terrified shriek as Bai Xiaochun threw him out in

front of him.

“I refuse to believe that you would dare to kill the son of a demigod!!” Bai Xiaochun roared. Even as his words continued to echo out, he pulled out another Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill.

When Chen Haosong saw that Bai Xiaochun was using Zhou Hong as a shield, an unsightly expression appeared on his face. Eyes flashing like lightning, he cut off his connection to the finger attack, causing the image of the finger to fade significantly before reaching Zhou Hong.

And yet, for some unknowable reason, the finger actually passed directly through Zhou Hong, not harming him in the least... to appear directly in front of Bai Xiaochun!

The finger attack struck after all!

In that same instant, Bai Xiaochun popped the Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill into his mouth, and then used his left hand to launch a fist strike at the incoming finger!

A deafening boom filled the air. Cracking sounds rang out from Bai Xiaochun, and blood sprayed out of his mouth as he fell back. However, as he did, the power of the Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill erupted out, healing his wounds even as they appeared. 300 meters back, he finally ground to a halt, where he looked up, ashen faced and panting... but completely recovered from all wounds!!

Despite the fact that he seemed to be in good condition, his mind was anything but calm. As of this point, he realized that his understanding of devas had always been incomplete. There was obviously a massive difference between devas of certain levels.

“This Chen Haosong... must be in the true great circle of the Deva Realm! That attack of his just now felt like it contained the weight of all the heavens. How terrifying!” As he looked up at Chen Haosong, his heart pounded with a very uneasy feeling.

“Like to bully your inferiors, huh?” he thought. “You just wait until I’m a demigod. Then you’ll be my inferior, and I’ll bully you!” Meanwhile, Zhou Hong was trembling in terror at having just stared death in the face. When he saw that deva-level finger attack heading toward him, he was sure that he was going to be killed. The fear still lingered inside of him, and at the same time, he felt more terrified of Bai Xiaochun than ever. As far as he was concerned, he was nothing less than a crazy daredevil!!

It was at this point that a red blur of light shot toward Bai Xiaochun from off in the distance, and then Mistress Red-Dust appeared in front of him.

She had only been able to watch from a distance as he faced that finger strike alone, and it had left her feeling quite shaken. As of that point she realized... that she didn’t know much at all about this Bai Hao.

She was actually feeling very nervous about the situation herself. Turning her gaze away from Bai Hao, she suppressed her shock about what had just happened, then looked up at Chen Haosong and said, “Chen Haosong, I’m here on behalf of my father the king to protect Bai Hao!”

Silence reigned. The string of shocking methods Bai Xiaochun had used to neutralize the attack of a heavenly duke left the nine heavenly marquises completely flabbergasted.

Although each move he had used seemed ordinary in nature, the fact that he had seemingly instinctually called upon them was something that most ordinary people were incapable of. It required not only resourcefulness, but very quick thinking!

Furthermore, it was clear evidence of extensive experience in battle.

The fact of the matter was that Bai Xiaochun’s display of fighting instinct... was completely shocking to everyone present.

Even Chen Haosong's brow was slightly furrowed in shock at Bai Xiaochun's strength. Considering his status, it would only be appropriate for him to attack a single time in this situation. Furthermore, even if he was willing to keep acting aggressively, there was now Mistress Red-Dust to deal with, and she was backed by the Giant Ghost King. Therefore, it was with a very grim expression that Chen Haosong looked at Mistress Red-Dust and coolly said, "You don't have what it takes to protect him!"

A very serious glint could be seen in Mistress Red-Dust's eyes, and the air around her seemed to turn cold as she said, "My father has already contacted Heavenmaster Hall about this incident. Without clear direction from the Grand Heavenmaster about what to do next, it doesn't matter if I don't have what it takes. You will not make another move, Chen Haosong!"

Chapter 755: I'm Not Bai Hao....

Chen Haosong's pupils constricted slightly. If what Mistress Red-Dust had just said was true, and the Giant Ghost King had already brought the matter to the Grand Heavenmaster, then just as she had said, almost no one would dare to touch Bai Hao until the Grand Heavenmaster weighed in on the situation.

However, the reason for saying that almost no one would dare to touch him... was that there was still another person in Arch-Emperor City who qualified to disregard the Grand Heavenmaster.

He was, of course, the current Arch-Emperor!

However, the Arch-Emperor would not casually do such a thing.

As Bai Xiaochun looked back and forth between Mistress Red-Dust and Chen Haosong, he finally began to recover his senses after the sudden interchange which had just occurred. Only now did he start to get nervous, and sigh anxiously inside.

“How could I be this unlucky...? Is my poor little life going to be in danger...?” The fact that the matter had been escalated up to the level of the Grand Heavenmaster was not comforting at all, and in fact, had his heart beating rapidly.

Although Bai Xiaochun had never seen this Grand Heavenmaster, he knew exactly who he was!

He was Chen Manyao's Master, whom Bai Xiaochun had encountered as a shadowy projection back in the River-Defying Sect. Because he had been in the Heavenspan River region at the time, it had been impossible to tell the man's cultivation base level. But now that he thought about it, whatever methods he had used to accomplish that task back then had not been simple.

Heart thumping with anxiety, he began to brainstorm as many ideas as possible of how to escape Arch-Emperor City if things went south....

“What do I do, what do I do...?” he thought. At this point, Chen Haosong took out a transmission jade slip and sent a message to the Grand Heavenmaster. The other heavenly duke also took out a jade slip.

Silence descended onto the area, and with it, great pressure began to weigh onto Bai Xiaochun. As far as he was concerned, he was the unluckiest person in the entire world. From the moment he had arrived in Arch-Emperor City, he had kept his tail between his legs, and yet, had constantly run into trouble.

As the deadlock continued down below, it was high above the city in the imperial palace, in a location that represented the greatest power in all the Wildlands, that an old man sat cross-legged in a palace hall, thinking.

Although he was ancient in appearance, he radiated a bizarre aura that made him seem anything but old. It was almost as if his ancient features were a mere façade; clearly, if the power of his qi and blood erupted out, it could encompass all of Arch-Emperor City.

He wore simple garb, little more than a white robe. Although there was nothing luxurious about it, that robe would cause any person in the Wildlands who saw it to immediately feel nervous.

And that was because the robe revealed his status, a status so high that, despite wearing the most common of clothing, he looked like he was garbed in a river of stars.

He was the Grand Heavenmaster!

He was currently looking at a transmission jade slip, which abounded with information about what was happening in Borough 89. Quite a few people had messaged him about it, and although it wasn't a very important matter in the grand scheme of things, it was enough to make the Grand Heavenmaster put a fair bit of thought into it.

“How amusing,” he said, a cold, bizarre smile spreading across his face. “This Bai Hao seems to whip up a storm wherever he goes.... The Giant Ghost King wants him as a son-in-law. The Spirit Advent King wants me to execute him so his daughter will forget about him. The Nine Serenities King’s son wants to assassinate him.... It seems that all of the four heavenly kings have been dragged into issues revolving around Bai Hao.

“And that’s not to mention that the incident in Borough 89 has dragged almost all of the heavenly dukes and heavenly marquises into it.... Even those who didn’t show up personally in Borough 89 have children involved.

“I can’t believe that one little Bai Hao managed to do all of this.... Very amusing. Of course, in addition to Bai Hao, there are other culprits. Namely... the two imperial princes....

“Did someone put them up to it? Did someone inspire them to pit Zhou Hong against Bai Hao, and cause so many lives to be lost in the process? I don’t think that those two princes could come up with a plan like that. The only person who could do something so ingenious... would be the Arch-Emperor himself.” Finally, he looked up, and his eyes glittered with cold light as he looked deeper into the imperial palace.

“You don’t want to be a puppet, and so you’re taking advantage of this situation to make a strike from the shadows...?”

“Unfortunately, there is something of which you’re completely unaware. This Bai Hao that you so blithely thought to use has many other secrets, secrets so outrageous you couldn’t even imagine them. The highest likelihood of all is that he’s actually Bai Xiaochun.... After all, when he was outside of Arch-Emperor City, back when I was preparing to investigate him, he unleashed... the Hell-Emperor Fist!!” The Grand Heavenmaster’s eyes narrowed as an uneasy feeling rose up in his heart.

“Hell-Emperor, are you trying to tell me to trust him...?” With

that, he closed his eyes and put out of mind the issues regarding Bai Hao's true identity, and his connection to the Hell-Emperor. Then, he turned his thoughts back to what was happening in Borough 89.

“It seems to me that Arch-Emperor City has been quiet for too long. The Arch-Emperor is starting to get ideas.... Therefore, the question is, of all the nobility and aristocracy connected to the imperial court, which of them... are loyal to the Arch-Emperor?” A grim look appeared in the Grand Heavenmaster's eyes as he looked back down at the jade slip.

“This Bai Hao... has offended just about all of the nobles and aristocrats in Arch-Emperor City. Even the events of the Necromancer Kettle alone were enough to earn him public ire. In that case... I think having this Bai Hao alive would be much better for me than having him dead!” The Grand Heavenmaster smiled. The more people this Bai Hao offended, the more it meant that he was actually a free agent in the city, unconnected to anyone.

“Whether he's Bai Hao or Bai Xiaochun doesn't matter.” To the Grand Heavenmaster, it would be very valuable to have an unaffiliated government official on his side!

Furthermore, the hints given by the Hell-Emperor had the Grand Heavenmaster more interested in Bai Xiaochun than ever before. And the coincidence that he was backed by the Giant Ghost King made him even more enticing.

“If he actually becomes the Daoist partner of that Zhou Zimo, then that would cast some doubt onto my theory. But there's no way the two of them will get together!” The Grand Heavenmaster knew that Bai Xiaochun was the perfect tool for him to use now that the Arch-Emperor seemed to be planning something. Furthermore, he had offended all the important people in the city. By giving him a chance, he could make him feel as if his only backer was the Grand Heavenmaster, a relationship which would only grow deeper as time progressed.

Furthermore, what he had heard about Bai Hao's shakedowns in Giant Ghost City showed what kind of person he was. He would definitely make use of power to gain revenge. And that would help the Grand Heavenmaster seek out and sever any secret relationships that were developing between the aristocracy and the Arch-Emperor!

Having reached this point in his train of thought, the Grand Heavenmaster made his decision.

“Head immediately to Borough 89 with a Dharmic decree.... Bai Hao is to be appointed as inspections commissioner, and given command of 1,000 troops! And bring him to me immediately!”

Even as the Grand Heavenmaster's words began to echo out, the air in front of him distorted, and a shadowy figure appeared. The figure seemed surprised when the position of inspections commissioner was mentioned, but bowed his head respectfully, voiced his assent, and then vanished.

Back in Borough 89, Bai Xiaochun was frowning as his mind raced with various thoughts regarding what was to come. Although he had a really bad premonition about what was going to happen, there was no way to escape at the moment, so he was forced to wait nervously.

“If I really have no other options, then I'll find an opportunity to slip away. I still have a few Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pills left, and I can also use my mask to change appearances again if I really have to.”

As time passed and his anxiety mounted, Bai Xiaochun felt the pressure mounting. He was so nervous his heart itched as though it had grown grass, and his mouth and throat were completely dry.

“I can't rely on the Giant Ghost King either. If he wanted to save me, he could have used the teleportation portal to come here by now....” At this point, he was in no mood to try to do anything brave. Casting a sidelong glance at Mistress Red-Dust and Chen

Haosong, he slowly began to edge backward.

However, in the instant that he moved, the faces of Chen Haosong and the other heavenly dukes flickered. Mistress Red-Dust's eyes glittered, and then all three devas suddenly looked in the same direction.

When Bai Xiaochun realized what was happening, he followed their line of sight to find the air distorting, and a black-robed figure stepping out into the open.

The sight of this newcomer caused Chen Haosong's eyes to widen, and it was the same with the other heavenly duke and Mistress Red-Dust.

The nine heavenly marquises' hearts began to tremble with fear.

Bai Xiaochun was almost crazy with nervousness, to the point where his heart was about to burst out of his chest. He was even worried it might just stop beating.

It was at that point that the black, shadowy figure, whose facial features weren't even distinguishable, looked at Bai Xiaochun with glittering eyes.

"So, you're Bai Hao!" The coldness of the voice seemed to Bai Xiaochun to be filled with killing intent, making him as nervous as a scared bunny rabbit.

"I'm not Bai Hao...."

Chapter 756: I'm... The Inspections Commissioner?

Bai Xiaochun's voice quavered as he spoke, and even as it rang out, he suddenly darted away as surely as a rabbit whose tail had been stepped on....

The speed with which he moved left everyone stunned. Never could anyone present have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would flee like this in the face of this black-robed, shadowy figure.

Even the black-robed figure seemed stunned. He actually hadn't intended to frighten Bai Xiaochun, he just naturally had a grim and sinister way of speaking, the type that normally was filled with perilous killing intent. In fact, he wasn't even aware that it was the killing intent in his voice that had prompted Bai Xiaochun to flee the way he had....

The moment Bai Xiaochun scurried away, Chen Haosong's eyes flashed, and he took a step forward to give chase. As for Mistress Red-Dust, her expression flickered, and she lunged to block Chen Haosong's path.

The nine heavenly marquises all flew into the air, shouting loudly.

“How dare you flee, Bai Hao!”

“If the Grand Heavenmaster wants you dead, then there's nowhere in heaven and earth that you could flee to!!”

Even the chosen whose life force had been drained all got very excited, and even began to laugh uproariously. As far as Zhou Hong was concerned, the heavens did have eyes, and it was with profound satisfaction that he looked at the fleeing Bai Xiaochun. “You will be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt, Bai Hao!!”

As the scene devolved into chaos, the black-robed figure suddenly burst into motion, piercing through the air to pass Chen Haosong,

and then appear right in front of Bai Xiaochun.

“What are you doing, Bai Hao?!” he said in an angry voice.

Bai Xiaochun was on the verge of tears. By this point, it was obvious that this black-robed figure was a deva.

“Dammit, how come there are so many devas all of a sudden?!?!” Eyes bloodshot from terror at the deadly crisis, Bai Xiaochun let out a shout and drew upon the speed of his fleshly body to rocket off in a different direction.

At this point, the black-robed figure realized that he had scared Bai Xiaochun out of his wits. Unsure of whether to laugh or cry, he simply stood where he was and spoke in a gravelly voice.

“Hear the decree of the Grand Heavenmaster.... Bai Hao is hereby appointed as the inspections commissioner of Arch-Emperor City, and is given command of 1,000 troops!”

This was the most quickly and efficiently he had ever delivered a Dharmic decree in his entire life. Usually, he took his time, and spoke in a sinister fashion that put pressure on everyone who heard his words. But now, it was with a bitter smile that he spit the words out as quickly as possible.

Immediately, everything went completely quiet. The heavenly marquises who had been chasing Bai Xiaochun turned with wide eyes toward the black-robed figure, unsure if they had misheard.

“Inspections... commissioner?!”

Chen Haosong had been blocked by Mistress Red-Dust, but was just preparing to continue chasing Bai Xiaochun, when he heard the words and instantly stopped in place, turning to look at the black-robed figure with an expression of complete incredulity. The other heavenly duke was equally stunned.

Mistress Red-Dust’s eyes went wide at the sheer outrageousness of it all. Her original guess had been that if the Grand Heavenmaster wanted to give some face to the Giant Ghost King,

then he would order Bai Hao to return to Giant Ghost City.

Never had she even considered the possibility that he would promote him to be the inspections commissioner!!

The inspections commissioner in the city was no small figure. He had the right to perform inspections on all the important people in the city, and was actually extremely powerful. Back when the Grand Heavenmaster had been in the middle of his rise to power, he had appointed an inspections commissioner who held that position for a hundred years. That inspections commissioner had presided over a reign of terror, and had slaughtered countless political rivals of the Grand Heavenmaster. He had struck fear into the hearts of everyone in the aristocracy, fear that lingered to this day.

After the Grand Heavenmaster consolidated his power, he removed the inspections commissioner from office and instead had him serve as a personal high counselor. And that man... was none other than this black-robed shadowy figure!

The position of inspections commissioner had been empty ever since he left it, but now, Bai Xiaochun had been promoted!

The powerful experts who had come from the various clans, as well as the bedraggled chosen down on the ground, were all completely stunned, their expressions frozen, at least until they began to cry out in alarm.

“How... how is this even possible?!?!”

“Inspections commissioner... in command of 1,000 troops....”

Bai Xiaochun was still fleeing at top speed, but when he heard the words that had just been spoken, he slowed down to a stop, his eyes wide.

“Huh?” Never in his wildest imagination could he have guessed that, not only would he come out of the situation unscathed... but he would also get a promotion! “Um....”

At this point, he still hadn't turned around, and actually wasn't convinced of what was really happening. However, considering that nobody was chasing him anymore, he turned to look at the black-robed figure.

When he found that the black-robed figure was staring back at him, he hesitated for a moment, then pointed at himself and asked, "I'm the inspections commissioner?"

The black-robed figure was looking at Bai Xiaochun, feeling a bit of a headache coming on as he wondered whether or not the Grand Heavenmaster might have issued the wrong Dharmic decree. How could this fellow be the inspections commissioner, who was supposed to strike fear and dread into the heart of the aristocracy...?

And yet, he didn't dare to go against the Grand Heavenmaster, and was forced to simply sigh and nod his head.

Not sounding polite at all, he said, "If you're Bai Hao, then you're the one. However, I really do want to know why you're running away. Feeling guilty about something?"

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times. Although he was now certain of what was happening, it almost seemed like a dream. He quickly pulled himself together, though. Taking a deep breath, he swished his sleeve, stuck his chin up, and proudly said, "Hahaha! I, uh... ahem, of course I know how important I am to the Grand Heavenmaster. My goal moments ago was to see who present would dare to violate the Dharmic decree of the Grand Heavenmaster and attempt to kill me anyway!"

As of this moment, not a trace of the fear from moments ago could be seen on Bai Xiaochun. He seemed righteous, and even stern as he stood there tall and straight.

"Hmmmphh! I will most certainly remember how everyone acted moments ago!" With that, his gaze slowly slid across the crowd.

Then he looked over at Zhou Hong and the other chosen down on the ground. Looking very stern and just, he said, “And don't think I didn't notice how excited all of you were acting just now!”

Then he looked at Mistress Red-Dust, assuming the posture of an important figure, which was something he was very proficient at doing. “As for you, Zimo, please accept my thanks for your assistance today. I clearly misjudged you. You truly are a lovely woman.”

The truth was that he really did appreciate what Mistress Red-Dust had done.

An unsightly expression appeared on Mistress Red-Dust's face when Bai Xiaochun called her a 'lovely woman', and she couldn't refrain from gritting her teeth and letting out a cold snort.

The sudden turn of events had Chen Haosong looking very ill at ease. The nine heavenly marquises also seemed very apprehensive. As for Zhou Hong and the other chosen, they were cursing Bai Xiaochun inwardly for how shameless he was. He had clearly been fleeing like a frightened rabbit moments before, but now that he was the inspections commissioner, he immediately pretended that he was on the side of justice.

The black-robed figure seemed to understand Bai Xiaochun a bit better by this point. Although he was still a bit annoyed, he ignored Bai Xiaochun's little speech and coolly said, “Very well, come with me to see the Grand Heavenmaster!”

Then he turned to leave, clearly not in the mood to stay in Borough 89 any longer. The mishaps of the day were simply too preposterous.

Now that disaster had been averted, Bai Xiaochun was finally starting to calm down. As it turned out, there really hadn't been a reason to be so flustered to have all of these devas chasing him.

“I can't believe I'm the inspections commissioner....” he thought.

Although it seemed like his veins of steel were pulsing, he was still feeling very jumpy. Even his stomach felt a bit upset. However, he simply turned and swaggered after the black-robed figure, who took him flying... toward the imperial palace.

Everyone else who was left behind at first just stood there, either dazed or depressed. Then, having no options left, they simply left, taking their chosen with them back to their clans. At long last, Borough 89 was quiet again....

Zhou Hong was helped away, and despite his weak state, immediately went back to Nine Serenities City. He had no desire at all to remain behind in Arch-Emperor City, and was terrified by the mere thought that, not only had he failed to kill Bai Hao, but Bai Hao had also been promoted to inspections commissioner.

Chapter 757: Do You Or Do You Not Dare?!

On two occasions, Bai Xiaochun had drained Zhou Hong of life force with absolutely no consequences. In fact, he had actually become famous, and even increased his overall standing as a result. And now, he had caught the attention of the Grand Heavenmaster, and had been given the matchlessly terrifying title of inspections commissioner.

Zhou Hong wasn't the only one to be terrified by the situation. Virtually all of the aristocratic chosen were the same. Even their clans as a whole were shaken. A person who had once been a nameless nobody was instantly the focus of all attention, and someone that no one could afford to ignore.

It was a sudden turn of events that many people had trouble accepting. Of course, news spread rapidly, and before long, the wily old foxes in the aristocracy began to put the puzzle pieces together, and come to an understanding of what the Grand Heavenmaster was thinking....

“Something big is coming....” It was hard to say who came to this conclusion first, but soon, everyone was talking about it.

When the Spirit Advent King heard about the situation, he removed any restrictions on his daughter Xu Shan. As for the Nine Serenities King, after Zhou Hong returned, he treated his injuries and then gave strict orders that he wasn't to set foot out of Nine Serenities City!

When the Giant Ghost King heard the news, he sat there on his throne for a long moment, various expressions playing out on his face. In the end, he sighed.

“If the Grand Heavenmaster wants him, can I really refuse...?” He shook his head, mixed emotions visible in his eyes.

Mistress Red-Dust returned to the Giant Ghost Legion, wrapped

up in her own thoughts and speculations about what it all meant.

Because of one single order given by the Grand Heavenmaster, the entire Arch-Emperor Dynasty was now astir. In fact, somewhere deep in the imperial palace, in a majestic hall, a man sat on an imperial throne, clad in imperial robes. As soon as he heard the news, his hands clenched down onto the dragon-shaped arms of his throne, and his entire body went stiff.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun followed the black-robed figure through the imperial palace. He was no longer strutting, but rather, looking around vigilantly. Although he was pleased by how things were playing out, he was still fearful and anxious about this Grand Heavenmaster.

Although Bai Xiaochun couldn't make out the black-robed man's face, he could sense how stern and sinister he was. It put quite a bit of pressure onto Bai Xiaochun, and he was just thinking of saying something to ease the tension between the two of them when the man seemed to realize what he was thinking.

“From now until the moment we reach the Grand Heavenmaster, keep your mouth shut!”

Bai Xiaochun was not very pleased at how impolite the response to his unspoken question had been. After all, he was now the inspections commissioner. However, considering that this person was a deva, and also had been sent personally by the Grand Heavenmaster, it seemed like a good strategy to just give in to him now. However, there didn't appear to be any need to actually fear him.

“This shadowy bastard tried to screw me over earlier. Back when he delivered the Dharmic decree, he intentionally made it seem like he wanted to kill me. All to frighten me....” That made Bai Xiaochun even madder, but he knew what to say and how to say it, and therefore kept his expression calm as he followed the black-robed man through the imperial palace.

The palace was huge, and was as impressive as a celestial paradise, but Bai Xiaochun wasn't in the mood to enjoy it. He focused on trying to keep track of the path they were following, until eventually, they arrived at the entrance of a grand hall.

It seemed ordinary, without any ornate decorations. It could even have been described as simple. There was something ancient about it, and in the main courtyard in front of the entrance, there was a cauldron with incense burning in it, the smoke spiraling high up into the sky.

Not a single person was present, making it seem like the type of place few people would be willing to come to.

“Wait here.” With that, the black-robed man proceeded forward a few steps before vanishing without a trace. Bai Xiaochun looked at the main door, which was closed, and then around at the silent courtyard. Finally, he stood there quietly waiting. For some reason, the huge hall seemed like an enormous beast staring down at him.

Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard. It would be impossible not to be nervous in a moment like this. However, after mentally reviewing the situation, he still felt like he should be fine. After all, it wouldn't be difficult for the Grand Heavenmaster to cause trouble for him if he wanted to. Considering they were in Arch-Emperor City, the man could have apprehended him at any time he wished.

As he stood there waiting, he tried to decide how to carry himself in this meeting.

“It probably wouldn't be a good idea to resort to flattery. The Giant Ghost King likes that kind of thing, but I don't know enough about the Grand Heavenmaster. What's the first thing he's going to do? Act awe-inspiring? Or maybe chide me...?” As he sat there stewing in anxious thoughts, he suddenly realized that something seemed off, as if someone were looking at him from above. Slowly looking up, he saw that high up in the clouds, an enormous head

was hanging down, looking at him with a curious expression. It was a dragon!

At the same time, intense pressure descended, pressure that Bai Xiaochun could tell surpassed Chen Haosong. Obviously, this dragon... was comparable to a demigod!

Bai Xiaochun had seen this very same dragon from afar when he had first arrived at Arch-Emperor City. But now, he was right in front of it, only about 300 meters away. He could see virtually every detail about it, including the sea of scales that covered its body.

Although Bai Xiaochun was a bit alarmed to be so close to a dragon, he quickly put a smile onto his face, waved, and called out a greeting.

“Hi there...!” Almost immediately, the dragon’s eyes glittered. Then, Bai Xiaochun sensed a wind blowing against his face, whereupon he discovered that the dragon had dropped its head down further, until it was only a bit more than a meter away from him.

Bai Xiaochun gasped in shock, and began to tremble at having something so huge right in front of him. He could even feel its breath on him, which was when he realized the dragon was actually sniffing him curiously.

At this point, he really felt like crying, and took a step back. As he did, the dragon moved forward! Scalp tingling, Bai Xiaochun kept the friendly smile on his face, and was about to say something else when the voice of an old man drifted out from inside the hall.

“He likes you.”

Bai Xiaochun turned to find that, at some unknown point, the door to the hall had opened, and visible in its depths was an old man.

He wore a long white robe, and somehow seemed like a god or

divine being. His gaze was the type that seemed to make everything else unimportant, as though a mere glance from him could make the darkest places bright.

It was a sensation that caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to tremble. This man was definitely the same man who had been projected into the River-Defying Sect... Chen Manyao's Master!

In fact, even if he had never seen him before, Bai Xiaochun would have instantly been able to tell that this was the Grand Heavenmaster. Without any hesitation, he clasped hands and bowed.

"Your humble servant Bai Hao offers greetings, Grand Heavenmaster!"

"Come in," the Grand Heavenmaster said with a slight smile. He wasn't as intimidating as Bai Xiaochun had imagined, and after a moment, seemed like nothing more than an old man. In fact, after he smiled, that divine sensation on him faded away.

Obviously, he was very different from the Giant Ghost King, which actually got Bai Xiaochun more nervous as he scrambled to decide how to act. As he walked into the hall, the huge dragon watched him go, then slowly disappeared up into the clouds.

As Bai Xiaochun walked further into the hall, his anxiety mounted. He really wasn't sure how to act, but was ready to play it by ear and adjust at a moment's notice.

The Grand Heavenmaster didn't seem to care about how nervous Bai Xiaochun was. After looking him up and down, he said, "I asked you here so that I could ask you a question.... Do you or do you not dare... to investigate all the important people in the dynasty, and find out which of them... have interrupted the peaceful cultivation being practiced by the Arch-Emperor?!"

Although he spoke the words slowly, they caused a strange energy and pressure to build up in the entire hall.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, already starting to get excited by what he was hearing. Considering that he wanted revenge, the chance to investigate all of the important people in the imperial court was the perfect chance. If he said they were loyal to the Arch-Emperor, then that meant they were, whether they actually were or not!

Expression brightening, he slapped his chest and passionately declared, “Grand Heavenmaster, there’s no need to ask whether I dare or not. As long as you give the order, I will dare to do anything. Investigate the aristocracy? Ha! I’ll even investigate the Arch-Emperor!”

A strange, amused expression could be seen on the Grand Heavenmaster as he asked, “Aren’t you afraid of the Arch-Emperor?”

Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment before cautiously asking, “Well, um... what cultivation base does he have?”

Chapter 758: Dont Tell Me This Place Is Haunted?!

“The Arch-Emperor is a deva....”

After breathing a sigh of relief, Bai Xiaochun thumped his chest and decided he should probably use the same technique he had used to feel out the Giant Ghost King.

He didn't care about the Arch-Emperor, or a bunch of ministers and the aristocracy. After all, he had already offended just about everybody. In terms of what would happen long-run, he wasn't too worried about it. As long as he could get his cultivation base high enough, then he would surely be able to find a way to escape the Wildlands and get back to the Great Wall and the Heavenspan River.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he felt not only a bit calmer, but also realized he was coming to like this Grand Heavenmaster more and more. With a mission like this, and a title like inspections commissioner, he would obviously have a lot of power. Getting more and more excited, and convinced more than ever that this Grand Heavenmaster was definitely a rare individual, he decided that he should probably take advantage of the situation to do a bit of brown-nosing....

“Grand Heavenmaster, you have shown me a mountain of kindness, and in fact, I owe you my life. Without you, I would very likely be buried in the depths of the Yellow Springs right now. A trifling deva might be able to crush me to death, but how could I ever bow my head to evil forces? Besides, Grand Heavenmaster, there's no way that you would just sit around watching a loyal and devoted youngster like myself be bullied. Am I right?”

A strange expression could be seen on the Grand Heavenmaster's face. He had heard that Bai Hao was like this in Giant Ghost City, but now that he saw his behavior with his own eyes, he realized

the rumors were not accurate. Bai Hao wasn't just a flatterer, he took advantage of every single opportunity to be a sycophant.

In any case, the Grand Heavenmaster was pleased by the answer he had been given. With that, he gave an enigmatic smile, looking at Bai Xiaochun as though he could read his heart.

“Go. You will be taken to the Inspections Manor. That... will be your new place of residence.” With that, he waved his sleeve, and Bai Xiaochun's vision blurred. When it cleared, he was outside of the imperial palace, standing right in front of the black-robed man from earlier. The man didn't seem surprised at all by Bai Xiaochun's sudden appearance, and simply turned and walked off without saying a word.

Bai Xiaochun was stunned that the mere wave of a sleeve by the Grand Heavenmaster could move him to a completely different location. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun had prepared a whole slew of other things to say, but hadn't been given the chance.

“I guess it doesn't matter. I'll just save them for next time. If I used up all my flattery in one shot, then what would I do afterward?” Fully convinced that this was the right way to look at things, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and swaggered after the black-robed man.

Meanwhile, back in Heavenmaster Hall in the imperial palace, the Grand Heavenmaster was looking toward a location further in the depths of the palace, a profound gleam in his eyes.

“The blood of the first generation Arch-Emperor runs in your veins... but why are you causing a stir now? Do you really want to bathe Arch-Emperor City in blood again?” The Grand Heavenmaster shook his head, and then closed his eyes to meditate.

The Inspections Manor was not in the imperial city up above, but rather, down below in one of the boroughs in the central district of the city. More specifically, it was located in Borough 4!

The black-robed man led Bai Xiaochun out of that city in the clouds, and down to an awe-inspiring manor complex.

The manor was large, and placed in a rather inconvenient location in the middle of the borough. However, the streets around it were all empty. People were apparently so terrified of it that they would take long detours just to avoid getting close to it.

It was pitch black, and radiated a cold, sinister aura that made it seem like some ferocious, primordial beast.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw it, he gasped in shock. Obviously, this was a very sinister and deathly place. Slaughters of all sorts had taken place here, leaving the air itself stained with a gloomy and eerie feeling that would never be dispelled.

From the outside, it looked very similar to how a governmental office in the mortal world would look, and yet, in some ways it was different. Two huge statues could be seen on either side of the main entrance, clad in suits of black armor. Powerful fluctuations rolled off of them, and although they were clearly statues, they seemed like they could leap into action at any moment to defend the manor. In fact, their eyes actually came to focus on the black-robed man for just a moment before returning to their original position.

That in itself gave Bai Xiaochun a better understanding of what the Inspections Manor was like. Although he couldn't tell much about those two statues, he could tell from their fluctuations that they were as powerful as devas!

“Deva-level statues....” he thought, swallowing hard. If the black-robed man weren't here, he would have been hard-pressed not to go over and touch the statues to see what they felt like.

The main gate to the Inspections Manor was also pitch black, and as soon as it opened, it was possible to see that the interior had limestone pathways and countless other buildings and structures inside. However, not a single person was present.

Even after the black-robed man led Bai Xiaochun inside, not even the tiniest sound could be heard. Bai Xiaochun looked around, and for some reason felt a bit terrified at how quiet everything was. It was just too quiet!

The black-robed man looked around with a glint of reminiscence in his eyes, and then tossed a black command medallion to Bai Xiaochun. “This is the Inspections Manor. You’re on your own now, Bai Hao.”

Bai Xiaochun caught the medallion and was about to ask some questions, when the black-robed man turned and vanished.

Bai Xiaochun was now alone. Looking around at his surroundings, and then at the command medallion, he shook his head.

“That’s it?” Bai Xiaochun was not very pleased. Considering how high his status was, the fact that the black-robed man had treated him in such a way seemed very negligent. However, considering that he was obviously close to the Grand Heavenmaster, Bai Xiaochun simply sighed.

“Ah, whatever. For the sake of the Grand Heavenmaster, I’ll let this slide.” Fingering the command medallion, he sent some divine sense out to check his surroundings. However, he quickly came to realize that there was an intense pressure in the area that limited his divine sense to roughly ten percent of its normal capacity.

“What kind of a weird place is this Inspections Manor?” he thought nervously. With that, he sent some divine sense into the command medallion, only to find that he needed to spend time activating it before he could use it. Considering the level of his cultivation base, and the current speed of the process, it seemed like it would take at least twenty hours before the activation process was complete.

With that, Bai Xiaochun looked around hesitantly, and then asked, “Anybody there? Hey, is anybody there?!”

He continued to shout in such a manner as he walked further into the manor. However, no matter how he shouted, not a single person appeared. Not only was Bai Xiaochun surprised by this, he was also starting to feel that something was off.

“This place can’t really be completely empty, can it...?” he sent some divine sense out, and began to hurry along a bit faster. After all, evening was about to fall. Before long, he had taken a look at most of the areas in the Inspections Manor.

He had peered into all of the grand halls, and all of the residences. However, no matter where he went, he didn’t see a sign of a single other person.

By this time, he was really getting jittery at how strange this place was.

“There’s no way that I, the inspections commissioner, am the only person inside of the Inspections Manor....” His intuition was indeed telling him that... there were other auras present. It was just that he couldn’t find them, as if they existed somewhere between life and death.

“Don’t tell me this place is haunted!” Shivering, he suddenly thought back to the Arch-Emperor’s sepulcher, and the spine-tingling things that had occurred there. Spinning, he looked over his shoulder but there was nobody behind him, not even any paper people.

It was starting to get dark, causing shadows to fill the manor, and making it even more sinister. Flustered, he decided that he needed to leave, but quickly discovered that he couldn’t!! The entire manor was completely sealed and locked down by some sort of restrictive spell.

By now, he was truly terrified, and was convinced that there was something very wrong with this Inspections Manor. After confirming that it was impossible to get out, he found a random building and pushed open the door. Seeing that there was no dust

anywhere, he nervously sat down cross-legged.

“I guess I’ll have to wait until the command medallion is completely activated before I can learn the secrets of the Inspections Manor.” Looking down, he confirmed that the command medallion was roughly thirty percent activated.

Gritting his teeth, he rotated his cultivation base to try to get the process to go faster.

“Come on, hurry up! I have a really bad feeling about this. It’s almost night. I’m worried... that this place is haunted!” Shivering, he cursed the black-robed man a bit, then thought about the crappy command medallion. Activating it shouldn’t be that hard, right? There had to be a way to get the blasted thing to activate faster.

Chapter 759: We're All On The Same Team

It was dark outside as Bai Xiaochun frantically tried to activate the command medallion. It was so deathly quiet around him that it would have been possible to hear a pin drop.

Slowly but surely, his hair began to stand on end. He simply couldn't remain calm, and was doing everything he could to activate the command medallion as quickly as possible. However, at some point during the night, his work was interrupted by the sound of footsteps coming from outside the building he was in.

Thump thump. Thump thump.... It almost sounded like a beating heart, although Bai Xiaochun was quite certain they were footsteps. However, after sending some divine sense outside to check, he couldn't see anyone in the area.

That, of course, caused his scalp to tingle so hard it felt like it might explode.

"It's really... really haunted...." He felt like crying; other than death, the thing he feared most in life was ghosts. It didn't matter that he was in the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, he still couldn't shake that deep-seated phobia. Without any hesitation he procured a big stack of paper talismans from his bag of holding and began to slap them down all over himself.

They were leftover talismans from his days back in the River-Defying Sect, which he had also used in the Arch-Emperor's labyrinth. At the moment, he didn't care at all that using them could theoretically reveal his identity, and he even forgot to use the powers of his mask to change their appearance. After plastering himself all over with them, he was still shaking in fear, and kept pushing the command medallion to activate. At the same time, he kept looking around anxiously, worried he would see a face looming in the darkness.

"I'm the inspections commissioner, and this is the Inspections

Manor! How could this be happening...? It shouldn't be like this...!" As he sat there nervously, he suddenly realized that he could hear more and more footsteps outside, until it sounded like an entire army was passing by.

By this point, he was virtually going crazy.

"So many ghosts...." he thought, his face white as a sheet. It was at this point that, without any warning, someone suddenly knocked on the door.

It was a rigorous, methodical knock that frightened Bai Xiaochun so badly he leaped to his feet and stared at the door, panting and trembling.

After a moment, the knocking stopped, and then the footsteps went off into the distance, as though whatever army was outside had move on.

Eventually, when Bai Xiaochun was sure that everything was quiet, he wiped the sweat from his brow. All of a sudden, he felt a bit embarrassed. After all, he was a powerful cultivator, a Wildlands necromancer who used countless vengeful souls to conjure magical flames. And yet, here he was being bullied by ghosts. All in all, he couldn't help but feel a bit scornful of his own actions.

"Come on! Is Lord Bai really afraid of ghosts? Nah, I just don't want to go out until I'm finished activating the command medallion. After all, I wouldn't want to cause any misunderstandings." Having reached the conclusion that this was definitely the best way to look at it, he no longer felt very embarrassed, and was just about to continue working with the command medallion when....

All of a sudden, a rumbling sound echoed out as some massive force pushed against the door, causing it to swing open. As it did, a chill wind rushed inside, startling Bai Xiaochun so much that he screamed and unleashed all the power of his cultivation base.

Lunging backward, he shouted, “I’m the inspections commissioner! We’re all on the same team here....”

It was impossible to say whether or not it was because of what Bai Xiaochun had just shouted, but after the door opened, it was obvious that there wasn’t anyone standing in the doorway. It was completely empty.

Sweat poured down Bai Xiaochun’s forehead, and his aura trembled unstably. Outside, Arch-Emperor City seemed completely dark, which wasn’t how Bai Xiaochun remembered the place usually being at night. Back in Borough 89, it had always been a lively place. Furthermore, he was now in the central district of the city, in Borough 4, a place which should have been even more bustling.

In the center of the city, the streets were packed day and night. But strangely... even with the door open, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t hear even a whisper of the hustle and bustle that he should have. Everything was dark and quiet.

Apparently, this part of the city center was aware of how things worked near the Inspections Manor, and turned off all of their lights at night.

“What the hell kind of place is this?!” Teeth chattering, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and then waved his finger, causing the door to swing closed. Looking around the area vigilantly, he scanned everything with divine sense, but again came up with nothing. Finally, he patted his bag of holding to produce a soulhoarding pagoda, out of which Bai Hao flew.

“You’re a ghost cultivator, my apprentice,” he said. “Help me look around and see if there are any other beings like you around here.” Bai Hao was a bit taken aback, but he looked around for a moment, then closed his eyes for a while. Eventually, he frowned.

“Master,” he said hesitantly, “there are definitely no ghosts around here that have mental faculties like I do.... However,

there's definitely something strange about this place, as if it exists somewhere between the realms of death and life. I really can't put my finger on it. It's like this place...." At this point he realized that his Master's face had turned deathly white, and that he appeared to be completely terrified.

"What's wrong, Master?" he asked.

Bai Xiaochun licked his lips and mused that he definitely couldn't allow himself to look scared in front of his apprentice. Thumping himself on his chest, he said, "Hahaha! Nothing! I'm not scared at all, go on with your explanation."

"Uh, Master... I never said you looked scared."

"Huh? Oh. Hahaha! Well, let's not talk about that. You were just saying something but didn't finish. What about this place?"

Looking oddly at Bai Xiaochun, Bai Hao continued, "To me, this place doesn't feel like it's empty at all.... In fact, it's like there are people all around us... hidden figures in large numbers...."

His words caused goosebumps to cover Bai Xiaochun's skin, and he looked around left and right to see if he could see anything. He couldn't.

"Master, um... are you sure you're not scared?" All of a sudden, Bai Hao found the situation somewhat funny. This was his first time seeing his Master looking scared like this. He hadn't even been afraid when going up against hundreds of chosen.

Inside, Bai Xiaochun was wailing in fear. However, on the outside, he simply glared at Bai Hao.

"Nonsense," he said loudly. "Me? Scared?! I'm not scared of anything!"

After that, he decided to change the topic again. Pulling Bai Hao a bit closer, he continued to work with the command medallion, and simultaneously began to chat randomly with Bai Hao.

“So, my apprentice, how have you been doing lately? Um... oh, how is the eighteen-colored flame coming along? We won't be going back to our shop, you know, so we need to think of a new way to get our hands on some more souls.”

Bai Xiaochun chattered on, changing the conversation topic constantly. Although an odd expression could be seen on Bai Hao's face, he continued to answer the questions. As the two chatted, time passed, and eventually Bai Xiaochun started to run out of things to talk about. That was when he related to Bai Hao what had occurred during his meeting with the Grand Heavenmaster.

Earlier, Bai Hao hadn't dared to let even the slightest fluctuation out, for fear that he be detected. Therefore, he wasn't privy to what had gone on between Bai Xiaochun and the Grand Heavenmaster. As Bai Hao listened, his expression turned very somber.

“Investigate who is loyal to the Arch-Emperor....” Bai Hao was shocked, and at the same time, realized that his Master had been dragged into an enormous web of intrigue.

Eyes flickering with intelligence, he provided his analysis of the situation, “Master, this is no small matter. Not only did the Grand Heavenmaster defy the wishes of the majority by not killing us, but he then went on to appoint you as the inspections commissioner.... Obviously, he's using the fact that you offended so many people to use you as a tool!”

“I thought of that too,” Bai Xiaochun said, his eyebrows dancing up and down. “Master is just too outstanding, don't you say?” Although Bai Xiaochun had temporarily stopped thinking about what an eerie place he was in, he didn't stop using the powers of the mask to conceal himself.

As for Bai Hao, he continued to ponder the matter, using his superior intellect to analyze how the situation would be most beneficial for his Master.

“Master, this situation might be a good opportunity for us. All of it will come down to the Grand Heavenmaster’s stance.... He obviously took a liking to you because of how you offended everyone. In that case... he probably wants to use you, not just like an ordinary tool, but like a sharp knife! Master, from here on out, the more people you offend, the safer we’ll be!”

Bai Xiaochun had long since become convinced that Bai Hao was extremely intelligent, most especially because of the incident with Sun Yifan and Sima Tao. Therefore, after hearing his analysis, he nodded in agreement.

Bai Hao was very pleased to have the approval of his Master. Eyes flickering with strange light, he continued to think about the matter for a moment. Then he leaned closer to Bai Xiaochun, lowered his voice, and said, “Master, I think I have an idea of what the Grand Heavenmaster is thinking. First you need to smooth out the internal crises. After that, you need to weaken the aristocracy.... In terms of smoothing out the internal crises, I don’t have any plan for how to do that. But as far as weakening the aristocracy... when the time comes, I have a plan that will completely crush the influential clans and other powers, and at the same time, make you more valuable than ever to the Grand Heavenmaster!”

With that, he went on to elaborate his plan.

“So ruthless....” Bai Xiaochun murmured, his eyes widening.

“Master,” Bai Hao replied quietly, “since we’ve started down this path, we need to walk it to the end....”

Chapter 760: The Powers Of The Inspections Commissioner!

Bai Hao's plan was so ruthless that Bai Xiaochun was already hesitant to pull it off. However, if he ended up in the right circumstances, it might work. Right now, though, things were too unstable. "We'll talk about that more later. Right now, the most important thing is for me to do a good job at being the inspections commissioner."

Looking even more serious, Bai Hao said, "Master, we also need to start making some secret plans to make sure that we don't get disposed of once our usefulness has passed!"

"Don't worry," Bai Xiaochun said. "Your Master has a lot of experience with that kind of thing."

Then he laughed heartily. If he hadn't said that, Bai Hao would have felt a lot better, but now, he had a very ill premonition. Whenever his Master felt this confident, bad things always happened. However, he still couldn't come up with any way to remedy that situation other than to continue to offer advice to Bai Xiaochun.

And thus the night passed without anything strange happening. Bai Xiaochun continued to focus on activating the command medallion and chatting with Bai Hao.

At dawn, he went outside and confirmed that the restrictive spell was still in place, and that he couldn't leave the Inspections Manor. The only way to do so would be to completely activate the command medallion!

He kept working, and before long, evening fell again, which was when he finally activated the medallion. It had taken twenty-six hours, which was longer than he had originally anticipated.

As soon as the medallion was activated, he sent some divine sense

into it, whereupon a sound like heavenly thunder filled his mind. Then, his divine sense merged with the medallion, and... he saw a complete image of the Inspections Manor!

At that point, his eyes went wide, and his entire body thrummed with joy. Despite exerting all of the willpower possible, he couldn't hold back from gasping and then releasing a shout of surprise.

“This... this....”

What he could see in his mind's eye was a miniature version of the entire Inspections Manor. And from this vantage point, it was possible to see that the entire place was filled with numerous coffins!

In fact, the manor seemed to be built on top of a huge collection of the things. There were fully 100,000 of them, densely packed together into roughly nine levels. Each one of those coffins emanated terrifying fluctuations. The deeper the levels got, the fewer coffins they had, and yet the more terrifying the fluctuations. Bai Xiaochun's shock mounted as he studied the situation.

The ninth level only had a single coffin, but by means of the command medallion, Bai Xiaochun could tell that it had... the aura of a demigod!!

“Heavens....” Bai Xiaochun murmured, chest heaving as he realized that he must be holding, not just a command medallion, but rather, a magical device that could be used to control these 100,000 coffins!

He actually felt as if he could use a single thought to cause all 100,000 coffins to open up, and then do the same to the eyes of all the corpses that lay therein!

“So, that's the true Inspections Manor....” Bai Xiaochun thought, stunned. After a long moment, he retracted his divine sense and looked down at the black command medallion. By now, he was

convinced that what he held was not the master command medallion. There was no way the Grand Heavenmaster would simply hand over such heaven-shaking, earth-shattering power.

“This must be an auxiliary medallion.... the master medallion is surely in the hands of the Grand Heavenmaster. He is the one who can command the army beneath the Inspections Manor to do anything he wishes!

“However, that doesn’t really affect me. I’m on the Grand Heavenmaster’s team, after all. Even using a bit of this power is good enough!” After getting his breathing under control, he sent some divine sense into the command medallion and focused it on the subterranean coffin nearest him.

“Awaken!”

As soon as the thought rippled out, the limestone slab nearest the door of the building he was in shattered, and an ancient coffin shot up into the air. It was made of black iron, and as soon as it thudded down onto the ground, the lid was pushed open from within.

An aura of death and rot erupted out, along with... a burly man clad in black armor, wearing a black mask, and pulsing with a murderous aura!

Based on the intensity of the murderous aura, he had killed too many people to count! It immediately caused Bai Xiaochun’s expression to flicker with shock.

As the man slowly looked up, glowing red eyes could be seen behind the mask. He took a step forward toward Bai Xiaochun, the fluctuations of the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage rolling off of him. The black-armored corpse trooper walked up to Bai Xiaochun, then bowed his head and knelt on one knee.

“Greetings, exalted one!” he said in a rumbling voice that contained respect and veneration.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes sparkled, and Bai Hao’s jaw dropped.

“So, this is the true power hidden within the Inspections Manor!”

Bai Xiaochun poured some more divine sense into the command medallion, and then called out to another of the coffins to awaken.

Before long, the entire Inspections Manor was rumbling as one coffin after another opened up, and more black-armored men flew out. Soon, there were fully a thousand!

The weakest among them were equivalent to the mid Nascent Soul stage, and a few were at the level of half-devas. The murderous aura they emitted affected the wind and clouds, and they were surrounded by the perpetual wailing of ghosts and wolves.

And that was just a small portion of the force hidden beneath the Inspections Manor. Bai Xiaochun wanted to call upon more, but knew that his command medallion was limited in usage, and could only be used to summon 1,000.

Furthermore, he could only call on the coffins in the top seven levels. The eighth level only had ten coffins, all of which had deva-level power. Of course, none of them contained souls; it was only fleshly body power.

“A thousand is good enough!” Bai Xiaochun was by no means disappointed. In fact, he was elated. After looking over the 1,000 black-armored corpse troopers, he threw his head back and laughed heartily. All of a sudden, he felt like he was back on the Great Wall, where the wave of a finger could send an army of thousands into battle.

“If I was in this position back when everyone was coming to cause trouble for me, I wouldn’t have had to do anything. I could have just waved my hand, and all of those chosen would have been crushed!” Bai Xiaochun was feeling very happy and very confident. Also, he was coming to the conclusion that this Grand Heavenmaster was much more reliable than the Giant Ghost King.

After all, the rewards the Giant Ghost King gave him were all honorary, whereas the Grand Heavenmaster had given him command of an army.

There was another function to the command medallion other than being able to summon the army of 1,000 troops. It was also filled with reports about all of the aristocracy within the Wildlands, and especially Arch-Emperor City. It was as if hidden eyes were watching everyone at every moment, reporting back all of the events which occurred in their lives, and then storing it in this command medallion. Whoever possessed this command medallion would be privy to countless secrets.

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun immediately began to browse through some of the reports, and soon realized that the reason he had been attacked by the hundreds of chosen was that someone had been propagating false rumors. Those rumors had aroused such anger among the masses that eventually, the chosen decided to simply attack him directly.

In terms of the culprits, Zhou Hong was only one of many. Virtually all of the people Bai Xiaochun had captured in the Necromancer Kettle had played a part. However, there were clues pointing to the people who had truly instigated the matter... two of the imperial princes....

Bai Xiaochun's anger was beginning to grow. Everything was now starting to become clear. And that was especially true regarding the young man with the feng shui compass who had accompanied Zhou Hong that day. A quick bit of investigating using the command medallion quickly identified him.

He was none other than a vassal of the grand prince!

“Complete and utter bullying!” Bai Xiaochun said through gritted teeth. With that, he pondered the mission the Grand Heavenmaster had given him, and then thought about how all of these aristocrats and nobles had sought to kill him, and his eyes

began to shine with cold light.

When Bai Hao realized that his Master was getting angry, he asked what the problem was. Upon hearing the explanation, he quickly advised, “Master, just keep your cool for a bit. If your personal matters cause problems for the Grand Heavenmaster’s main plan, it could--”

“There’s no need to keep my cool,” Bai Xiaochun interrupted with the wave of a hand. “The two issues are one and the same. After all, the Grand Heavenmaster doesn’t know who is truly loyal to the Arch-Emperor, and he didn’t prohibit me from investigating anyone!” He was now in a position of power, backed by the Grand Heavenmaster, and sure that his poor little life would not be in danger. Considering what type of person he was, there was no way that he wouldn’t seek his revenge.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun also knew that, even with the Dharmic decree of the Grand Heavenmaster to back him, and the level of power he wielded, he still had to have evidence on his side if he wanted to act. That way, he wouldn’t stir up any unnecessary trouble.

Evidence like that might be difficult to gather for an ordinary person, but not for Bai Xiaochun. Back when he had been an inquisitor in Devil Penitentiary, he had acquired all sorts of secrets during the interrogations he performed.

“Let’s go,” Bai Xiaochun said proudly. “We’re paying a little visit to the prison!” With that, he and Bai Hao flew up into the air, followed by 1,000 burly men in black armor.

It was evening, but Arch-Emperor City in general was still quite alive, so when Bai Xiaochun appeared on the streets with his army of black-armored corpse-troopers, looking very grand and magnificent, he attracted instant attention. After all, the corpse-troopers radiated murderous auras filled with death, and were sinister to behold.

“Who are those people...? Look at that incredible murderous aura!!”

“Hey, isn’t that Bai Hao? How come all of those black-armored soul cultivators behind him seem so rife with death?!?!” Conversations rippled out in all directions.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased at being the center of attention like this. With a thousand troops at his command, who would ever dare to provoke him?!

Chapter 761: Recognize Me?

Back when the Grand Heavenmaster had appointed Bai Xiaochun as the inspections commissioner, many people in Arch-Emperor City had turned their attention to the Inspections Manor in Borough 4. Therefore, a lot of people noticed when he led the 1,000 black-armored men out into the open, and they trembled with fear.

All of them suddenly recalled what was now something of a legend. In the past, this army had caused blood and gore to rain down on Arch-Emperor City, and had come to be known as....

“The Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion!!”

“In the past, they caused blood to rain down for seven months straight.... the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion!!”

Countless eyes were focused on Bai Xiaochun, and the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion soldiers that followed him. The nobility and aristocracy were shaken, not because of any fear of Bai Xiaochun himself, but fear of the army of corpse troopers. Furthermore, they feared who that army represented... the Grand Heavenmaster!!

There were many stories about this army of corpse troopers. In one version, they had been assembled by the third generation Arch-Emperor, a sort of black ops force that the arch-emperors had controlled from generation to generation. Now, though, that army had fallen into the hands of the Grand Heavenmaster.

However, other people said that the so-called corpse trooper army had not existed before the rise of the Grand Heavenmaster. Supposedly, he had created the army using the corpses of the nobles and aristocrats who had resisted him!

Virtually every possible origin story for the army existed, but all of them were connected to the Grand Heavenmaster!

As news of the reappearance of the corpse troopers began to spread, many people were shaken, and began to pay close attention to what was unfolding.

Everyone knew... that something big was about to happen!!

Most importantly, everyone also knew that the person who now led the Grand Heavenmaster's army was... Bai Hao!!

He had offended countless chosen, and although he didn't have direct dealings with every almighty person among the nobility and aristocracy, he was connected to virtually all of them.

The bloody event from just a few nights ago was still the subject of much discussion, and everyone knew that the vengeance Bai Hao would wreak would be a major event!

Everyone's minds were racing as they pondered what would happen, and at the same time, everyone was completely on guard.

Bai Xiaochun actually had no idea that his going out at the head of 1,000 black-armored soldiers was causing such a stir. He just felt wonderful to be the center of so much attention, and couldn't help but revel in his success.

"Ah, it's been a long time... too long, in fact, since I've basked in such glory.... Back in Giant Ghost City, I was the majordomo, and yet, had no true military power!" As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun truly felt as if he had the right to look down on all creation. Sticking his chin up, he slowed down a bit as he flew through the air.

His destination was Arch-Emperor City's Grand Asylum, which was not located in the central district. Rather, it was in Borough 49. As Bai Xiaochun flew along with his 1,000 black-armored soldiers, the city guards just looked at him from a distance, not daring to get close. As such, Bai Xiaochun was able to go directly to the Grand Asylum.

The Grand Asylum was constructed to look like an enormous,

coiled python. The entrance was the python's mouth, and as soon as Bai Xiaochun appeared there, the warden and other important prison officers flew out to meet him. The sight of Bai Xiaochun and his 1,000 black-armored soldiers caused all of them to shiver in fright.

Obviously, they had heard that this Bai Hao had been appointed by the Grand Heavenmaster to serve as the inspections commissioner. Trembling, they clasped hands, bowed, and said, "Greetings, Inspections Commissioner!"

"You recognize me?" Bai Xiaochun said coolly, keeping his hands clasped behind his back and his chin stuck up.

The warden of the Grand Asylum was a middle-aged man who was so fat he was almost a ball. Smiling nervously, he said, "Inspections Commissioner Bai, you have unbounded integrity, and are spectacularly famous. Nobodies like us can only gaze upward at your splendor. Only a few months ago, your humble servant gazed at you from afar, sir, and was impressed to no end by your imposing bearing. For whatever reason you've come, oh exalted one, your humble servant will do everything in his power to help you."

The warden was feeling very nervous. The fact that this was the first location Bai Xiaochun had chosen to visit after taking command of the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion left him feeling very unsettled.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't very pleased with the overt flattery, and didn't get any sense at all that the warden was being sincere. However, considering his current status, it would be a big loss of face to cause problems for lowly figures such as the warden. Snorting coldly, he said, "Enough jibber-jabber. Just follow me and do what I say!"

Hands clasped behind his back, he swaggered into the Grand Asylum.

The warden and the other officers were stunned by Bai Xiaochun's response, and immediately began to shiver even more than before. Hearts racing, and sweat pouring down their backs, they hurried after him.

Although this was Bai Xiaochun's first time in the Grand Asylum, considering the time he had spent as a guard in Devil Penitentiary, much of it as the number one dark inquisitor, he immediately identified with the musty odor of a prison that entered his nose. It was all very familiar.

Eventually, they were in the warden's grand hall, where Bai Xiaochun sat down and said, "Bring out all of the records regarding the current prisoners."

The nervously sweating warden immediately voiced his assent, and then arranged for all of the prisoner records to be brought over. Those records soon arrived in the form of a jade slip, which the warden personally handed to Bai Xiaochun.

Looking very stern, Bai Xiaochun took the jade slip and then said, "Arrange a private chamber for me!"

With that, he began to study the jade slip.

The warden immediately arranged for the nicest chamber in the entire Grand Asylum to be cleared out for Bai Xiaochun's use. He just hoped that he could get Bai Xiaochun out of the prison as quickly as possible. To have the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion present had him feeling extremely nervous.

Considering the experience he had gained in Devil Penitentiary, Bai Xiaochun was quickly able to search for and identify the prisoners who were connected in some way to the aristocracy and nobility in Arch-Emperor City. "This prisoner.... And this one. Him too.... Bring them all to me one at a time!"

Because of their connections, such prisoners couldn't gain their freedom, but had relatively good lives inside of the prison, and

roughly the same access to cultivation resources as they had on the outside.

Many of them lorded it over their fellow prisoners, and some were even treated with great respect by the guards. Therefore, when Bai Xiaochun issued his order, the warden hesitated.

Irritated, Bai Xiaochun glared at the warden and said, “Warden, could it be that you want the inspections commissioner to personally go get the prisoners?”

At the same time, the black-armored corpse-troopers at his side began to radiate murderous auras that made the area instantly seem like a hell filled with malevolent asura spirits.

Trembling in terror, the warden unhesitatingly issued the proper orders.

Almost immediately, the prison was thrown into complete chaos as the guards found the prisoners Bai Xiaochun had named and grabbed them with maniacal fury.

“What are you people doing!?”

“I work for Heavenly Marquis Zhou! What gall you have!”

“Stay your hand!!”

In response, the guards simply surrounded them, vicious expressions on their faces as they sealed their cultivation bases and dragged them over to the private chamber that had been set aside for Bai Xiaochun.

Soon, dozens of prisoners were lined up outside, trembling in fear and unsure of what was happening. When the prisoners began to talk amongst themselves to try to figure out what was going on, the guards immediately silenced them.

The area grew very quiet, and the guards all bowed deeply in a certain direction down the corridor. The prisoners looked over nervously and saw the warden, a fawning expression on his face as

he walked down the hall alongside a young man.

The young man was handsome, with his chin stuck up and his hands clasped behind his back. Of course, he was Bai Xiaochun, and he was followed by a contingent of black-armored soldiers who struck fear into the souls of anyone who saw them.

“As the inspections commissioner, I’ve come here to personally interrogate these prisoners. Bring them in as I call for them. Furthermore, no one is allowed to disturb me as I carry out the interrogations!” After coming to a stop at the door, Bai Xiaochun looked around with a stern expression. The warden immediately voiced his assent.

Moments later, Bai Xiaochun was in the private chamber with the first prisoner. Outside, the black-armored soldiers stood guard, preventing anyone from getting close.

The warden stood there, terrified and anxious, still unsure of why Bai Xiaochun had picked this place as his first location to visit.

“What is the purpose of him coming here...?” the warden thought, confused. That was when the first bloodcurdling screams erupted from the secret chamber. The faces of everyone present fell, and all eyes went wide, especially those of the guards who ranked as inquisitors.

“That screaming... what methods could provoke such a reaction...?”

The guards were alarmed, and the prisoners even more so. Many of them gasped in fear. As for the warden, his heart filled with emotions of both shock and reverence.

The screaming lasted for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn. After that, the door of the private chamber opened, and a trembling figure was thrown out, who was of course the prisoner who had gone into the room with Bai Xiaochun. His eyes were glazed over, and he seemed to be on the verge of collapse.

“Next!” Then, Bai Xiaochun’s voice broke the silence as he spoke from the private chamber.

Chapter 762: I Heard You're Good At Shakedowns!

Bai Xiaochun had long since made his decision. He wanted revenge, but he needed to have evidence to justify his actions. Even if that evidence wasn't completely conclusive, he would at least need to provide some sort of explanation to the Grand Heavenmaster.

As far as he was concerned, this was the only way to get that evidence. Furthermore, there was no way that other people would have been able to guess that he would come to the Grand Asylum to perform interrogations. Few people in the world had ever served as prison guards, and fewer as inquisitors. Therefore, almost no one... would ever realize that the Grand Asylum was a place where countless shocking secrets were held!

To Bai Xiaochun, the Grand Asylum was the greatest weakness in his enemies' armor. After all, back in Giant Ghost City, it had been in Devil Penitentiary that he had learned about the rebellion being planned by the three great clans.

One unique aspect to Wildlander soul cultivators was that it was difficult to perform soulsearches on them as they got more powerful. However, that wasn't a problem for Bai Xiaochun.

The prisoners he had selected for interrogation were perfect sources of the evidence he needed. All of them had committed heinous crimes, and all of them were deeply connected to the nobility and aristocracy. Due to various random reasons, though, none of them had been sentenced to death.

As time passed, more and more prisoners went into the private chamber, and endless screaming filled the halls of the prison. Everyone present was shaken, especially the inquisitors, whose eyes began to shine with bright light.

“The exalted inspections commissioner... is also a dark inquisitor!!”

“You’re right! You know what, I remember now! I heard that Bai Hao was vicious and merciless, and that he actually became the number one dark inquisitor back in Giant Ghost City!!”

Soon, the warden heard what the inquisitors were saying, and he began to tremble inwardly, filled with fear at the techniques Bai Xiaochun was using.

Although the warden didn't even qualify to be the type of person who was directly connected to the Arch-Emperor, he had heard the stories of what had happened many years ago, when the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion instigated a seven-month reign of terror. Back then, not everyone who had been dragged into the calamity had actually been guilty.

That mere thought caused the warden to shiver. Looking at the black-armored corpse troopers standing guard over the private chamber, the warden decided that he would fulfil Bai Xiaochun’s every request, no matter what it was.

After a full day of dozens of interrogations, Bai Xiaochun got plenty of clues. At that point, he walked out of the private chamber, an unsightly expression on his face as he held out another jade slip. This one was filled with the names of over a hundred new prisoners.

“Bring them to me!”

The warden didn’t hesitate for even a second. Loudly voicing his affirmation, he immediately arranged for the second group of prisoners to be brought to Bai Xiaochun for interrogation.

Eventually, a third group was called for, then a fourth and a fifth....

As Bai Xiaochun was focusing on performing interrogations to get the evidence he needed for his revenge, the outside world was

being shaken by the events playing out.

With clouds in place, it is impossible to see the sun or moon. But if a pair of hands spread the cloud cover, then everyone could see. As soon as word started to spread about Bai Hao's background, many people began to speculate as to what exactly he was doing.

“What? He went to the Grand Asylum?”

“What did Bai Hao go there for...?”

“This isn't good. He was a dark inquisitor back in Giant Ghost City! Don't tell me he's going to go rifling for secrets among the prisoners in the Grand Asylum...?”

However, what was particularly marvelous about Bai Xiaochun's plan was that, even if a given prisoner had access to important information, people on the outside of the prison who also had access to the same information would often not believe that said prisoner truly knew what they knew.

After all, if the people on the outside were aware that any given prisoner had access to that sensitive information, the prisoner would have long since been silenced in death.

It was in the fourth group of prisoners that Bai Xiaochun finally found the information he was looking for. One of the prisoners revealed that a certain heavenly marquis had been maintaining secret communications with the grand prince.

Bai Xiaochun even remembered the name of that heavenly marquis. His son was particularly close to Zhou Hong. Pulling out his inspections commissioner command medallion, he did a bit of research, and confirmed that this very person had helped Zhou Hong spread rumors about Chen Manyao and Xu Shan.

Bai Xiaochun chuckled darkly, and then continued with more interrogations. All-in-all, he was in the Grand Asylum for half a month. During that time, he interrogated all suspicious individuals, and yet, was not satisfied. Therefore, he went on to

interrogate some of the other random prisoners who had committed heinous crimes. Some of them were prisoners who had been so shaken by the previous string of interrogations that they told what they knew without having to use any special methods, which was a good thing, considering that his supply of Aphrodisiac Pills was limited.

Most shocking of all was that it was during the last interrogation of a prisoner who didn't seem important at all, that he got the most shocking bit of evidence!

“Li Tiansheng’s father...? He’s the heavenly marquis in the Li Clan, right?” Bai Xiaochun knew that he had hooked a big fish, and was delighted. Ending the interrogations, he walked out of the private room, waving his black-armored corpse-troopers to his side as he flew out of the Grand Asylum.

Respectful expressions could be seen on the faces of the guards as he left, and many of them even looked at him with reverence. The efficiency with which he performed interrogations was shocking, and because of it, many of the guards wouldn’t hesitate to leap to do Bai Xiaochun’s bidding.

As for the warden, he breathed a sigh of relief. He had felt a lot of pressure over the last half a month, and had been worried that the slightest slipup on his part would get him dragged into a huge mess.

After reverently escorting Bai Xiaochun out of the prison, he hurried back inside and went into secluded meditation, well aware that another bloodbath was coming to Arch-Emperor City.

Bai Xiaochun was delighted, but didn’t immediately go to cause a scene with Li Tiansheng’s father, the heavenly marquis. Instead, he went to the imperial palace to pay a formal visit to the Grand Heavenmaster.

“How dare they provoke me! Hmph! I’m going to make sure they realize that Bai Xiaochun is not so easy to deal with!” As he headed

toward the palace, he pondered the situation and realized that he still didn't have enough manpower. Therefore, he contacted Zhou Yixing again, and told him to return to Arch-Emperor City with his men. Around then, he arrived at Heavenmaster Hall, where he clasped hands and bowed.

“Your humble servant Bai Hao offers greetings, Grand Heavenmaster! I have a matter to discuss!”

As soon as his voice echoed out, the dragon stuck its head down from the clouds and looked curiously at Bai Xiaochun. However, before it could do anything else, the door of the hall opened, revealing the Grand Heavenmaster sitting there looking at Bai Xiaochun.

Settling his aura, Bai Xiaochun hurried inside.

“Grand Heavenmaster, your humble servant accomplished his mission smoothly! I've already dug up evidence of two heavenly marquises who disturbed the cultivation of the Arch-Emperor.” With that, he produced a jade slip that he offered to the Grand Heavenmaster.

The Grand Heavenmaster took the jade slip and looked at it with a smile. Then he rubbed his thumb over its surface and muttered to himself for a moment.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, wondering if the Grand Heavenmaster would have him take care of the two heavenly marquises. After all, the evidence wasn't completely conclusive, and even extensive analysis could only produce middling speculation about the results. However, after all of the interrogations in the Grand Asylum, Bai Xiaochun was fairly certain he understood those two heavenly marquises.

Neither of them were good people. For example, the entire Li Clan all practiced poison cultivation. The main technique they used was called Heart Of A Woman, which involved collecting the hearts of women to use as part of the technique.

It was an evil technique to begin with, and the more powerful the cultivator got, the more women's hearts were needed. The Li Clan had essentially been built on a foundation of bloodshed.

And then there was the Chen Clan, which was even worse in some ways. They funded their clan by selling life force. That life force was harvested from cultivator slaves that the clan kept in pens like animals. Furthermore, all of those slaves were cultivators captured from the Great Wall.

The Chen Clan was one reason why all of the noble and aristocratic chosen had recovered so quickly after having been captured and drained of life force by Bai Xiaochun.

As he thought about these two evil clans, Bai Xiaochun looked furtively at the Grand Heavenmaster.

The Grand Heavenmaster's face was expressionless, and he wasn't saying even a single word, which caused Bai Xiaochun's nervousness to mount. It was really impossible to tell what the Grand Heavenmaster was thinking. Enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, whereupon his thumb flexed, and the jade slip transformed into ash.

"Go find Heavenly Marquis Li and Heavenly Marquis Chen... and arrest them!" In response to the Grand Heavenmaster's words, the air next to Bai Xiaochun rippled, and that familiar black-robed man stepped out. After voicing his assent, he bowed and vanished.

Bai Xiaochun was startled, but at the same time, felt a bit excited.

"I heard that you're good at shakedowns," the Grand Heavenmaster said. "You have four hours to go handle the Li and Chen Clans!" With that, he closed his eyes.

Bai Xiaochun's heart immediately began to race, and he felt all the blood in his body rushing to his head. Although he was excited that he would be able to profit from performing some more shakedowns, what was more important was that he could have his

revenge. Furthermore, he could use his public office to do so, which was an amazing thing. As it turned out, this Grand Heavenmaster was turning out to be a great guy!

He immediately voiced his assent, then turned and flew out of Heavenmaster Hall. Obviously, the Grand Heavenmaster wanted him to do as the old saying said. Kill the chickens to scare the monkeys! Punish some people to serve as a warning to others!

He didn't even need to have any hard evidence, just some clues! Even speculation was enough for the Grand Heavenmaster... to give him the go-ahead to take lives!

“With someone like him to rely on, nobody would ever dare to provoke me!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he proudly waved his sleeve to summon his 1,000 corpse troopers. Then, he headed toward the Li Clan.

“Get ready, Li Tiansheng. Lord Bai is coming!”

Chapter 763: Do You Admit To Your Crimes?

It was an exhilarating feeling to be leading the 1,000-strong Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion out from the imperial palace. All of the imperial guards trembled in fear at the sight, to the point where they didn't dare to even breathe, much less get in the way.

By now, everyone in the city knew about Bai Xiaochun's appointment to the position of inspections commissioner. The additional fact that the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion had been awakened led to widespread fear.

In fact, word had even spread out into the Wildlands and beyond. Not even Bai Xiaochun knew how famous he was at this point.

Even the four great riversource sects in the Heavenspan River region, the sects who controlled the Great Wall, had heard of the name of Arch-Emperor City's Inspections Commissioner, Bai Hao.

In Arch-Emperor Dynasty, Bai Xiaochun was the newest dragon to walk the face of the earth, a razor-sharp knife in the hand of the Grand Heavenmaster!

Before long, people were gossiping about Bai Hao's past in Giant Ghost City. People talked about how he was vicious and merciless, how he had killed members of his own clan, and his daredevil act of kidnapping a demigod expert. Then there were his shakedown, the fact that he was a wife-stealer, and countless other details. In the end, everyone was left gasping in disbelief at all the stories.

Most people believed him to be... a lunatic. His battle prowess was astonishing, to the point where he had both attacked and captured more than a hundred chosen. Later, he even fought back against a group of hundreds of chosen at the same time.

A person like that could already be considered stunning without even mentioning that he had the backing of both the Giant Ghost King and the Grand Heavenmaster. In fact, he was also the son-in-

law of the Giant Ghost King!

Because of all of these various aspects, Bai Xiaochun was now... a very, very important person in the Wildlands!

He was far more famous than Zhou Hong, Gongsun Yi and the other chosen like them.

And now, emboldened by the Grand Heavenmaster, it was with a completely haughty air that he set out with his corpse troopers and their intense murderous aura. A thousand beams of light merged together, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as they shot... toward the Li Clan, right in the middle of Arch-Emperor City!!

“Li Tiansheng, you and Zhou Hong worked together with all those other chosen to cause me endless trouble. You tried your best to see me dead, and I let you off the hook over and over again. But now you’ve gone and really pissed me off. Well let me tell you, when I get pissed off, I frighten even myself!” Bai Xiaochun didn’t have a care in the world, and his eyes shone with keen anticipation as he imagined the reactions of all of the people who had tried to kill him in the past.

“And you’re first on the list, Li Tiansheng!” With that, he accelerated, causing the rumbling sounds to intensify as his 1,000 corpse troopers got closer and closer to the Li Clan.

The sight of Bai Xiaochun brazenly speeding through the air attracted a lot of attention, and many gasps. Furthermore, when people realized what direction he was heading in, coldness gripped their hearts, and speculations began to run wild.

“He’s not doing anything to suppress that murderous aura! What is Bai Hao going to do...?”

“Look at the direction he's heading in. It seems like... Borough 9?”

“Borough 9? That’s where the Li Clan is....”

The Li Clan occupied roughly twenty percent of Borough 9. They

had risen to power because of the heavenly marquis in their clan. Not only was their clan populous, they had many outside soul cultivators who were willing to work for them because of how powerful they were. It was a snowball effect that had quickly turned them into a mighty group that few people would ever dare to trifle with.

Even as everyone looked on in shock, Bai Xiaochun led his 1,000 corpse troopers into Borough 9, toward a sprawling courtyard complex, from within the middle of which rose a 300-meter-tall tower!

That tower was a heavenly marquis pagoda! Within Arch-Emperor City, only heavenly marquis clans had structures 300 meters tall. As for the heavenly dukes, they had pagodas 3,000 meters tall!

Almost as soon as Bai Xiaochun caught sight of the Li Clan's pagoda, the people in the Li Clan realized that he was heading in their direction. It led to a small-scale commotion, with countless cultivators flying out of the clan to observe his approach.

Li Tiansheng was in the crowd. He was the heir apparent of the clan, and also a chosen, with a very high position. Unless his father was present, he was essentially the clan chief.

“Bai Hao!!” At first Li Tiansheng was startled, but his expression soon twisted into a vicious snarl. The venomous look in his eyes was clear; he had paid a steep price to the Chen Clan to restore his life force after the most recent incident, and the person responsible for that was none other than Bai Xiaochun.

His hatred for Bai Hao was part of his heart, but he was also aware that he was in a very different position now. He was the inspections commissioner, backed by the Grand Heavenmaster, and the fact that he had come surrounded by a murderous aura caused Li Tiansheng's heart to begin to pound in his chest. Without any hesitation, he issued orders to activate the clan's

defensive spell formation.

Even as he issued the orders, a piercing whistling sound filled the air as Bai Xiaochun arrived with his 1,000 corpse troopers. The murderous aura seething off of the corpse troopers formed something like a black cloud that hovered above the Li Clan.

There were already other soul cultivators showing up in the area to see what was going to happen. All of them were filled with shock, and were starting to come to their own conclusions about how events would play out.

“Could it be that the Grand Heavenmaster is actually going to make a move?! And the Li Clan... is first on the list!!”

“No way! It’s probably just Bai Hao using his status to exact revenge!”

As numerous individuals looked on in astonishment, Bai Xiaochun hovered there grandly, flanked by his 1,000 corpse troopers, looking over the Li Clan cultivators, who were clearly ready for a fight. Then his gaze came to rest on Li Tiansheng, around whom were clustered an unusually large number of clan cultivators.

Glaring, Bai Xiaochun said, “Li Tiansheng, why haven’t you come out to pay respects to the inspections commissioner!?”

As his voice echoed out like thunder, the corpse troopers’ murderous auras grew even more intense.

The Li Clan cultivators’ expressions flickered, many of them growing fiercer. By this point, Li Tiansheng was panting a bit, and his mind was spinning. However, he didn't let that show on his face. Instead, he scowled and yelled, “You’ve got a lot of guts coming here and offending your superiors, Bai Hao. This is the manor of a heavenly marquis, not just some random place where you can go make a scene. Back down immediately!!”

Sticking his chin up, Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his

back and brazenly said, “The manor of a heavenly marquis? Heh heh. The main reason Lord Bai came here today is because the Li Clan is the manor of a heavenly marquis. I heard you have a lot of wealth in this clan of yours. I'm just worried that some of your treasures are forgeries, and would like to help you inspect them.”

Inside, he was bursting with happiness, and was very pleased with how amazing his little speech had just been. It was the type of feeling that came with occupying the position of superiority and justice.

Cultivators of the Li Clan were accustomed to being arrogant people, and immediately responded with boisterous, impolite words.

“What gall!!”

“Do you have a death wish or something, Bai Hao? What makes you think you have the right to come cause trouble for our Li Clan?!”

“What a joke! I guess Bai Hao is just a complete moron!”

As for Li Tiansheng, his expression was unsightlier than ever, and he was getting more anxious by the moment. He could tell that something was off about the situation, but was convinced that there was little likelihood the Grand Heavenmaster was interested in making a move against the Li Clan. The most likely possibility... was that Bai Hao had come here to enact personal vengeance. As such, Li Tiansheng's eyes flickered with cold light.

“That means this is a chance to exterminate this guy once and for all....” Although he was afraid of the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion, the reserve powers of the Li Clan, along with the fact that his father was Heavenly Marquis Li, gave him plenty of confidence.

“Li Clan cultivators, hear my orders. Anyone who enters Li Clan territory shall be executed immediately!”

The Li Clan cultivators snarled viciously, and their killing intent soared. More people were flying up into the air from inside the clan, many of them clan members, but others being hired soul cultivators. Before long, there were more than 10,000 people visible, all of them surging with the desire to kill. Overall, they actually seemed a bit more impressive than the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion.

The surrounding onlookers gasped in shock, and even Bai Xiaochun was a bit startled. However, he knew his status, and had his orders from the Grand Heavenmaster. Obviously, the fact that the Grand Heavenmaster had sent him here meant that he didn't intend for the Li Clan to kill him.

Feeling a bit more confident with that thought, he glared at Li Tiansheng, convinced that he had been acting a bit too softly before. Looking away from Li Tiansheng and the cultivators around him, he turned his gaze to the pagoda.

“Heavenly Marquis Li, I've come here today with orders from the Grand Heavenmaster. I'd like to ask you a question.... Do you admit to your crimes!?!?”

The entire atmosphere in the area changed, and countless gasps could be heard among the onlookers. The Li Clan cultivators were all visibly shocked, and Li Tiansheng's heart was beginning to pound.

Chapter 764: Fighting In The Li Clan!

As the words left Bai Xiaochun's mouth, Li Tiansheng's father sat in a private chamber in the highest level of the enormous pagoda. He was a majestic heavenly marquis, and yet, his expression was profoundly grim.

Despite being a half-deva, his mood was so foul that it had destabilized his cultivation base to a certain degree.

There could be no misunderstanding Bai Xiaochun's words. Furthermore, Li Tiansheng's father had been paying close attention to Bai Xiaochun's arrival, and during the entire time, his expression had been slowly transforming, until it was now profoundly grim.

Even his breathing was in chaos. He was a heavenly marquis, and was therefore even more profoundly insightful than Li Tiansheng and the other cultivators in the clan. He could tell... that this Bai Hao would not have brought his troops here without the express permission of the Grand Heavenmaster.

It wasn't a matter of strength in arms, but of position and standing. There were 108 heavenly marquises in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, and for the inspections commissioner to visit one with such brazen audacity spoke volumes about the Grand Heavenmaster's stance.

"Is it a threat...?" Heavenly Marquis Li thought. At the moment, he was feeling profoundly uneasy, which in turn had him more vigilant than ever. As he thought about everything he knew about the Grand Heavenmaster, beads of sweat began to pop out on his forehead, and terror rose up in his heart.

"The Grand Heavenmaster... wants to kill me!" As soon as Heavenly Marquis Li came to this conclusion, a vicious snarl appeared on his face, and he began to pant. He knew that if the Grand Heavenmaster really did want him dead, then he had no

other choice than to try to escape before the calamity fell!

And yet, he couldn't quite reconcile himself to doing that. He had practiced cultivation for many, many years to reach the position of heavenly marquis, and led one of the most powerful clans in the Wildlands. He refused to just sit around passively waiting to be killed. He had to fight! He had to figure out a way to resolve this deadly situation!

“I need to buy time!!” That was his decision. His only chance at resolving the issue was to buy time. If he could make a big enough scene in the meantime, then the other heavenly marquises and the heavenly dukes would have a chance to react. Maybe even the four heavenly kings.

After all, he was a heavenly marquis, and the other heavenly marquises would not be happy about one of their kind being casually disposed of. In fact, they would likely come to his aid. In some senses, they would actually be saving themselves!

If he could get all of the important people in the imperial court to rise to action, then even the Grand Heavenmaster would have to take the matter seriously.

“And what about the Arch-Emperor... no. No, I can't go to the Arch-Emperor!” All of a sudden, a tremor ran through Heavenly Marquis Li, and he suddenly had an inkling of where the true issue lay.

“If the Grand Heavenmaster wanted to kill me, he could just issue a decree ordering my execution. Why would he send Bai Hao to do the deed...? He's using the pretext of killing me to see who else in the court would speak up for me. He's trying to lure the snakes out of their holes!!” Such thoughts filled Heavenly Marquis Li's mind, along with a bitter coldness. The more he thought about it, the more it seemed that this was the case, so he quickly decided that he had to do two things. First, buy time so that people would come to his aid. Second, figure out a way to escape!

“Buy time. Cause a big scene....” Eyes glittering, he sent a message to Li Tiansheng.

“Kill the corpse troopers! And do anything necessary to cut down this Bai Hao!!”

Even as everyone in the Li Clan was trembling, Li Tiansheng got the orders from his father. His immediate reaction was that things didn't seem to have escalated to that level, and yet, now was not the time to ponder the situation. Glaring at Bai Xiaochun, he yelled, “Bai Hao's orders are forged! This is a conspiracy! Cultivators of the Li Clan, kill him immediately!”

The other cultivators under his command hesitated for a moment, but knew that if the Li Clan fell, they would likely be killed along with it. Snarling, they shouted and charged into battle.

Within the briefest of moments, over 10,000 cultivators were howling and flying toward Bai Xiaochun.

In response, Bai Xiaochun glared and waved his hand, sending his 1,000 black-armored corpse troopers flying to meet the charge.

Booms immediately rang out in all directions. As for Bai Xiaochun, he didn't actually join the fighting, but remained further back, guarded by a contingent of corpse troopers. His poor little life was the most important thing to consider, and he wouldn't casually put it in harm's way.

This was his first time seeing the corpse troopers in action, and it was a shocking sight. They didn't seem to feel pain at all, and clearly relied on body refinement techniques. They fought fiercely wherever they went, slaughtering foes left and right.

Neither magical techniques nor the effects of magical items seemed to have any effect on them. They charged into the fighting without any hesitation. Within the space of a few breaths of time, agonized shrieks began to rise into the air. Clearly, the cultivators

of the Li Clan were no match for the corpse troopers. In fact, many of them were literally ripped to pieces in the blink of an eye!

The reek of blood filled the air, and before long, the clan's spell formation rumbled to life, sending a blood-colored screen of light shining up, accompanied by what sounded like the beating of a heart.

As the heartbeat echoed out, black, toxic gas began to erupt from the Li Clan cultivators. Furthermore, many of them pulled out actual human hearts, which they then crushed while simultaneously shouting out bizarre words.

As the hearts were crushed, the shadowy images of women appeared, mournful and venomous as they floated forward to fight the corpse troopers.

Those shadowy women were highly toxic! As for the hearts which had just been crushed, they were none other than the manifestation of Heart Of A Woman!

This was the poison technique cultivated by the Li Clan, which had been derived from the ancient saying, the most vile poison cannot compare to the heart of a woman!

However, based on what Bai Xiaochun could tell, what was vile here was not the hearts of the women. It was the poison technique the vicious Li Clan cultivated after extracting the hearts and using them for cultivation purposes.

The poisonous effect was shocking, and was the first thing that caused any problems for the corpse troopers. Their bodies even began to show signs of decay, and they were forced to slow down. Even their black suits of armor were affected. Bai Xiaochun immediately pulled them away from the fighting, and yet, that also exposed him.

Killing intent seethed in Li Tiansheng's eyes as he shouted, "Kill Bai Hao!!"

Even as his words echoed in the air, he shot at top speed toward Bai Xiaochun, flanked by ten Li Clan elders, all of whom had Nascent Soul cultivation bases. Toxic gas swirled around all of them, which took the form of shadowy women, all of whom had holes in their chests where their hearts should have been. Almost as soon as they appeared, a sensation of imminent crisis filled Bai Xiaochun's heart, and his face fell.

Just when he was about to back up, a mysterious light shone in the eyes of the nearby corpse troopers who had been affected by the toxic gas. Simultaneously, they all opened their mouths and breathed in deeply.

That caused a dramatic wind to spring up, which immediately sucked the toxic gas in the area into their bodies! If that were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal, but the shocking thing was that after inhaling the toxic gas, their cultivation bases skyrocketed!!

Clearly, that toxic gas was actually beneficial to them, and could temporarily increase their cultivation! The rise in cultivation base power immediately negated their previous injuries, leaving them completely whole!

Bai Xiaochun was quite pleased by this, and could see how incredible this army of corpse troopers was. Clearly, there were still more secrets about them that he had yet to discover.

And that was most definitely the truth. The black-armored corpse troopers could absorb harmful magical techniques, and use them to catalyze their own cultivation bases. Essentially, it turned them into an army... that could get stronger the longer they fought!

Bursting with excitement, Bai Xiaochun pointed at Li Tiansheng and the people next to him.

“Kill them all!”

Bursting with murderous auras, the corpse troopers immediately charged in Li Tiansheng's direction.

“Not good!” Li Tiansheng thought, his face falling as he prepared to fall back. However, he wasn't fast enough, and before he could even move, both he and the ten clan elders were set upon by the corpse troopers. Blood immediately began to spray out of their mouths, and they were quickly left with severe injuries.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was laughing heartily.

“This is what happens when me and you fight, Li Tiansheng! When I make a move, even god in the heavens hides his face!” Bai Xiaochun immediately marveled at how good he was with words.

However, in the same moment he finished speaking, the bloodied and injured Li Tiansheng looked back at him and viciously shouted, “Organ Sacrifice!!”

Chapter 765: I Very, Very, Very, Very Much Like To Grow Flowers

As soon as the words left his mouth, the shield of light distorted as... an enormous blood-colored heart appeared!

At first glance, it didn't appear to be illusory at all. Furthermore, it was actually made of 1,000,000 actual human hearts! Those hearts represented 1,000,000 women who had died!

This was the most powerful function of the Li Clan's spell formation. The instant the gigantic heart appeared, it collapsed, becoming an ink-like cloud of black smoke that spread out in all directions.

It began to corrode everything it touched, even some of the hired soul cultivators. Those who were too slow screamed and were transformed into globs of blood that splattered down on the ground.

Only the members of the Li Clan who cultivated the Heart Of A Woman were unaffected. In fact, expressions of madness could be seen on their faces as they opened their mouths and breathed in the gas, which instantly healed them. Then, they went back to fighting the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion.

The sight of what was happening with the poison gas caused Bai Xiaochun's scalp to tingle, and he started to back up. However, that was when Li Tiansheng's father took advantage of the chaos to take a step forward, becoming something like a bolt of lightning that shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Your life is over, Bai Hao!!”

Bai Xiaochun's pupils constricted as he looked at the incoming Heavenly Marquis Li. Up to this point, he hadn't participated in any of the fighting, mostly because he wanted to be on guard for something just like this. Therefore, as soon as the heavenly

marquis appeared, his cultivation base surged with power.

However, before he could make a move, a sinister voice suddenly rang out into the area.

“So, you’ve finally emerged from your heavenly marquis pagoda! I guess it was worth it for me to hold back until this moment!”

“Hei Ming!!” Heavenly Marquis Li snarled and tried to back up. However, he was too late. The instant he tried to reverse momentum, a huge hand descended from above with incredible speed, crushing through the Li Clan’s defensive spell formation and grabbing Heavenly Marquis Li!

“Heavenly Marquis!!”

“Father!!”

Everyone in the Li Clan began to cry out in alarm, especially Li Tiansheng, who seemed so terrified that he lost all of his will to even move.

At the same time, eyes went wide among the crowd of onlookers, and many of them gasped.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked up to see that familiar, black-robed figure up above in the air.

Bai Xiaochun was not very happy about this development, especially considering that he was the inspections commissioner.

“Hey, you black-robed freak,” he shouted, “we’re on the same team here, aren’t we? It’s not very nice to stick around hiding and then jump into things at the last minute! I worked hard to reel in this big fish, and now you’re trying to hook him yourself?! You’re trying to steal my thunder!!”

The black-robed man looked down at Bai Xiaochun for a moment before coolly responding, “He can easily self-detonate when inside the heavenly marquis pagoda. Besides, the Grand Heavenmaster told me to arrest him, and that’s exactly what I’m going to do. As

far as stealing your thunder... well, allow me to bestow you with some good fortune.”

With that, he pointed his finger downward, causing a gale force wind to sweep through the Li Clan. Instantly, the previously damaged spell formation completely and utterly shattered!

Popping sounds rang out as numerous cultivators within the clan who had been powering it experienced a backlash, causing blood to spray out of their mouths. At the same time, the toxic gas in the area swirled together into 1,000 separate strands that shot toward one particular corpse trooper who was at the half-deva level. Upon reaching him, the strands of smoke poured into him, a baptism of sorts.

The corpse trooper immediately began to tremble as he absorbed the smoke, and although he appeared to be corroding, that only caused him to absorb the smoke more quickly, until it was rushing into him through his pores.

Then he threw his head back and howled as his cultivation base power skyrocketed. Shockingly... he was now no longer at the half-deva level. He had broken through! His power grew and grew until he was only a hair away from the Deva Realm. The toxic gas provided by the hearts of 1,000,000 women only provided a temporary boost, and didn't make him a complete deva...

But he could still crush any other half-deva!!

Bai Xiaochun was stunned by what he was seeing. Although the upgrade to the corpse trooper was not permanent, only temporary, it was still a shocking thing.

“What kinds of monsters are these things...?” he thought. What was happening surpassed even what he could imagine, and in truth, the word ‘monster’ really wasn't sufficient to describe the black-armored corpse troopers.

“There are a total of 100,000 corpse troopers.... In that case, does

it really mean... that they could turn into 100,000 devas? Or even 100,000 demigods? How is that even possible...?" It almost seemed like it was some big joke. The power on display that the Wildlands was capable of completely exceeded all imagination.

However, by this point, he also realized that these black-armored corpse troopers must have some sort of big weakness! For example, a lack of resources to power them!

"This is the true reserve power of the imperial court...." Hei Ming said, sounding a bit regretful. "Unfortunately, they have some fatal flaws!" With that, he shook his head and vanished, taking Heavenly Marquis Li with him.

Heart pounding, Bai Xiaochun looked at his two corpse troopers who were now almost on the same level as devas. It didn't take long before his eyes were shining with delight.

"Who would have ever thought I would end up controlling an army this powerful!?!?" Excited, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Then, he sent out a thought that recalled the newly-upgraded deva corpse trooper, who stood at his side like a Dao protector.

Feeling very pleased, and very proud of himself, he looked over at the Li Clan forces and waved his hand, sending his corpse troopers over to crush them. Meanwhile, Li Tiansheng was trembling as he realized what Bai Xiaochun was thinking.

"We're willing to heed the imperial decree from the inspections commissioner!" he shouted urgently, clasping hands and bowing deeply in fear of displeasing Bai Xiaochun. "Please help us to inspect... all of our treasures...."

The rest of the Li Clan cultivators all looked as pale as death. Their spell formation had been broken, and their heavenly marquis arrested. None of them had any will left to fight. Therefore, it was after only a slight moment of hesitation that they bowed their heads in acknowledgement of Li Tiansheng's words,

and then clasped hands in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped at the sight of so many people all bowing to him. Then he looked over at Li Tiansheng, and was not very pleased. Li Tiansheng had reacted far too quickly to the sudden change. Furthermore, he even went as far as to copy Bai Xiaochun's earlier words from before the fighting started. The fact that there was an audience to all of this had Bai Xiaochun feeling even more irritated than before.

Snorting, he ignored Li Tiansheng and the rest of the Li Clan cultivators, and immediately set to work with his shakedown. The Li Clan had a heavenly marquis, and profound reserve savings that obviously surpassed the resources of the three great clans from Giant Ghost City. After all, even though those three great clans had deva patriarchs, this was Arch-Emperor City, the seat of power in the Wildlands, and a place where the resources surpassed all other locations.

There were soulhoarding pagodas and countless portions of soul medicine, as well as magical items that formed the reserve power. The sight of it all was quite dazzling to Bai Xiaochun.

There was a 9-meter-long spirit bone which emanated pulses of spiritual energy that closely resembled the spiritjade statue from back in Giant Ghost City.

There were numerous magical items with thirteen or fourteenfold spirit enhancements. There was even a whole collection of Heavenspan River water. And even spirit stones....

It was a vast pile of treasure, almost a mountain. It was in the middle of the shakedown that Zhou Yixing finally arrived, and when he saw the growing pile of treasure, he was stunned. However, as soon as Bai Xiaochun gave the word, he quickly set to work organizing it and packing it away.

The vast amount of wealth that was building up was shocking, but it was what Bai Xiaochun found in the rear courtyard,

protected in a restricted area, that caused him to rub his eyes in disbelief.

“Am I seeing things...?” There, right in the middle of the restricted area, protected by multi-layered restrictive spells.... was a flower with seven leaves on it!

“Rainbow spirit thistle!!” he murmured, shaken. Rainbow spirit thistle was a type of medicinal ingredient he had read about back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. It was the primary ingredient in a type of spirit medicine that could be used to break through from the Nascent Soul stage into the Deva Realm!

It could increase one’s chances of success by thirty percent!!

Although it would only help when aiming for the weakest tier of devas, it would still be helpful. After all, the patriarchs of the Spirit and Blood Stream Divisions back in the River-Defying Sect had gone into secluded meditation to make a breakthrough, but had not succeeded as far as Bai Xiaochun was ever aware. If either of them had possessed a rainbow spirit thistle, though, they would have had a much greater chance of succeeding!

It was a spirit plant that was very rare in the Heavenspan River region, and would lead to bloody conflicts if it appeared. Countless people would fight madly over them, and yet, here was one right in front of Bai Xiaochun.

The Wildlands was not a suitable place to grow spirit plants, and therefore, it was a complete shock to see one here!

Gasping, Bai Xiaochun looked around, and realized that there was something unusual about this rear courtyard.

Clearing his throat, he tried to seem very calm as he said, “What a wonderful flower. Men, come dig it up for me. And do not under any circumstances deliver it to my mansion. I’m going to get very angry at anyone who does that. Even though I very, very, very, very much like to grow flowers, as the inspections commissioner, I

definitely could not embezzle things in that way!”

Chapter 766: A Howl From The Rear Courtyard

“Never are the rich benevolent. This Li Clan really knew how to rake in the money! And all by climbing on the backs of the common people....” Of course, it helped Bai Xiaochun’s shakedown efforts to categorize the Li Clan in this way. It was with complete righteous indignation that he stood off to the side, watching Zhou Yixing uprooting the rainbow spirit thistle.

Glancing at the flower, he said, “Be careful with that flower! Don’t damage it. Ai. Growing flowers is the only hobby I have, so although that flower doesn’t belong to me, I simply can’t stand to allow anyone else to harm it.”

Zhou Yixing looked a bit embarrassed. It would be obvious to anyone who looked at it that this flower was anything but ordinary. As he worked, he muttered to himself that it seemed too obvious that Bai Xiaochun was trying to avoid responsibility and have Zhou Yixing take the flower to his mansion for him....

After Zhou Yixing dug up the rainbow spirit thistle, Bai Xiaochun pointed at the ground and, eyes glittering, said, “There’s something really strange about this place. Yixing, let’s go a bit deeper and see what we can see.”

In response, Zhou Yixing stomped his foot forcefully onto the ground, which caused the dirt to collapse and whoosh away, revealing something buried further down. A beast hide!

It was impossible to say exactly what kind of beast it had come from. It was completely black, and seemingly ordinary in nature. It did not emanate spiritual energy, and seemed almost like an ordinary animal skin. However, as soon as it appeared, Bai Xiaochun could sense his Eternal Parasol inside of his bag of holding suddenly getting excited.

Back in Borough 89, the Eternal Parasol had helped Bai Xiaochun defend against the deva-level attack of Chen Haosong. However, the parasol's canopy had ended up being destroyed, leaving behind only the damaged main shaft.

The fact that the base of the parasol was now vibrating caused Bai Xiaochun's eyes to widen. He quickly sent some divine sense into his bag of holding, which enabled him to sense that the parasol had suddenly begun to thrum with desire. Clearly, it wanted that beast hide.

Not having noticed Bai Xiaochun's reaction, Zhou Yixing said, "It's just a beast hide."

Curious, he picked up to look at it, but didn't see anything unusual about it. He looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun rubbed his eyes, immediately causing them to redden and tear up. Looking at the hide, he sighed and said,

"That animal skin makes me think back to my childhood, and my constant companion Blackie.... Ah, whatever. Hand it over to me. I'll keep it as a remembrance. I doubt the Grand Heavenmaster will object to me keeping an ordinary beast hide." Sighing and shaking his head, he accepted the beast hide from Zhou Yixing. After feeling it in his hands, he placed it into his bag of holding, a look of reminiscence and grief on his face. Then, he turned to leave.

Zhou Yixing looked suspiciously at him as he left. Smiling wryly, he shook his head and continued on with the shakedown. Before long, the Li Clan had been completely cleaned out....

The hearts of the members of the Li Clan dripped with proverbial blood, and that was especially true of Li Tiansheng. He could do nothing but watch as case after case of wealth was hauled away. Despite the pain he felt, there was nothing he could do about the situation. At the moment, his desire to survive outweighed everything, and he was sure that if he did the slightest thing to irritate Bai Xiaochun, he would likely have his life force drained

away again.

The entire time, he actually kept a smile plastered on his face, although it was the type of stiff smile that looked worse than someone crying. After the Li Clan had been cleaned out, Bai Xiaochun looked over at Li Tiansheng, and couldn't help but feel a bit of admiration.

“Quite a bit of willpower, I see,” he thought. “He actually smiled during the entire shakedown. It seems Li Tiansheng is able to deal with difficult situations better than the average person....” All of a sudden, he felt more vigilant than before, and quickly made a decision to make advance preparations to forestall any future problems.

“Men, arrest them all and throw them into Grand Asylum. And tell the warden that this Li Tiansheng has unusual willpower, and should be given a particularly severe sentence!” With that, he ignored the secretly fuming Li Tiansheng, and led the larger portion of his Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion up into the air.

“Next target, the Chen Clan! There's not much time left, I definitely need to hurry!” With that, he pressed forward at top speed toward the location of his next shakedown, which was the Chen Clan in Borough 13!

Everyone who had been present to watch him and the corpse troopers shake down the Li Clan were shocked, and even trembling. The fact that the mighty Li Clan had met such a fate was no small matter in Arch-Emperor City.

Clearly, the Grand Heavenmaster was wielding a sharp knife to instigate major changes in the city!

As people analyzed the matter and spread word, the various nobility and aristocracy in the city were all informed. Even the four heavenly kings learned about the matter. Everyone was shocked to the core, and many, many eyes came to focus on Bai Xiaochun to see what he would do next.

As Bai Xiaochun proceeded along toward the Chen Clan, his thoughts were focused on his bag of holding, and the Eternal Parasol, which was now experiencing a dramatic transformation!

That seemingly ordinary beast hide was obviously something that had to do with the growth of the rainbow spirit thistle. After Bai Xiaochun had put it into his bag of holding, an enigmatic, half-laughing, half-crying ghost face had appeared on the surface of the damaged parasol shaft. Then, it greedily absorbed the beast hide, fusing with it as one!

As it did, the beast hide became the new canopy of the parasol. Furthermore, an aura began to emanate from the parasol that got Bai Xiaochun very excited.

It was apparently refining itself and growing more powerful! Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been more excited. After all, the Eternal Parasol had been of great help when it came to cultivating his Undying Bones.

He had been worrying about how to fix the damage to the Eternal Parasol, but now, it was fixing itself, and even becoming stronger in the process. As of this point, Bai Xiaochun was convinced that the shakedowns were already worth it.

“The Li Clan has helped me get my Eternal Parasol back. I wonder... what surprises do the Chen Clan have in store!?” Excited, he retracted his divine sense from his bag of holding and pushed toward Borough 13 with greater speed.

Many people were paying attention to his progress, and soon, it was to their shock that they realized that Boroughs 12, 13, and 14 all had heavenly marquises in them! Considering what had happened to Heavenly Marquis Li, they could only imagine what was to come.

“Who is he going for this time?!?!?”

“Dammit. I didn't offend Bai Hao, nor the Grand Heavenmaster....”

When Bai Xiaochun passed by Borough 12 in grand fashion, the heavenly marquis there breathed a sigh of relief. However, the Chen Clan in Borough 13 was beginning to get nervous. Then, he came to a stop in the air just outside of their clan.

“Heavenly Marquis Chen, come out to see me immediately!” The heavenly marquis from Borough 14 was immediately a bit relieved. Meanwhile, Heavenly Marquis Chen sat in the top of his heavenly marquis pagoda, gripped with foreboding. Glaring at Bai Xiaochun, he shivered in anxiety.

“The best thing to do is get out of here as soon as possible!” Without the slightest hesitation, he crushed a jade slip, which caused his body to immediately begin to fade away.

Everyone in the Chen Clan was scared witless, including that chosen who had accompanied Zhou Hong in his efforts to spread rumors about Chen Manyao and Xu Shan. By now, everyone had gotten some news about the fate of Li Tiansheng, and therefore, the fact that Bai Xiaochun had come here was terrifying beyond measure.

Silence reigned in the Chen Clan, with the exception of the nervous panting of the clan members. Countless eyes were fixed on Bai Xiaochun, hovering there in the air surrounded by black-armored corpse troopers.

His hands were clasped behind his back, and his chin stuck up proudly, impressed by his own grandeur. However, after waiting for a moment and not seeing Heavenly Marquis Chen, he waved his hand to his men and said, “So, he has the audacity to despise the majesty of the Grand Heavenmaster? Shake down this Chen Clan! If anyone resists, execute them on the spot!”

Malevolent auras sprang up from the corpse troopers as they flew into the Chen Clan. As for the two deva-level corpse troopers, Bai Xiaochun kept them by his side as bodyguards.

Zhou Yixing was at Bai Xiaochun’s side, and when he saw how

powerful and amazing Bai Xiaochun was, he was once again convinced that he had made the right decision.

As the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion began to invade the Chen Clan, the power of teleportation suddenly sprang up from pagoda in the middle of the clan. However, as it did, a cold harrumph also filled the air.

“Where do you think you’re going?” That familiar black-robed figure once again appeared. Ignoring the heavenly marquis pagoda, he strode off into the distance, then reached out into thin air. Instantly, the air distorted, and an image appeared of Heavenly Marquis Chen, who was obviously attempting to flee the clan.

When the clan members saw that their own heavenly marquis was trying to escape, it struck dread into their hearts, and left them feeling crushed. They had absolutely no will to fight, and simply watched as the corpse troopers entered and began to ransack the clan.

The Chen Clan was actually a lot wealthier than the Li Clan. Even Bai Xiaochun, with his extensive experience performing shakedowns, was left gasping at the sight of all the wealth.

However, just as he was approaching to take a closer look, a howl of delight erupted from further in the clan in an area where the corpse troopers had just taken control.

“I knew you would get what you deserved eventually, Chen Clan! Even if I die here this day, I, Song Que, can close my eyes in death, content that you’ve earned your fate!!”

Chapter 767: Do You Know Who My Uncle Is?!?!

The words were spoken with lively passion, as though the person behind them truly did not fear death. They were also alive with hatred, as if they had been spoken by a person who had suffered indescribable torments at the hand of the Chen Clan, pain the likes of which could never be forgotten.

No one in the Chen Clan paid any attention to the words, though. All of them were staring nervously at Bai Xiaochun, their faces ashen and grim.

Not even the black-armored corpse troopers showed any interest.

However, as soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the words spoken, and especially the name Song Que, his eyes went wide, and a strange expression appeared on his face. He seemed amused, incredulous, and happily surprised, all at the same time.

“Song Que....” he murmured. Then he cleared his throat and intentionally cleared his face of all expression as he turned to look in the direction of the rear courtyard.

Clasping his hands behind his back, he stuck his chin up and loudly said, “Whoever it is that’s yelling over there, bring him to me!”

In response, one of the corpse troopers sped out from the rear courtyard and tossed a person onto the ground in front of Bai Xiaochun. Then he stood there, murderous aura seething, clearly ready to kill the person he had just thrown onto the ground if Bai Xiaochun gave the word.

The person the corpse trooper had brought from the rear courtyard was not a soul cultivator, but an ordinary cultivator from the Heavenspan River region!

At a single glance, it was possible to tell that he should have

looked like a healthy young man. Instead, he was bedraggled and broken-down, hardly more than skin and bones. He also had a scraggly beard that made him look much older than he actually was.

His clothing was ripped and torn, making him look worse than a beggar. He was covered with what appeared to be soot and ash, and even had wisps of black smoke rising from his dantian region.

He was clearly weak beyond measure, hovering right on the brink of death. And yet, despite that, his cultivation base fluctuations revealed him to be... in the early Nascent Soul stage!

The black wisps of smoke coming from his dantian region also spread out to cover his nascent soul. Furthermore, with every rotation of his cultivation base, spiritual energy would seep out through the black smoke....

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw all of this, he gasped in shock....

This cultivator was none other than... Song Que!!

He had been a chosen in the Blood Stream Sect, and one of the elites of the River-Defying Sect. He had traveled with Bai Xiaochun to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect as a Dao protector, and had also gone into the labyrinth outside the Great Wall. From there, he had been teleported out into the Wildlands just like Bai Xiaochun, Master God-Diviner, Zhao Long, and many others.

Some of the lucky ones who were teleported out into the Wildlands had managed to make their way back to the Great Wall, but Song Que hadn't been so fortunate.... He had been teleported right into Arch-Emperor City. Unlike Bai Xiaochun, he had not become famous and popular, but rather, had been captured and enslaved, sold into service to the Chen Clan.

Because of his extraordinary cultivation base and natural talents, the Chen Clan had used a brutal secret magic to forcibly propel his cultivation base all the way into the early Nascent Soul stage.

Although it could be considered a breakthrough, it was actually very harmful to Song Que, and had involved incredible pain and danger. And yet, that wasn't even of any importance. The worst thing of all was that he had been turned into something like livestock. The black smoke which had been inserted into him forced his cultivation base to rotate, and then sucked away the spiritual power from inside of him.... In the end, he had become a living spirit stone used by the younger soul cultivators in the Chen Clan to further their cultivation!

In addition, the effects of his cultivation base were limited by the black smoke, and could not be used externally. They had also placed numerous restrictive spells on him. As such, he was no threat at all to anyone around him, and also lived in constant pain.

Furthermore, in order to force his cultivation base to rotate more rapidly, and release more spiritual power, the younger members of the Chen Clan had frequently tortured him.

The torture had pushed Song Que to the point where he wished to die, and yet, there was no way the Chen Clan would allow a living spirit stone like him to perish. As the years passed, Song Que gradually slipped into mental darkness. Therefore, when he saw how terrified the Chen Clan cultivators were of these black-armored corpse troopers, he felt more joy than he had in years, and even threw his head back to laugh at the top of his lungs.

As soon as he was thrown down onto the ground in front of Bai Xiaochun, he looked around at the terrified Chen Clan cultivators, many of whom he recognized. As for the corpse troopers, their auras were enough to cause his mind to reel from shock.

And yet, even more of note than those things... was the fact that everyone was clearly focusing solely on Bai Xiaochun.

The person Song Que saw standing in front of him was a handsome young man wearing luxurious clothing. He was clearly an elite of some sort, someone with an incredibly high standing. In

fact, his bodyguard was a black-armored corpse trooper whose aura left Song Que feeling completely stunned. He seemed as if he existed as one with the heavens, and made him feel so weak in comparison that a single thought on his part could surely end his life.

“Deva Realm!! This guy has deva bodyguards? Who is he....?” Song Que felt incredible pressure weighing down on him from this unknown young man, a person who struck terror into the hearts of the cultivators of the mighty Chen Clan, and who had a deva as his bodyguard. He was obviously someone very important.

“There can’t be very many people like this guy in the Wildlands. And he’s so young. Is he... an imperial prince?!?!” Considering how long Song Que had been living in Arch-Emperor City, he had come to know a bit about how the Wildlands worked.

As he looked up at Bai Xiaochun, his chest heaving, his heart suddenly filled with bitterness.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked down at Song Que and sighed, wondering what exactly Song Que’s problem was. It seemed like every time they ran into each other, Song Que was always in a really bad situation. Perhaps there was something wrong with him mentally?

Although Bai Xiaochun was initially inclined to poke fun at Song Que, such thoughts quickly vanished as various memories rose up in him, leading to feelings of pity. However, he couldn’t poke any holes in his identity, so he quickly suppressed such thoughts, waved his hand, and said, “This living spirit stone doesn't seem half bad. Send him to my residence for use in my cultivation.”

Zhou Yixing immediately hesitated, and almost seemed like he wanted to say something, but before he could, Bai Xiaochun gave him a meaningful glare.

It was a look that caused Zhou Yixing to tremble. He immediately voiced his assent, and stepped forward to grab Song Que. However,

before he could, Song Que suddenly went crazy.

“If you people are really that tough, then just kill me! I’d rather die than exist as a living spirit stone!!”

His raving didn’t cause Zhou Yixing to pause for even a moment as he hurried forward. Before he could lay hands on him, though, Song Que turned his bloodshot eyes onto Bai Xiaochun and shouted, “My... my uncle... he’s Bai Xiaochun!!! He’s in 1st place on the Hell-Emperor Stele. If he becomes a deva, then he’ll be the new Hell-Emperor. If you dare to do anything to me, then my uncle will get revenge for me! None of you will be able to escape!”

Song Que was feeling desperate, but had no other way to threaten someone with deva-level power. Not able to bear the thought of being a human spirit stone, he decided that he had to call on the name of Bai Xiaochun.... As for the matter of Bai Xiaochun’s name being on the Hell-Emperor Stele, it was something he had heard the younger members of the Chen Clan talking about recently, and was something that left him with very mixed emotions.

As soon as the words left Song Que’s mouth, Zhou Yixing’s hands began to tremble. As for the surrounding Chen Clan cultivators, many of them gasped and looked over at Song Que. This was something that Song Que had never mentioned before. If he had, they would surely have extracted more use out of him!

After all, the name of Bai Xiaochun was a taint on all of the Wildlands. The fact that he was in 1st place on the Hell-Emperor Stele was something that defied imagination. If it remained there until the end of the trial, and Bai Xiaochun actually became the successor of the Hell-Emperor, it would be a clear slap in the face to the entire Arch-Emperor Dynasty....

As Song Que’s words echoed out, the expression on Bai Xiaochun’s face turned even more strange. The truth was that he was feeling very pleased with the whole situation, and was even thinking about how angry Song Que had been in the past when he

called him Que'er. Now, with the prospect of being a living spirit stone, he actually went so far as to call on his name....

“Silly boy,” he thought to himself. “Even if I weren’t your uncle, I would still save you for the sake of the River-Defying Sect. And besides, considering everything that’s gone on between your aunt and I....” Sighing, Bai Xiaochun looked at Song Que and had to resist the urge to walk over and tousle his hair.

“Take him away!” Bai Xiaochun said, flicking his sleeve. In his opinion, his gains here in the Chen Clan had been significant.

Song Que let out an angry, agonized shriek as Zhou Yixing gritted his teeth and rendered him unconscious. As he carried him away, he stewed anxiously about the unexpected fact that Song Que was actually connected to Bai Xiaochun....

Chapter 768: Pit Of 10,000!

The entire time, Song Que did not realize that the almighty government official he was speaking to... was the very uncle he had just referred to....

If he ever found out the truth one day, he would likely vomit buckets of blood, and would be filled with unending regret over what he had just said. But Bai Xiaochun was very used to operating under cover, and had a mask that made accidental slip-ups in his disguise virtually impossible.

As Song Que was taken away, Bai Xiaochun looked around at the Chen Clan, sighing in his heart.

“Who would have thought that I would actually run into Que’er here.... He really does get himself into the worst situations. How did he end up as a living spirit stone?” Claspng his hands behind his back, he stuck his chin up and looked around at the main square of the Chen Clan which stretched out around him, sighing even more deeply.

Bai Xiaochun was really starting to think of Song Que as one of his lucky stars. Every time he ran into him, he would save Song Que from an abyss of suffering. Whether it was in Sky City, on the Great Wall, or here, he was always able to get Song Que to call him uncle.

“Don’t tell me that it’s just because of how outstanding I am, is it...?” Sighing, he continued to relish the pleasure of shaking down the Chen Clan.

Before long, all of the wealth of the Chen Clan’s reserve savings had been gathered up by the corpse troopers, and piled into a small mountain in the middle of the square. As for the cultivators of the Chen Clan, they stood there trembling and not daring to say even a single word.

After all of the wealth was extracted, and the clan had been swept through thoroughly to make sure it was safe, Bai Xiaochun finally strutted inside to do his own inspection, and make sure nothing had been missed.

Escorted by his quasi-Deva Realm corpse trooper bodyguard, he went here and there within the sprawling clan estates, occasionally making observations.

“There’s something strange about that ornamental rock formation. Blast it open! I’d put money on the fact that there’s a secret chamber inside!”

“Look at the pearls inlaid into the eaves of that building. They’re obviously spirit pearls! Pry them out and take them away.”

“There’s something odd about the ground here. Men, come dig this area up and see if there is any treasure hidden underground. If so, take it. If not, then we’ll make do with the limestone slabs.” As he walked along, the surrounding corpse troopers obeyed his every word.

The Chen Clan cultivators were all very jumpy, and could tell that Bai Xiaochun was clearly going to clean them out completely.

Unfortunately for them, there was nothing they could do except bow their heads and accept the fact that... the Chen Clan was finished.

Rumbling sounds filled the clan as Bai Xiaochun went here and there performing his final inspection. When he was fairly satisfied, and was even preparing to leave, his expression suddenly flickered.

His divine sense was currently far beyond the Nascent Soul stage, and was actually comparable to a deva’s. Therefore, his final scan of the clan revealed that some distance away, there was actually a subterranean cavern.

It was rather large, fully 3,000 meters from one side to the other. It was locked with numerous restrictive spells, and various other

defenses that made it seem almost like an enormous chamber of holding. In fact, his divine sense was actually incapable of penetrating inside.

“Eee?” he murmured, eyes glittering. The truth was that he was still hoping to find something in the Chen Clan that would be of personal use to him, just as he had in the Li Clan.

Flying over to the area, he pointed down and excitedly said, “Dig that area up!”

Instantly, corpse troopers flew over and got to work.

As the rumbling sounds echoed out, many of the Chen Clan cultivators’ faces drained of blood. They knew that, deep within that pit was hidden, not a magical item, but rather... the foundation of the Chen Clan’s ability to sell life force!

Under normal circumstances, if anyone had dared to touch that area, they would have attacked with deadly force. But now, they could only watch silently as the buildings covering it were leveled.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of soul cultivators had gathered in the area to watch this unprecedented, momentous event playing out. Two heavenly marquises had fallen, an event which was shaking all of Arch-Emperor City, and prompted more and more people to come and witness the matter personally.

As the buildings in the rear of the Chen Clan collapsed, the ground beneath was eventually revealed, which then began to crack and split under the force of the magical techniques and divine abilities of the corpse troopers. Eventually, the lid of the chamber of holding was out in the open, and then it was removed, revealing the pit beneath!!

Immediately, a vile, indescribable odor was released, an odor so noxious that it made many people involuntarily vomit.

Frowning, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand in front of him to clear the air, and then peered inside the pit. As he did, a tremor ran

through him, and he let out a yelp of surprise.

“This....” He almost couldn’t believe what he was seeing; it caused his mind to spin, and made his eyes completely bloodshot.

At the same time, everyone else who could see the pit all began to cry out in shock.

“That’s... heavens....”

“So, this is the secret of the Chen Clan!!”

“So that’s how the Chen Clan is able to sell life force....”

The 3,000-meter-wide pit was filled with what appeared to be 10,000 people!!

It was actually a pit of foul, necrotic water, within which could be seen so many corpses that 10,000 was probably too small of a number to describe them. Some of the corpses were completely decomposed. Others were only partially decomposed, and there were some... living people!!

The clothing visible was not the clothing of Wildlanders. Bai Xiaochun could immediately tell... that these were Heavenspan cultivators!!

They were skinny and emaciated, their expressions listless, as though they lacked souls. Black strands of smoke wriggled and writhed beneath their skin, constantly extracting their life force.... Obviously, these were cultivators who had been captured and then viciously soulsearched!

Because of the force of the soulsearch, their souls had been destroyed, leaving behind only their physical bodies. After undergoing some special treatment, they were then thrown into this pit and sealed up, whereupon their life force was slowly extracted!

After they were sucked away into nothing more than dried up corpses, however, their agony was not yet over. The foul liquid

that resulted would be filtered and turned into the primary medicinal ingredient that the Chen Clan used to refine life force!

Although the Wildlanders who saw the pit were shocked, they were not as deeply affected as Bai Xiaochun. He was not a Wildlander; he was an ordinary cultivator from the Heavenspan River region, and therefore, he immediately began to tremble and sink into a very grim mood. After a moment passed, he even closed his eyes, worried that he might not be able to control his emotions.

After a long moment passed, he opened his eyes and sighed. The war between the Wildlands and the Heavenspan River region was not something that he could change. After all, the conflict he had solved between the Spirit and Blood Stream Sects had been between two forces that were fundamentally on the same side.

Without saying a word, he clenched his hand into a fist. Drawing upon his cultivation base and the full power of his fleshly body, he then unleashed a fist strike onto the pit.

Everything trembled as a massive force slammed into the corpses in the pit, instantly transforming them into flying ash.

As for the people who were technically alive, for all intents and purposes, they were already dead. Only their physical bodies lived on. For them, Bai Xiaochun's fist strike was actually something of a release....

Although he couldn't be sure, he thought that some of those living bodies actually smiled in the moment before they faded away into nothing....

Expression grim, he flicked his sleeve and coldly said, "Arrest all members of the Chen Clan and send them to the Grand Asylum!"

The corpse troopers immediately went to work, and the Chen Clan cultivators did nothing to resist.

Bai Xiaochun was in a very grim mood. Although he had collected a lot of wealth from the Li and Chen Clans, he didn't feel very

much like he had exacted personal revenge, mostly because of the matter of the huge pit.

He stood there for a long moment, wrapped up in his thoughts. Then he sighed, and turned and left with his corpse troopers.

There was nothing he could do to change the overall situation. Furthermore, he knew that if he did anything to reveal his true identity, he might end up just like the people in that pit. After all, he wasn't in the River-Defying Sect right now. He was in the Wildlands, in Arch-Emperor City....

Now that he had handled the Li and Chen Clans, it was in his role as the inspections commissioner that he went to the imperial palace to see the Grand Heavenmaster... and provide an official debriefing.

Along the way, he struggled with his bad mood, and kept thinking about that pit. When he arrived at the palace, he took a deep breath and pushed all of his gloomy thoughts into the bottom of his heart.

“I need to focus on my flame conjuring. Once I make that cultivation base breakthrough, I can leave this place....” At the moment, he really missed home.

Chapter 769: I Dare You To Try That Again, Heavenly Duke Chen

When Bai Xiaochun arrived outside of Heavenmaster Hall in the imperial palace, he immediately noticed that it was not devoid of people like it had been in the past. There were several dozen cultivators present who had come to offer formal greetings to the Grand Heavenmaster.

One of them was Chen Haosong, along with the old man who Bai Xiaochun had seen with him earlier. [Those two were heavenly dukes, and there were three other heavenly dukes present.](#) Although Bai Xiaochun didn't recognize them, he could tell from their auras that they were devas.

The rest of the people present were all heavenly marquises. Four of them Bai Xiaochun recognized as people from the group of nine who had besieged him.

All of them had unsightly expressions on their faces as they waited for the Grand Heavenmaster to summon them for their audience. As soon as Bai Xiaochun arrived, all of their gazes came to rest on him.

“Bai Hao!!” many of them growled through gritted teeth.

Chen Haosong's eyes glittered especially coldly, and he clearly desired to kill Bai Xiaochun. After all, he was close to the Heavenly Marquis Li, and at the moment, it was unclear whether the man was alive or dead!

All of the nobility and aristocracy in Arch-Emperor City had been shaken by the fact that two heavenly marquises had been arrested by the Grand Heavenmaster. After inquiries were made, and it became clear that Bai Xiaochun was behind it all, their hatred for him grew, although they didn't dare to do anything about it directly.

When the gazes of five devas, and a whole group of half-devas, all came to rest on Bai Xiaochun, it made it feel as if countless mountains were weighing down on top of him.

The coldness of the gazes caused Bai Xiaochun's mood to sink even lower, and at the same time, he started to get nervous.

“I can't believe how badly these people want to kill me! They don't dare look at the Grand Heavenmaster this way, but they have no qualms when it comes to me. They're clearly bullying me because they have superior cultivation bases!” Heart shivering with fear, he looked back at the group.

It was at this point that Chen Haosong spoke.

“How dare you hoodwink the Grand Heavenmaster, Bai Hao! If you have proof that Heavenly Marquises Li and Chen are traitors, then hand it over immediately for me to see!” His words were accompanied by an explosive killing intent, and a dangerously incisive gaze that made it clear that he would cut Bai Xiaochun down in cold blood if he could.

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered as he struggled to deal with the pressure crushing down onto him. The energy rolling off of Chen Haosong was like a mountain slamming into him. Ears ringing, he took a few steps back, his face turning pale in the process, and even his cultivation base teetering unstably.

All of a sudden, an intense sensation of deadly crisis rose up inside of him, causing his heart to tremble. However, that was also when a glint of hatred appeared in his eyes as he thought back to the tragic scene of that pit filled with 10,000 corpses. Instead of trying to stabilize his cultivation base, he actually bit his tongue as he staggered backward, and then sent the resulting blood spraying out of his mouth.

“What gall you have, Heavenly Duke Chen!” he shouted. “Are you trying to kill the inspections commissioner right in front of Heavenmaster Hall!?!? Don't tell me you're planning to mutiny

right here and now!?” A mere thought on his part reached out to the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion, causing numerous corpse troopers to fly over with killing auras surging.

Another cold flash of light passed through Chen Haosong’s eyes, but he knew how to hold his tongue when necessary. Although he had put some cultivation base power into his words moments ago, he had only hoped to intimidate Bai Xiaochun a bit, not hurt him. Of course, the only reason he had held back from intentionally hurting him was because they were all standing right outside of Heavenmaster Hall.

Never could he have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would actually accuse him of something he hadn’t done! And on top of that, he used it as an excuse to summon the Corpse Trooper Blood Battalion.

Chen Haosong frowned, as did the other four heavenly dukes at his side.

A light of madness sprang up in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes. He was convinced that these people wouldn’t dare to kill him here. After all, what would have been the point in the Grand Heavenmaster using him to issue a warning, if he then simply allowed people to kill him?

Either way, Bai Xiaochun was not worried about actually facing a threat to his life right here. He was still in a foul mood, and felt like venting a bit, so therefore, he decided he might as well perform a bit of a test.

“I dare you to try that again, Heavenly Duke Chen!!” he shouted. At the same time, the murderous aura roiling off of his 1,000 corpse troopers grew even more intense. All of their gazes were focused directly on Chen Haosong, as if they would attack him at the slightest provocation.

“You wouldn’t dare!” Chen Haosong said, his expression flickering as he yet again realized how devious Bai Xiaochun was.

“I wouldn’t dare? There’s nothing I won’t dare to do! I smacked the Giant Ghost King across the side of the head! I kidnapped more than a hundred people in the Necromancer Kettle! I personally fought hundreds of chosen simultaneously in Borough 89. So, tell me again what it is that I don’t dare to do! Make one more move, and you’ll see for yourself!”

“Are you threatening me!?” Chen Haosong said through narrowed eyes that burned with killing intent.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun decided to completely throw caution to the wind. Rage surging, he looked at the rest of the people who had gathered, and angrily shouted, “And if any of the rest of you dare to make a move, then I won’t let it drop! Fudge! If I can threaten a heavenly duke, then what makes you think I’m scared of some heavenly marquises!? You people listen to me. From here on out, you’d best be careful around me. As the inspections commissioner, I’m going to be keeping my eye on all of you!”

Although the heavenly marquises simmered with rage, when they saw that Chen Haosong was simply holding his ground and didn’t dare to move... then they obviously had no choice but to simply glare angrily at Bai Xiaochun.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun wasn’t scared at all when it came to people simply staring at him, and looked back at them unflinchingly.

Chen Haosong’s expression grew more unsightly, and even as he seemed to be on the verge of losing control of his anger, someone cleared their throat inside of Heavenmaster Hall. Then, the door slowly opened, and the Grand Heavenmaster strolled out.

“How can we maintain a united front with all of this squabbling!?” he said in a hoarse voice.

Everyone, including Chen Haosong, turned, clasped hands and bowed.

“Greetings, Grand Heavenmaster!”

As he stood there in front of Heavenmaster Hall, the Grand Heavenmaster seemed a bit stooped. He looked old, and not very threatening at all, and yet, everyone gazed at him with terror lurking in the depths of their eyes.

“Presumably you've come here in such a large group because you have something important to discuss. Am I right?”

Sounding very respectful, Chen Haosong said, “Grand Heavenmaster, we will take your words of counsel to heart. The reason Junior has come here today is to report that things are not going well in the fighting at the western Great Wall. I would like to request the use of one of the secret treasures, the Heavenspan Thorn....”

The other heavenly dukes went on in similar fashion, reporting which tribes were having problems, or what precious treasures had appeared. Some offered news from the Heavenspan River region.

Most of the heavenly marquises followed suit. They reported about random things that didn't have anything to do at all with Heavenly Marquis Li or Chen. Although Bai Xiaochun learned a bit more about the situation in the outside world from listening to their reports, he knew that all of these people were wily old foxes, and didn't really need to state their true goal outright. All of them coming here today in unison was enough to send a very clear message.

Furthermore, it didn't make it seem like they were loyal to the Arch-Emperor. The position of inspections commissioner had been left vacant for many years, but now that it was filled, two heavenly marquises had been apprehended almost immediately. That was enough to get all of the nobility and aristocracy jittery, and it was only normal that they would try to get some more clarification about the situation.

However, not everyone seemed to be willing to let things go at that. One of the heavenly marquises seemed to be slower on the uptake than everyone else, and after everyone else had given their reports, said, “Grand Heavenmaster, um, about Heavenly Marquis Li....”

In response, everyone else looked over at him in shock, and many of them even began to sweat nervously. As for the Grand Heavenmaster, he turned toward the person who had just spoken, a dark look in his eye.

“Speak up,” he said slowly. “I couldn’t quite hear that.”

“Um, I--”

“Louder!” the Grand Heavenmaster repeated.

Sweat began to pour down the heavenly marquis’s face. Trembling, he blurted, “Your humble servant... has no questions to ask!”

The Grand Heavenmaster nodded, and then looked around at the group silently. After a few painful moments ticked by, Chen Haosong took his leave, and then one by one, the rest of the group left.

At that point, only Bai Xiaochun and the Grand Heavenmaster were left outside of Heavenmaster Hall.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times. The scene which had played out just now was something the likes of which he didn't often see.... The Grand Heavenmaster had only spoken a few short sentences, and yet had come off sounding incredibly impressive.

Even as Bai Xiaochun pondered the subject, the Grand Heavenmaster broke the silence.

“Sometimes I really have to admire that Celestial on Heavenspan Island.... I really don’t measure up to him!” With that, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun. “So among the group just now, who do you think are the ones loyal to the imperial clan?”

At this point I would like to explain something that confused me at first. Chen Haosong bears the same surname as the Chen Clan that Bai Xiaochun just cleaned out. However, Chen Haosong is not a member of that Chen Clan. He has his own duke-level Chen Clan, a point which is made more clear later on in the story. For now, I think it makes things a bit easier to understand to point out that he is not connected to the marquis-level Chen Clan.

Chapter 770: Your Humble Servant Has A Plan

Bai Xiaochun didn't even blink a single time in response to the Grand Heavenmaster's question. Considering how serious the man was acting, he unhesitatingly said, "Grand Heavenmaster, I'd say there's a high likelihood that all of them are loyal to the imperial clan. And especially Chen Haosong. That bastard is definitely on the side of the Arch-Emperor!"

Bai Xiaochun was still angry at how much Chen Haosong seemed to want to kill him, and figured this was the perfect opportunity to do something about it.

Clearing his throat slightly, the Grand Heavenmaster said, "Oh? Do you have any proof?"

"Proof? Of course! Just moments ago, Chen Haosong clearly wanted to kill me. Grand Heavenmaster, you personally appointed me as the inspections commissioner, and I'm completely and utterly loyal to you. The fact that he actually wants to kill me does a lot to show what he's thinking. Grand Heavenmaster, why don't we just get rid of them all!"

The Grand Heavenmaster looked at Bai Xiaochun out of the corner of his eyes. He knew of the petty differences between Chen Haosong and Bai Xiaochun, and also knew what type of person Bai Xiaochun was. Therefore, he simply ignored his urgings, and looked thoughtfully toward the depths of the imperial palace.

When Bai Xiaochun realized that the Grand Heavenmaster was ignoring him, he sighed inwardly at how indecisive the man was. When you had to kill, it needed to be done without hesitation!

"If I were him," he murmured to himself, "I would definitely kill Chen Haosong immediately. There's no reason to be so wishy-washy about it." After a bit more time passed, Bai Xiaochun

realized that the Grand Heavenmaster was still ignoring him, and seemed lost in thought. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun decided to temporarily forget about what had just happened outside.

As he did, he began to ponder other matters, such as all of the wealth he had plundered from the Li and Chen Clans. That was when he started wondering if the Grand Heavenmaster was being like the Giant Ghost King, and waiting to get his split.

“Grand Heavenmaster, the Li and Chen Clans were swimming in wealth. I got a lot of treasure from them, a shocking amount really. I can’t believe some measly heavenly marquises actually had so much money. Obviously, they were well-connected to the Arch-Emperor.” His testing words had absolutely no effect whatsoever. The Grand Heavenmaster still seemed lost in thought, leading Bai Xiaochun to wonder what he was thinking about.

After a moment of hesitation, he said, “Grand Heavenmaster, I’ll send some people over right away to deliver all of the confiscated treasure....”

However, the Grand Heavenmaster still didn’t respond. By now, Bai Xiaochun was starting to feel a lot of pressure, and started to wonder if the Grand Heavenmaster suspected him of having taken some things for himself during the shakedowns....

Clearing his throat, he said, “Um... Grand Heavenmaster, I just remembered that the Li Clan had a sort of spirit mountain....”

Shockingly, though, the Grand Heavenmaster continued to ignore him.

Scowling on the verge of tears, Bai Xiaochun said, “Grand Heavenmaster, I just recalled that the Chen Clan had a piece of spirit jade....”

It was around this time that the Grand Heavenmaster finally looked back at Bai Xiaochun, although he didn't seem to be focusing his eyes, as though he were still staring into space.

It almost made it seem like he was privy to all of the secrets in the world, a thought that caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to start thumping.

“Grand Heavenmaster, it just occurred to me that there was a big batch of soul medicine in the Li Clan....”

As his words trailed off, the Grand Heavenmaster suddenly spoke in his hoarse voice.

“Do you know what is the most difficult thing to understand, Bai Hao?” With that, his eyes came into focus, and he turned to look off into the distance.

His words had Bai Xiaochun feeling more nervous than ever as he tried to determine the meaning of them. Could he be suspecting that Bai Xiaochun had actually embezzled more than what he had just admitted to?

In his unease, he even contemplated whether or not he should hand over the Rainbow Spirit Thistle from the Li Clan. It was actually very irritating that the Grand Heavenmaster was being so stingy. He hadn't embezzled that much, and yet the man kept digging away at him.

Even as he stood there trying to decide what to do, the Grand Heavenmaster continued.

“The hearts of men! Nothing in the world is more difficult to understand. Wouldn't you agree, Bai Hao?” There seemed to be some strange power at work within those words. As soon as they entered Bai Xiaochun's ears, he felt like crying. He almost couldn't believe that the Grand Heavenmaster was being even more stingy than the Giant Ghost King. After all, Bai Xiaochun had done all the work, and yet, the Grand Heavenmaster was taking all the rewards.

Not daring to hide anything else, he quickly said, “Grand Heavenmaster, it turns out my memory is a bit bad. I just now

realized that the Li Clan actually had a stalk of--”

However, before he could finish, the Grand Heavenmaster interrupted him, his voice hoarse and his pupils as black as night.

“The hearts of men are unfathomable. And not just the nobility and aristocracy of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, or the Arch-Emperor himself. I am the same. You know, if it hadn’t been for me, when the Arch-Emperor failed to step into the Demigod Realm all those years ago, the Arch-Emperor Dynasty would have fallen apart.... I cowed the four heavenly kings, and I kept the dynasty in one piece. I repelled the invading forces from the Heavenspan River.... You know, sometimes I think I should follow the example of the Celestial from Heavenspan Island, and just completely eradicate my enemies. Remove the sun and the moon, and leave the sky open and clear!” As these words left his mouth, he straightened up. He was no longer stooped, but rather, stood tall and straight. He pulsed with an energy that was difficult to put into words, and seemed like a completely different person than before. Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth, and even the light of the sun and moon seemed to fade.

All of a sudden, the Grand Heavenmaster didn't seem at all like an old man to Bai Xiaochun. He seemed like a giant who could prop up the heavens, as though a single thought on his part could cause the sun and moon to perish, and cast all heaven and earth into darkness!

The energy was so intense that Bai Xiaochun was forced to take a few steps backward, his heart pounding the entire time. However, the effect only lasted for a moment before the Grand Heavenmaster stooped back down, bowed his head, and sighed.

The sky returned to normal, and all heaven and earth went still. However, Bai Xiaochun’s heart was still racing, and he was panting. At this point, the Grand Heavenmaster turned to look at him.

“What did you just say? The Li Clan had a stalk of what?”

Bai Xiaochun stared back at him in mute shock, proverbial tears welling up in him. At this point, he realized that he had misjudged the situation. The Grand Heavenmaster didn't care at all about the wealth which had been confiscated during the shakedowns. He had been sighing and thinking, not about the treasure, but rather, about his personal issues. Furthermore, the words he had spoken had never had anything to do with the confiscated wealth.

Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard as he raced to come up with an idea of how to make sure he could keep everything he had earned during the shakedowns. To have the Grand Heavenmaster's gaze leveled on him caused beads of sweat to appear on his forehead as he nervously said, “Um... what was it the Li Clan had? Ah, that doesn't matter. Grand Heavenmaster, you are completely right that the hearts of men are unfathomable. However, that's not important! In fact, it doesn't really matter whether or not people are loyal to you, or to the Arch-Emperor!”

At first, what he said didn't make much sense even to himself. However, as the words left his mouth, an idea began to form more clearly in his mind, and he continued, “The most important thing is what they will do if both you and the Arch-Emperor are present at the same time! Who cares if Chen Haosong and the others are actually loyal to the Arch-Emperor?! Which of them will actually admit that openly?”

“Even if all of the nobility and aristocracy in the entire Arch-Emperor Dynasty are loyal to the Arch-Emperor, why does that matter?! None of them would ever dare to admit to that in your presence! That goes to show that you have them under your thumb!” The more he spoke, the more everything made sense, and the more excited he looked.

“Grand Heavenmaster, perhaps you can't force everyone to be loyal to you, nor can you determine for sure who is disloyal. However, what you can do, sir, is make everyone fear you!”

“Grand Heavenmaster, your loyal servant is of the opinion that you don’t need to try to figure out who is loyal to whom. You just need to figure out who they fear the most!” In the end, he was talking so loudly that he was almost yelling. At the same time, the Grand Heavenmaster’s eyes slowly began to narrow in thought. That in turn caused Bai Xiaochun to feel very proud of his words. Not only did they sound wonderful, they were actually packed with many levels of truth.

Considering that the Grand Heavenmaster was now thinking seriously about his words, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but sigh at how unparalleled he was under heaven.

“In order to protect that medicinal plant from the Li Clan,” he thought, “and also Que’er, I have to go for broke.” Clearing his throat, and feeling like the picture of outstanding righteousness, he struck while the iron was hot.

“Grand Heavenmaster, your humble servant has a plan....”

Chapter 771: Ancestral Sacrifices

The Grand Heavenmaster's expression had returned to normal, and it was impossible to tell what he was thinking. Looking at Bai Xiaochun, he coolly said, "Tell me your idea."

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and then began to explain.

"Grand Heavenmaster, I can give you an opportunity to have all of the nobility and aristocracy show for themselves how they feel!

"Your humble servant is not perceptive enough to tell what those wily old foxes are thinking. But you, Grand Heavenmaster, can likely discern that from both their wording and the fluctuations of their divine souls."

At this point, Bai Xiaochun's idea had come together. Eyebrows dancing up and down, he continued, "Your humble servant's plan is the type that will shake heaven and earth to the point where ghosts and gods will weep! It's simply amazing! Call it a deadly move, if you'd like, something that can pierce through the hearts of men!" He even thumped himself on the chest to emphasize his words. Then he waited for the Grand Heavenmaster to ask him to explain the plan in detail.

However, after a long moment passed, the Grand Heavenmaster's expression was still placid. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun started to feel a bit awkward. Clearing his throat, he shook his head and kept on speaking.

"To employ this deadly move of mine, it's important that all of the nobility and aristocracy be present. In fact, the Arch-Emperor also needs to be there. Grand Heavenmaster, is there any upcoming event or ceremony that everyone will need to attend?" Heart pounding in anticipation, he looked at the Grand Heavenmaster.

The Grand Heavenmaster peered back at him for a moment

before his eyes widened.

“Next month, we have the ancestral sacrifices! Since you’re so confident, we can try out your so-called deadly move then, and see what happens.” The Grand Heavenmaster didn’t ask for any more details about the plan. He flicked his sleeve, causing Bai Xiaochun’s vision to swim for a moment. When things became clear, he was outside of the imperial palace.

“He didn’t even ask any details...? Don’t tell me he thinks I’m just grandstanding or something?” Looking back in the direction of Heavenmaster Hall, he snorted coldly in his heart.

“When Bai Xiaochun makes a move, he frightens even himself! Ah, whatever. When the time comes, I’ll show the Grand Heavenmaster and everybody else exactly how terrifying I am!” Brimming with confidence, he began to review his plan, and before long, could visualize a whole series of scenes involving what would happen. He could hardly wait. He even laughed aloud at the mere thought of the wonderful things to come. Feeling splendid, he led his 1,000 corpse troopers back to the Inspections Manor.

Back at the manor, he summoned Zhou Yixing over to give a debriefing. Then he assigned a location in the Inspections Manor to him, and went into his own hall to meditate.

At the moment, he had no time or energy to spend on Song Que. He was fully focused on his upcoming plan. In fact, as soon as the door of his hall closed, he called Bai Hao out of his soulhoarding pagoda and began to explain the plan to him in full detail.

As Bai Hao listened, his eyes grew wider and wider. In the end, he gasped.

“Master... did you really think up this plan?” he asked, sounding a bit uncertain.

Bai Xiaochun was actually very pleased with Bai Hao’s reaction.

“Of course Master thought it up!” he said, thumping himself on

the chest. “What do you think? Awesome, huh?!”

“This plan... is ruthless!” Bai Hao replied with heartfelt admiration. “Especially considering that the Arch-Emperor will be there. I bet the nobility and aristocracy are going to go crazy.... Of course, the key to it all lies, not in the plan itself, but in how perceptive the Grand Heavenmaster is.” With that, he and Bai Xiaochun worked together for a bit to perfect the plan even more. In the end, Bai Xiaochun was very pleased with it all.

“Time just moves too slowly sometimes. I wish the sacrifices were being held tomorrow!” Although he was feeling very excited, he managed to calm down eventually. Considering that he had just taken care of the heavenly marquises from the Li and Chen Clans, he knew that the city in general would be in a bit of an uproar. Obviously, now wasn’t the time to go about making any further trouble. Therefore, he decided to go into secluded meditation for the next month.

Back during the competition with Sun Yifan and Sima Tao, he had reached the Flame Harmony realm and gained much enlightenment of seventeen-colored flame. He had also made further advancement because of subsequent tests. Therefore, during his month of secluded meditation, he spent time to make even more progress.

The month went by very quickly. During that time, panic built within Arch-Emperor City. The fact that the Grand Heavenmaster had arrested Heavenly Marquis Chen and Heavenly Marquis Li, and that their clans had been shaken down, was shocking news to say the least.

All of the heavenly marquises in the city were nervous, and even the heavenly dukes were feeling the pressure. It was as if all of them could smell the reek of blood wafting through the streams of time from that original occasion in which the inspections commissioner had wreaked havoc.

Although all of them had been prepared for something to happen after Bai Xiaochun was appointed as the inspections commissioner, none of them could have guessed that it would happen so soon!

The Grand Heavenmaster had moved with lightning-like decisiveness. Four hours. Four hours was all it took for two heavenly marquises to be implicated, and two entire clans to be shaken down and then imprisoned.

The name of Bai Hao rocked Arch-Emperor City as violently as a windstorm. In fact, to many people in the know, it was obvious that the city had completely changed since he had arrived.

“This Bai Hao... is a star of calamity that brings disaster with him....”

“Ruthless! I was there when Bai Hao shook down those two clans, and let me tell you, he took everything, down to the grass!”

“Well, you can’t blame Bai Hao. There was always friction between him and the aristocracy. Eventually it reached the point where only one party could come out on top.”

All sorts of talk spread, not just in Arch-Emperor City, but in the Wildlands in general. The news even reached the cities belonging to the four heavenly kings.

All of the chosen who had butted heads with Bai Xiaochun in the Necromancer Kettle were trembling in fear. The tragic fate of Li Tiansheng had them all on edge. Furthermore, their clans all instituted severe restrictions on them, forbidding them from going out into the city. Everyone knew that although they could secretly plot against Bai Xiaochun, they couldn’t make any open moves against him.

Most of the parties involved all felt bad for each other, and were acting with full vigilance. At the same time, their desire to kill Bai Xiaochun grew more and more intense.

Furthermore, because no one dared to offend the Grand

Heavenmaster, all of their killing intent came to be focused fully on Bai Xiaochun. Normally, the nobility and aristocracy were always at each other's throats, but at the moment, they were all part of a strange alliance.

It didn't matter whether or not they were truly loyal to the Arch-Emperor. The fact that two heavenly marquises had been taken out had them all nervous to the extreme. Although some parties hoped that going to offer greetings to the Grand Heavenmaster would help, many of them were trying to figure out a way to have Bai Xiaochun killed.

Unfortunately for those people, he stayed out of sight for an entire month. The people who wanted him dead couldn't very well storm the Inspections Manor, and therefore, they could only watch time go by as the day of ancestral sacrifices neared.

Everyone in the Wildlands took the matter of ancestral sacrifices very seriously. Whether it was the clans or the tribes, that day was a day of grand ceremony for the entire Arch-Emperor Dynasty.

The Arch-Emperor was always present for such sacrifices, and that was an important factor, even though he was a mere puppet. Furthermore, unless there were some unforeseen circumstances, all of the nobility and aristocracy had to show up as well.

The only major players who wouldn't be present were the four heavenly kings. They wouldn't come to Arch-Emperor City unless some sort of heaven-shaking, earth-shattering event occurred.

Of course the reason for that... was their very delicate relationship with the Grand Heavenmaster. Although things seemed to be calm between the heavenly kings and the Grand Heavenmaster, if the heavenly kings ever came to Arch-Emperor City, and something went wrong, the implications could be very severe.

Instead of coming personally, they would usually send their heirs apparent to represent them.

The person to whom the sacrifices were offered... was none other than the first generation Arch-Emperor. It didn't matter how many years had passed since his time, to the people of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, that very first Arch-Emperor was the most ultimate of entities.

Apparently, the ancestral sacrifices also had some connection to the Hell-Emperor. After all, whenever the sacrifices were carried out, heaven and earth would be split open to reveal the Underworld River inside of a massive vortex.

The vortex would cover all of Arch-Emperor City, and would be filled with countless souls which would descend onto the city for the benefit of the people, who could simply reach out to take them.

According to the legends, a deva soul had once descended in such a fashion. Furthermore, it wasn't just the nobility and aristocracy of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty who would participate in the event; the common people could do so as well.

Of course, although the nobility and aristocracy would reach out and take the souls, most didn't focus too much on that part of the event. To them, it was merely a good omen.

When the day came to offer the sacrifices, all of Arch-Emperor City was filled with a very somber air. Families emerged from their houses and dropped to their knees on the street to kowtow to the heavens. At the same time, bells tolled in the imperial palace, filling the city with their sound.

The heavenly marquises and heavenly dukes all donned their most formal attire and headed to the main square in the imperial palace, tranquil expressions on their faces the entire time....

That was when Bai Xiaochun emerged from secluded meditation. As he did, it was impossible for him to conceal the expression of excitement and anticipation that appeared on his face as he looked up at the city in the sky.

“I finally succeeded with seventeen-colored flame. And now, it’s time for the ancestral sacrifices....” Sighing, he flew up into the air, followed by 1,000 corpse troopers.

Chapter 772: If Youve Got What It Takes, Fight!

As the bells tolled, the streets of Arch-Emperor City filled with a sea of people. It was the same up above, too, with countless figures flying up to the imperial palace.

The city guard was out in full force to keep order and make sure that nothing unexpected happened on this day of ancestral sacrifice.

Of course, there was little chance of something like that; the city guard carried out their duties with the utmost loyalty. In fact, the area near the Inspections Manor was especially heavily guarded.

The matter with the two heavenly marquises the previous month had been monumental. The new inspections commissioner had made a huge splash, and was the target of almost universal animosity in the dynasty. If any mishaps occurred regarding him, it could affect the ancestral sacrifices, and that was something the city guard couldn't let happen.

Even as the city guard paid special attention to keep the Inspections Manor safe, Bai Xiaochun flew up from inside of it, surrounded by a thousand corpse troopers.

As he did, the nearby nobles and aristocrats noticed, and many gazes came to be fixed on him. They all contained mixed emotions, with everything from hatred to fear.

When Bai Xiaochun sensed so many people looking at him, he cleared his throat, clasped his hands behind his back, and stuck his chin up. He even glared back at the people who looked at him with hateful expressions, making it look like he wasn't afraid of anything in the world.

His haughty expression said it all: If you've got what it takes, then bring it on!

And that was the truth! He had the backing of the Grand Heavenmaster, as well as 1,000 corpse troopers. That meant that Bai Xiaochun could stare down the heavenly dukes if he wanted to, much less the heavenly marquises.

When the noble and aristocratic cultivators flying in the air sensed Bai Xiaochun's attitude, they frowned, then looked fearfully at his corpse troopers before returning their focus to the imperial palace and flying onward.

“What a bunch of wusses. All shaking in their boots at the sight of the inspections commissioner!” Feeling very pleased, he continued to swagger his way slowly onward toward the imperial palace.

Of course, it wasn't just the nobility and aristocracy flying through the air who noticed Bai Xiaochun. The common people down below in the city, countless soul cultivators and savage giants, all watched Bai Xiaochun flying upward.

“Inspections Commissioner Bai Hao!”

“That's him! Last month, he shook down the clans of two heavenly marquises....”

“Nobody's seen him for a month, but now that it's time for the ancestral sacrifices, here he is. He's definitely going to cause another scene....”

In response to the buzz of conversation, the city guards in the area grew more vigilant. Although they didn't flock to surround Bai Xiaochun, they did look around with killing intent, ready to leap to intervene if anything unexpected happened.

Feeling very well protected, Bai Xiaochun continued onward with keen anticipation of what was to come. The mere thought of his plans for the ancestral sacrifices had him so excited he could hardly control himself.

“My month of secluded meditation was very productive. I finally

succeeded with seventeen-colored flame... and Hao'er made significant progress in his auguries of eighteen-colored flame. I bet it won't be long before the formula for eighteen-colored flame is complete.

“Once I have that formula, and succeed in conjuring that flame... then I'll finally be an earthly necromancer!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he shivered in anticipation. At the moment, it seemed as if the sky were the limit, and it was truly a wonderful feeling.

“There are only three earthly necromancers in all of the Wildlands. If I succeed, then I'll be the fourth!” In the Wildlands, earthly necromancers were so rare that their position was roughly the same as the heavenly dukes!

In fact, in some ways, they actually surpassed the heavenly dukes. As long as such a person didn't betray the Wildlands, they could do anything they pleased. They could even commit grave offences that were normally punished with the death penalty, but be exempt because of their position!

After all... there were dozens of devas in the Wildlands, but there were only three earthly necromancers!

“But that's only secondary. The most important thing is that if I can conjure eighteen-colored flame, then that means I could perform spirit enhancements on my nascent soul! In one fell swoop, I could push my cultivation base all the way to the late Nascent Soul stage!!” Such thoughts made Bai Xiaochun even more excited. After all, he was currently in the mid Nascent Soul stage, but could defeat half-devas in battle. If he reached the late Nascent Soul stage... then he could most likely win against a true deva!

“Even if I can't, well, just wait until I'm in the great circle. Then I'll definitely be able to defeat devas!” Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been in higher spirits. He even picked up speed as he headed toward the imperial palace. He and his corpse troopers were bright

beams of light that shot toward the east gate of the palace.

As he approached, a middle-aged man could be seen off in the distance. He was threatening without being angry, dressed in a long golden robe embroidered with images of suns, moons, and clouds. Overall, he looked extremely impressive.

Furthermore, whenever people passed him by, they would respectfully clasp hands and bow in greeting.

That man was none other than one of the ten heavenly dukes, Chen Haosong!

He wasn't standing there alone. Next to him was a tall, well-built man wearing an official robe embroidered with a golden python. From his burly frame, it was possible to tell that he possessed extraordinary fleshly body power, and yet, he stood respectfully a full pace behind Chen Haosong.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun caught sight of Chen Haosong, he snorted coldly in his heart. As for Chen Haosong, a cold gleam passed through his eyes, along with an expression of revulsion that he did nothing to conceal.

Bai Xiaochun had seen the burly man before as well. He closely resembled Zhao Dongshan, and was in fact one of the senior members of Zhao Dongshan's clan. He was not an ordinary heavenly marquis, but rather, one of the nine extremely powerful heavenly marquises who had ganged up on Bai Xiaochun!

The burly man glanced at Bai Xiaochun, and then laughed coldly.

"The ancestral sacrifices are for heavenly dukes and heavenly marquises," he said in a booming voice. "What is this trash doing here?"

His voice was so loud that all of the assembled nobility and aristocracy near the east gate could hear him quite clearly.

None of those people had a very good impression of Bai Xiaochun, so they immediately broke out into scornful glances as

they looked over at him.

Bai Xiaochun's anger flared, and he glared back at them. Considering that he had the full support of the Grand Heavenmaster, he wasn't scared of these people at all. In fact, he immediately pointed at the burly man.

"This person has disrespected the Grand Heavenmaster! Arrest him!" His 1,000 corpse troopers immediately looked up, and then 100 of them charged toward the burly man.

Never could this man have guessed that Bai Xiaochun would dare to take action here, at the east gate of the imperial palace, on the day of the ancestral sacrifices. Expression flickering, he was just about to back up when Chen Haosong interrupted with a cold snort.

"Enough with the melodrama!" he said, taking a step forward.

His voice echoed with explosive might, causing the advancing corpse troopers to tremble visibly, and then lurch to a stop, as if they had been sealed in place.

At the same time, Chen Haosong's foot landed, and explosive energy surged out from him. A windstorm immediately kicked up, grabbing the 100 corpse troopers and hurling them back toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened into a deeper glare, and he was just about to say something when Chen Haosong spoke.

"Zhao Xionglin is a heavenly marquis, and is within his rights to berate you! If you won't bow your head and accept it, fine, but how dare you go and slander--"

"The Grand Heavenmaster himself appointed me as the inspections commissioner!" Bai Xiaochun interrupted loudly, sticking his chin up. "He expressly ordered me to participate in the ancestral sacrifices. For Zhao Xionglin to speak so rudely, and even berate me, is equivalent to him countermanding the decrees of the

Grand Heavenmaster! For me to say that he is showing disrespect is actually letting him off the hook lightly!”

“You!!” Zhao Xionglin blurted angrily. Although he had heard that this Bai Hao was relatively sharp-tongued, he had never imagined that he could so easily twist matters to make it seem like Zhao Xionglin himself was insulting the Grand Heavenmaster.

“Is that all you can say? ‘You’? If you’ve got what it takes, then see if you can fight all 1,000 of my corpse troopers! If 1,000 is too much, then how about 100? Pick any 100 you like, and see if you don’t end up dying by my hands!” As Bai Xiaochun spoke, the murderous aura coming from his 1,000 corpse troopers grew even more intense.

“How shameless!” Zhao Xionglin growled through gritted teeth. Although he was one of the strongest among the heavenly marquises, there was no way he could defeat 100 corpse troopers in a fight, much less 1,000. The corpse troopers didn’t fear death at all, and had the toughest bodies imaginable. When they attacked, they caused blood to splash, and didn’t stop until the battle was over.

Chapter 773: The Reigning Arch-Emperor

“Did you just say that I'm shameless? How could the Grand Heavenmaster appoint a shameless person to be the inspections commissioner, a position which requires uprightness and resistance to flattery? You're basically saying that the Grand Heavenmaster is blind, aren't you?!” Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered with delight. If this Zhao Xionglin had just kept his mouth shut, it would have been a lot better for him. Everything he said could be found fault with.

“Zhao Xionglin, you clearly suspect me, the Inspections Manor as a whole, and the Grand Heavenmaster himself! Could it be that you are in fact an accomplice of the traitorous heavenly marquises from the Li and Chen Clans?!?!”

With that, he waved his hand and said, “Men, take charge of the entrance to the imperial palace. Let everyone in except for this miscreant Zhao Xionglin!”

A large contingent of corpse troopers immediately rushed over to block the east gate of the imperial palace.

The other nobles and aristocrats in the area couldn't help but gasp at the sight of Bai Xiaochun's ruthless tactics. For many, it provided a very clear picture of this person whom they had never actually witnessed in action. It also went to further how threatening he seemed to them.

As for the city guards, they looked on with wry smiles. After all, this was not a situation they could interfere with. The only thing they could do was report the matter to their superiors.

The entire thing was a huge headache as far as Chen Haosong was concerned. To him, Bai Xiaochun was like a stick covered with thorns; although he should have been easy to snap in half, the thorns made him very difficult to deal with.

If that were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal. But Bai Xiaochun was completely sharp-tongued. He turned black into white if he wanted, and if one wasn't extremely careful with one's wording, he could easily twist words into weapons.

Seeing how furious Zhao Xionglin was, Chen Haosong frowned and said, "Enough!"

Waving his sleeve, he sent another blast of wind out to sweep away the corpse troopers Bai Xiaochun had just sent to block the door. Even Bai Xiaochun was hit by the wind, and was pushed backward a few dozen meters.

In the instant that Bai Xiaochun was pushed back. Chen Haosong blurred into motion, entering the east gate. As for Zhao Xionglin, he gritted his teeth and followed, casting a murderous glance at Bai Xiaochun over his shoulder as he did.

The rest of the nobility and aristocracy were all essentially on the same side in the matter, and had no good feelings regarding Bai Xiaochun whatsoever. They also took to motion, flying through the east gate.

Bai Xiaochun was not pleased at all with what was happening.

"Using a high cultivation base to trample people below you, huh?" he said loudly. "Well, if you were as tough as you think you are, then you would fight my corpse troopers!" While Bai Xiaochun grumbled to himself a bit, the city guards averted their gazes and sighed. It was really an awkward thing to hear the inspections commissioner, who was backed by the Grand Heavenmaster, complaining about people relying on high cultivation bases to accomplish things....

After everyone else entered the imperial palace, Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back, stuck his chin up, and headed toward the east gate. His corpse troopers followed. However, when the city guards saw that, one of them braced himself and stepped in the way.

Although he wasn't very happy to have to do this, he had no choice but to say, "Exalted Inspections Commissioner... uh... on the day of ancestral sacrifices, your subordinates aren't permitted to enter."

With that, he stood there looking nervously at Bai Xiaochun.

"Huh?" Bai Xiaochun said, taken aback. After confirming that he had heard correctly, he stood there, flabbergasted.

"They can't go in? Wait a second, there are a whole bunch of people in there with cultivation bases higher than me! And they all want to kill me! If I go in alone, I'll be in way too much danger!" Nervous, he tried to negotiate with the city guard, but the man could only smile wryly and shake his head.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun's face fell. If he had known that things would be like this, he would have just held his tongue earlier.... As he stood there hesitating, he realized that the bells were about to stop tolling. Sighing, he ordered the corpse troopers to stand guard near the gate, and then cautiously entered the imperial palace.

Once inside, he did not look like he had moments ago, like the type of person who wasn't afraid of anything in the world.... Instead, he exercised the utmost caution, and even walked as quietly as was possible.

Thankfully, because he was actually arriving a bit late, all of the members of the nobility and aristocracy were already in the main square. Furthermore, there were plenty of guards around to show the way. As such, he arrived at the square just as the bells finished tolling.

The square was huge, and featured eighteen enormous pillars with coiling dragons on them that were so high that they seemed to touch the heavens above. The ground was covered with green limestone slabs that emanated spiritual energy. In the middle of the square was a huge bell, which was still reverberating from the

tolling moments ago.

A ring of soul cultivator guards surrounded the bell, all of them wearing somber expressions. In two positions of honor on the left side of the square were Mistress Red-Dust and Zhou Hong.

In the positions of honor on the right side were the Junior Champion King Gongsun Yi, and the heir apparent of Spirit Advent City, the older brother of Xu Shan.

Clearly, these four represented the four heavenly kings. Not a single one of them acknowledged Bai Xiaochun's presence, and merely stood in place with their eyes closed.

Behind those four were the ten heavenly dukes, including Chen Haosong, who stood third from the left.

Behind the ten heavenly dukes were the more than 100 heavenly marquises. Among them was Zhao Xionglin, who cast a frosty glance at Bai Xiaochun, and snorted coldly.

All of the heavenly marquises and heavenly dukes were organized by rank. Behind them were other important government officials, who were all high-ranking and powerful. There were several thousand of them, and each one wore an expression of devout respect.

Bai Xiaochun had a spot among the larger group. However considering that he was more important than any of the other officials, he actually stood in front of them, just behind the heavenly marquises.

Few of the important officials had ever seen Bai Xiaochun, although most had heard stories about him. They knew that he was different from the heavenly marquises and heavenly dukes, and actually, few of them had ill feelings toward him. In fact, many of them wished to ingratiate themselves to him.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that most of the officials were looking at him with goodwill in their eyes, he sighed with relief, and even

gave a few smiles and nods to them. Then he looked over at the main hall of the imperial palace, and a strange feeling rose up inside of him.

“The Arch-Emperor.... Although the Grand Heavenmaster holds all of the power, the Arch-Emperor... is the true representative of the imperial clan. He is the official ruler of the Wildlands....” For all he knew, he was the first person from the Heavenspan River region to stand in this square in the imperial palace. And perhaps he would be the last.

The fact that his journey through the Wildlands had landed him in this spot caused him to sigh with pride.

“Just wait until I get back to the River-Defying Sect and recount all of my stories to Xiaomei, Junwan, Big Fatty Zhang and Uncle Li.”

Then, he blinked and refocused on the violet-colored main hall. The hall itself was built from nine golden dragon statues that looked so lifelike they seemed they might fly up into the sky at any moment.

Just looking at the place caused pressure to weigh down on Bai Xiaochun. He could also sense that those nine golden dragons were a spell formation of some sort.

“All the other times I came to the imperial palace, I visited Heavenmaster Hall. This is my first time visiting the main hall of the palace. I wonder what the Arch-Emperor actually looks like.”

After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, the previously silent bell once again rang out loud and clear. Then, the door of the main hall slowly opened, and the nine golden dragons opened their eyes. Incredible energy surged out, and everyone in the audience could hear something like the roaring chant of dragons. Those who listened closely soon found themselves slipping into a daze.

Bai Xiaochun was no exception. Even as he looked on, the opened door revealed a dozen extremely good-looking soul cultivators. Some were men and some were women, but all of them wore extravagant robes. One of them was none other than the second prince.

These were the princes and princesses of the imperial clan, although not all of them. They were only a small group who represented the whole.

In front of that group were two old men whose hands were tucked into the opposite sleeves of their voluminous robes. They were stooped over, and didn't seem very impressive, and yet there was something very sinister about them.

Beyond the two old men, at the very end of the hall, were two thrones, one large and one small. The large throne was completely golden in color, and was of course the dragon throne. Sitting upon it was a middle-aged man wearing imperial robes and an imperial crown.

Although it was impossible to make out his features clearly at first, there was something grand and noble about him; his appearance, coupled with the chanting roar of the dragons, made him truly seem like the most paragon entity in all creation!

This god-like figure was none other than the reigning Arch-Emperor!

Bai Xiaochun was shaken. Although he couldn't make out the expression on the face of the Arch-Emperor, he could sense the man's eyes. They seemed to contain stars and heavenly bodies, and were the type that would leave a person's mind reeling to simply gaze upon them.

However, that sensation quickly passed as his gaze was drawn to the smaller throne. Although that throne was smaller, it was actually placed on a higher level than the Dragon Throne itself!

It was pitch-black, and seemingly ordinary in all aspects. It was empty at the moment, but everyone in the square, including all of the ministers and generals of the imperial court, were all looking at it!

That throne... belonged to the Grand Heavenmaster!

Even as everyone stared at that black throne, one of the stooped old men called out in a piercing voice, “Grand Heavenmaster, your presence is requested!”

As his voice rang out, the clouds above seethed, and the enormous dragon that had been so curious about Bai Xiaochun in the past suddenly lowered its head. Then it roared, a roar that suppressed the call of the nine dragons down below as, at the same time, the Grand Heavenmaster mysteriously appeared on the black throne!

Everyone present was shaken, even the heavenly dukes. Simultaneously, they all averted their gazes, clasped hands, and bowed.

“Greetings, Grand Heavenmaster! Greetings, Arch-Emperor!”

Chapter 774: Your Majesty, I Snatched A Deva Soul!

The thousands of people gathered outside of the hall clasped hands in formal greeting, their voices ringing out to shake heaven and earth.

Inside the hall, the second prince and the other members of the imperial clan didn't dare to reveal a trace of defiance, and also offered formal greetings.

Only the Arch-Emperor himself didn't join in. His hands tightened onto the arms of the dragon throne for a moment, but then relaxed.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was measuring up both the Arch-Emperor and the Grand Heavenmaster.

“So, this is the Arch-Emperor?” he murmured to himself. “Doesn't seem like much when compared to the Grand Heavenmaster.”

The echo of the voices lasted for a moment before fading away. As for the Grand Heavenmaster, he sat on his throne, face completely expressionless, seemingly there only to observe the ancestral sacrifices, and not inclined to speak at all.

The Arch-Emperor let the moment stretch out for a bit, then looked at the two stooped, sinister old men, and nodded slightly.

Having been given this vague order from the Arch-Emperor, the two old men exchanged a glance, and both of them could see in the other's eyes that they were fearful of the Grand Heavenmaster's reaction. After a moment, one of them turned to face the square outside of the hall and began to recite the sacrificial invocation. As his words echoed out, they seemed to contain a bizarre resonance which caused the clouds up above to churn into the form of a vortex.

As the vortex spun and grew larger, the enormous dragon from earlier vanished.

The strange portents didn't provoke a reaction from the crowd, as though they had been expecting all of this. However, it was Bai Xiaochun's first time witnessing the event, and he couldn't help but stare in shock. Gradually, the vortex grew so large that it covered all of Arch-Emperor City.

As it did, it was possible to see something inside of the vortex, an enormous river....

Bai Xiaochun held his breath in shock as he realized that the river inside the vortex was emanating a powerful aura of death....

"The Underworld River!" he murmured. By this point, despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun was all the way up in the sky in the imperial palace, he could actually hear the droning sound of the common people down in Arch-Emperor City, offering expressions of worship and praise.

Because the vortex was so enormous, it was possible to see the Underworld River very clearly, even the flowing water which made it up.

The aura of death which flowed out of the vortex gradually filled the entire area, leaving Bai Xiaochun feeling quite shaken. It was a very shocking sight. It almost looked as though an enormous eye had opened up, allowing everyone to peer through it to view the Underworld River. At the same time, it was as if that eye were looking out at all creation in the outside world.

It was a very strange sensation, the likes of which Bai Xiaochun had never experienced before.

Even as Bai Xiaochun stared in shock, the old man finished the sacrificial invocation. As he uttered the concluding words, he waved his sleeve.

"Let the ceremony begin!"

His words rang out like the sounding of a bell, and as they did, shocking rumbling sounds could be heard from the vortex. It was almost as if an enormous, invisible hand had slapped the Underworld River, causing a huge wave to rise up. It was a frothy wave composed of countless souls... which then poured through the vortex!

It was in spectacular and magnificent fashion that a rain of souls began to pour down!

Endless numbers of souls began to fall onto Arch-Emperor City.... They covered everything, and most importantly of all, they all seemed to be sleeping! Even if a deva soul appeared, it would also be in a state of slumber, and could be grabbed by whatever hands were lucky enough to reach it!

A cheer rose up from Arch-Emperor City as the excited commoners sprang into action, hoping to benefit from the favor offered during the ancestral sacrifices.

The guards in the imperial palace reached out to grab falling souls, as did Mistress Red-Dust and the other powerful people like her.

The heavenly dukes, heavenly marquises, and even the government officials all did the same. Of course, to them, in this collecting of souls during the ancestral sacrifices, what was most important was not the number of souls harvested, but the type. Anyone who managed to get a deva soul would be benefiting from an incredibly good omen.

However, deva souls didn't always appear during the ancestral sacrifices, only every so often.

The scene playing out caused Bai Xiaochun to gasp. He looked around with a strange light gleaming in his eyes, and even anticipation; now was the time for him to carry out his plan. Afterward, it was likely that the nobility and aristocracy would hate him even more than they already did.

“Well, I can’t worry about all that. They never liked me to begin with. Even if I didn’t go through with this plan, they would eventually make another move against me.” Gritting his teeth, he leaped into the air, trembling with both excitement and nervousness.

When Bai Xiaochun took to motion, the Grand Heavenmaster’s eyes opened just a crack to look at him.

It only took a moment after Bai Xiaochun flew up into the air that he reached out and grabbed one of the descending souls!

It was a Foundation Establishment-level soul....

As soon as his hand closed around it, his eyes went wide, and he gasped. An expression of disbelief filled his face, but it quickly turned to joy. He even threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“Heavens! I can’t believe I actually got a soul like this!!”

His laughter was loud enough to begin with, but he actually amplified it with some cultivation base power, which attracted quite a bit of attention. Before anyone could see clearly what had happened, though, he flew back down toward the area of the main hall in the imperial palace.

It was with lightning-like speed that he landed back in the square, right in the same location of honor as Mistress Red-Dust and the other heirs of the heavenly kings. It was there that he spoke out in a voice that crashed like heavenly thunder.

“Many thanks to you, Your Majesty! Your humble servant Bai Hao managed to snatch a deva soul!” With that, he thrust the Foundation Establishment soul high up into the air for everyone to see clearly.

Because of how loudly and suddenly he had spoken, virtually all of the nobility and aristocracy in the square all looked over at him. As for Mistress Red-Dust, she was the closest, and when she heard

his words and saw the soul he was holding, her expression flickered.

“What are you doing, Bai Hao!?” Mistress Red-Dust said in a berating tone. “Get back to your place!” Off to the side, Zhou Hong looked on with wide eyes. As for the Junior Champion King and the heir apparent from Spirit Advent City, they were all stunned by what they were seeing.

The soul Bai Xiaochun was holding was clearly a Foundation Establishment-level soul, and not a deva soul....

They weren't the only ones to react in such a way. Chen Haosong and the heavenly dukes were all completely taken aback. However, within moments, their gazes turned as sharp as blades, and the same thought ran through all their minds.

“Could it be that he wants to force the emperor to abdicate?!”

The heavenly marquises began to react as well, and were clearly flustered. No one had any idea what exactly was going to happen next.

“A deva soul?”

“That's not a deva soul....”

“Is Bai Hao an idiot or something?”

Discussion began to spread within the square. As for Zhao Xionglin, he clearly didn't see that something fishy was going on, and loudly said, “Did your eyes fall out, Bai Hao? That's a Foundation Establishment-level soul, not a deva soul! If you think that's a deva soul, then you've obviously gone crazy! Why don't you just say it's a demigod soul!?”

Mocking laughter could be heard among the crowd, but Bai Xiaochun ignored it. His gaze was fixed solely on the Dragon Throne, and the Arch-Emperor.

As for the imperial princes and princesses, various expressions

could be seen on their faces. Among them was the second prince, who knew Bai Xiaochun a bit better than the others. He couldn't help but look over, alarm written on his face.

“What is he doing? Don't tell me he's going to try to get father to bow his head in submission?!”

The Arch-Emperor sat there on his throne, his eyes shining brightly as he stared at Bai Xiaochun.

Although Bai Xiaochun seemed excited, he was actually profoundly nervous, and the Arch-Emperor's shining eyes had his heart pounding. However, before he could say anything, one of the two stooped, sinister old men spoke in a voice that thrummed with killing intent.

“What gall you have! That's obviously a Foundation Establishment-level soul! How dare you try to deceive His Majesty!” Even as the old man spoke, he stepped forward in Bai Xiaochun's direction, and the aura of a deva exploded out.

He was attacking with full force, clearly intending to kill Bai Xiaochun in one move, drawing on full force and full speed to cut him down on the spot!

Chapter 775: This Bai Hao Is A Good-For-Nothing Wretch....

The sinister old man attacked with lightning-like speed, to the extent that Mistress Red-Dust and the other heirs apparent didn't even have time to react. In fact, Mistress Red-Dust was actually inclined to do something, but simply wasn't fast enough to.

The old man's cultivation base erupted with deva fluctuations as he appeared right in front of Bai Xiaochun. There, he called upon the powers of a deva to become one with all creation and take the shape of an enormous magical symbol.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was shocked, and immediately tried to back up. From what he could tell, this old man was more terrifying than Chen Haosong. A single strike from him... would be completely catastrophic!

"I say one thing he doesn't like, and he tries to kill me!?!?" Bai Xiaochun was scared to death. However, even as he tremblingly backed up from the sinister man, the Grand Heavenmaster smiled. It was a profound and meaningful smile, and at the same time, a flicker of praise could be seen in his eyes. Reaching out, he waved his right finger in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

Instantly, a shield of black light appeared around Bai Xiaochun, almost like a bubble that completely surrounded him.

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually took place in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Then, the enormous magical symbol that was the incarnation of the sinister old man slammed into the bubble.

A huge boom rang out, and the entire imperial palace quaked.

The bubble collapsed, and the old man appeared, face ashen as he coughed up a mouthful of blood. The backlash sent him tumbling backward to slam into the ground inside the main hall, where he

coughed up some more blood. Then he turned to look at the Grand Heavenmaster.

“Grand Heavenmaster, you--” Before he could finish speaking, the Grand Heavenmaster looked at him, causing him to tremble. Whatever else he had planned to say stuck in his throat.

“Calm down and let Bai Hao finish speaking,” the Grand Heavenmaster said coolly. As for the Arch-Emperor, he was now gripping the arms of the dragon throne so tightly that blue veins could be seen bulging out on the backs of his hands!

Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard. The black bubble from moments ago had ensured that he came out of the incident completely unharmed. However, the sensation of deadly crisis he had felt still lingered, causing his heart to tremble. And yet, he had already started down this path, and there was no turning back. A cold gleam in his eye, he calmed himself and spoke in a loud voice.

“Listen, you ignoramus. I'm not trying to deceive His Majesty. This is a deva soul! Are you blind or something? Furthermore, I didn't ask your opinion about the matter. Grand Heavenmaster: would you mind providing an assessment? What type of soul is this, sir?”

The mysterious smile on the Grand Heavenmaster's face was visible for everyone to see as he replied, “A deva soul!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, the imperial princes and princesses gasped, and their faces flickered with various emotions. Some of them, such as the second prince and the grand prince, went completely pale.

“The Grand Heavenmaster is trying to get father to bow his head in submission!! He's going to force him to say that it's a deva soul!! The Grand Heavenmaster is reasserting his authority!!”

Even the most unintelligent of the officials and aristocracy could see what was going on. In response... the facial expressions of

everyone present changed immediately, with few becoming excited or happy.

Mistress Red-Dust took a deep breath and looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a complicated expression. Zhou Hong's eyes were lit up with fear as he realized that the Grand Heavenmaster was going to force the Arch-Emperor's hand. The more Zhou Hong thought about how Bai Xiaochun was going about this task, the more terrified he became.

The Junior Champion King stood there quietly, and the heir apparent of the Spirit Advent King bowed his head. Chen Haosong and the other heavenly dukes stood in silent introspection, clearly hoping that they didn't get dragged into what was happening.

Bai Xiaochun could see the veins bulging out on the Arch-Emperor's hands, and could sense the killing intent in his eyes. Although it was a frightening sight, Bai Xiaochun reminded himself that he was on the side of the Grand Heavenmaster. Furthermore, he couldn't help but think back to how the imperial clan had been behind the attack on his spirit enhancement shop.

Gritting his teeth, he said, "The Grand Heavenmaster said that it's a deva soul. Your Majesty, what do you say, sir? What kind of soul is this...?"

In response, the Arch-Emperor sat there on his Dragon Throne, his eyes growing colder than ever. All of the heavenly marquises and heavenly dukes stood there with hearts pounding, averting their gazes downward.

The veins on the Arch-Emperor's hands bulged larger than ever, and his eyes were colder than the coldest winter wind. It looked like he desired wholeheartedly to skin Bai Xiaochun alive!

The person to speak next was the second sinister old man. Inside, he was grumbling bitterly, but as a servant to the imperial clan for many generations, he felt that he had to speak up. "What gall you have, Bai Hao! This is complete hogwash! That's obviously a

Foundation Establishment-level soul. How could anyone think it's a deva soul?!"

At this point, Bai Xiaochun took in a casual, lazy breath. Then, he glared at the old man and raised the Foundation Establishment-level soul high into the air. Slowly turning to look at the assembled aristocracy and officials, he cleared his throat.

“Heavenly Marquises. Heavenly Dukes. Would you mind helping out a bit? Is this a Foundation Establishment-level soul, or a deva soul!?” Bai Xiaochun was really starting to get excited, as he had finally reached the end goal of his plan. Everything that he had done up to this point had been a feint. He had intentionally let everyone believe that he was going to try to force the Arch-Emperor to abdicate, or at least bow his head. But the truth... was that his goal was not to force the hand of the Arch-Emperor, but rather... all of the government officials and aristocrats!

All of this had stemmed from his assertion that he could give the Grand Heavenmaster a chance to see what Bai Xiaochun could not; what everyone was thinking.

Bai Xiaochun's unexpected words caught everyone off guard. All of a sudden, veins bulged out on the Arch-Emperor's face as he realized that things were far worse than he had initially taken them to be. As for the two sinister old men, their faces completely drained of blood.

The imperial princes and princesses trembled, and some of them were even sighing inwardly. All of the aristocrats and officials suddenly felt like they were suffocating. Earlier, they had hoped to stay out of what had appeared to be the Grand Heavenmaster and the Arch-Emperor butting heads. And at first, it had seemed that they were succeeding. But then, with no warning at all, this damnable Bai Hao turned everything around and targeted them!

Mistress Red-Dust's eyes went wide, as if this was her first time truly seeing Bai Xiaochun. The Junior Champion King and the heir

apparent of the Spirit Advent King were both gasping in terror.

Bai Xiaochun's act from earlier, and the way he had controlled the flow of events, had been masterful, to say the least. Almost no one could have been prepared at all for the realization that Bai Xiaochun's true goal was actually the officials and aristocrats!

However, there were a few in the audience who had not been caught completely off guard. Chen Haosong and the other nine heavenly dukes had actually begun to speculate from the very beginning that Bai Xiaochun was putting on an act.

Some of the heavenly marquises had also begun to work things out earlier on. And yet, that understanding didn't help them resolve the issue they now faced, and all of them were cursing vehemently in their hearts.

As for everyone who had had issues with Bai Xiaochun in the past, the sudden turn of events caused their faces to fall, and their hatred of him to grow even more intense.

By this point, everyone could tell that the Grand Heavenmaster was helping this Bai Hao, and was using the soul in question to determine the attitudes of everyone present!

It was an issue that everyone present wished to avoid, but now they were stuck in a dead end. As such, the hatred they felt toward Bai Xiaochun penetrated all the way to their marrow. In the past, they had been able to take advantage of the general political instability to their own advantage. But now, they had to publicly reveal their loyalties. And that was not an easy choice to make. If they stated that Bai Xiaochun was holding a Foundation Establishment-level soul, the Grand Heavenmaster would most definitely not forgive and forget. But if they said it was a deva soul, then the Grand Heavenmaster would have his hooks in them well and good. And that meant that if the Arch-Emperor ever managed to gain power back, they and their clans would definitely be purged by death.

Of course, some could consider attempting to secretly maintain loyalty to the Arch-Emperor, while simultaneously proclaiming themselves for the Grand Heavenmaster. But that would not be easy, considering that they were speaking out publicly. Whether or not the Grand Heavenmaster believed their act or not wouldn't matter. Nor would it matter that the Arch-Emperor might understand their actions. Not only would it be a big embarrassment, but they would be giving their enemies an opportunity to use against them. The slightest slip-up later on in the future could lead to terrible results.

Most important of all in the situation was the fact that there was no way the Grand Heavenmaster would actually trust any proclamations of loyalty made here today. And yet, that wasn't what he wanted.... He wanted the power that would come with everyone siding with him, whether they were sincere or not.

With that power, he could easily crush all of the influence the Arch-Emperor had secretly built up. Not only would everyone realize that they had once again been dominated by the Grand Heavenmaster, but anyone who had once felt loyalty to the Arch-Emperor would now be struck with terror.

This was a show of strength, and at the same time, a threat!

“This Bai Hao is a good-for-nothing wretch!! How shameless!!”

“So ruthless. Dammit!!”

“He's forcing us to publicly reveal our stance!” Hatred swelled in the hearts of all present, and at the same time, fear of Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 776: You're Screwed....

In the current Arch-Emperor Dynasty, the Arch-Emperor was actually only a figurehead. The Grand Heavenmaster held the true power, and controlled both the Son of Heaven and the aristocracy. However, that was mostly what happened behind the scenes.

Furthermore, in the grand scheme of things, it didn't matter too much that the Arch-Emperor was weak; he was only the current reigning Arch-Emperor. Nobody could say for sure what would happen when the next Arch-Emperor rose up. Furthermore, the Grand Heavenmaster had not followed the example of the Celestial from Heavenspan Island, and turned himself into an emperor. As far as many people were concerned, the Grand Heavenmaster was actually being quite benevolent and merciful.

Even more people hoped to just keep their distance from the issue. Not daring to get involved, they kept their true feelings vague, allowing the Grand Heavenmaster and the Arch-Emperor to handle things on their own, as long as the Arch-Emperor Dynasty itself continued.

Therefore, the events playing out right now were like a bolt out of the blue, and had placed the problems surrounding the issue of the Grand Heavenmaster and the Arch-Emperor right smack dab in the open!

Everyone in the square was cursing Bai Xiaochun inwardly for being so vile as to drag them into a situation they had been working so hard to avoid. In fact, most of them greatly regretted having come to attend the event to begin with.

Of course, the Arch-Emperor was also caught completely unprepared by what was happening, and was aware that the events of this day would determine once and for all how powerful he was!

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, his heart trembling with nervousness. However, he knew that his hand had been forced.

The second prince and the grand prince had already made a move against him, and were it not for the Grand Heavenmaster, he would surely have been dead and buried here in the Wildlands.

“You can’t blame me for this, Arch-Emperor. If you want to blame somebody, blame those two sons of yours....” By this point, his mind was made up; his fate was now completely tied to the Grand Heavenmaster.

At the moment, the entire square was silent. The heavenly marquises and dukes were all standing there looking down at their feet. For the first time ever on the day of ancestral sacrifices, the entire imperial palace was completely silent.

It made quite the sharp contrast with the raucous, celebratory noise coming from the common people down below in the city.

The Arch-Emperor wasn't saying anything, nor was the Grand Heavenmaster. Everyone in the hall stood there without making a peep. The princes and princesses had bitter looks on their faces as they looked down at the ground, hearts filled with hatred for Bai Xiaochun at the disaster he had caused, and dread of the Grand Heavenmaster.

However, the silence didn’t last for very long. Eventually, one of the heavenly marquises gritted his teeth and stepped forward. Clasp hands, he bowed to the Arch-Emperor and Grand Heavenmaster, then spoke out in a loud voice.

“It’s very clear to me that Inspections Commissioner Bai Hao is holding a deva soul!”

Now that the first person had stepped forward to make a statement, a second followed. Then a third. One by one, more than a hundred heavenly marquises did the same.

“That’s definitely a deva soul!”

“Correct! If you look closely, it’s obviously a deva soul!”

Each and every person said the same thing; that it was a deva

soul!

Some of the people who stepped forward really were loyal to the Grand Heavenmaster, but not all of them. And yet, none of them hesitated for even a moment to make their stance clear!

And of course, many of them were cursing Bai Xiaochun to death. However, their faces were covered with somber expressions as they made their statements regarding the deva soul. Even the nine heavenly marquises who had attacked Bai Xiaochun did the same, including Zhao Xionglin. Although he was swearing in his heart, it was with a booming voice that he said, “Anyone can see that it’s definitely a deva soul!”

As the heavenly marquises made their statements, the faces of the imperial princes and princesses grew paler and paler. Bitter smiles spread out on the faces of the two sinister old men. As for the Arch-Emperor, he sat there calmly, watching the heavenly marquises and dukes. The coldness in his eyes from earlier was gone, and his face was expressionless. However, deep in his eyes, it was clear that he was branding this image of Bai Xiaochun into his mind for all time.

That struck coldness into Bai Xiaochun’s heart, but he reminded himself that he was one of the Grand Heavenmaster’s men, and that the Arch-Emperor couldn’t hurt him even if he were more powerful than he already was.

“Stupid Arch-Emperor! I’ve smacked the Giant Ghost King across the side of the head, fool! Hmm, I wonder what it would feel like to smack an Arch-Emperor?” Swallowing hard to work up some courage, he waited for the heavenly marquises to all step forward.

Before long, all of them were finished, every single one of them having uttered the words deva soul. Next came the ten heavenly dukes, and not a single one hesitated about what to do.

“A deva soul!”

“A deva soul!”

Chen Haosong was no exception. By this point, the imperial princes and princesses were trembling, although whether from anger or fear it was impossible to tell! In terms of Mistress Red-Dust and the other representatives of the four heavenly kings, they too acknowledged that Bai Xiaochun had a deva soul. At that point, the square once again fell into silence.

It was a silence that indicated that the Grand Heavenmaster's overall power had once again skyrocketed, surpassing his previous level of power by far. After all, this was the first time that he and the Arch-Emperor had ever clashed publicly!

One statement from the Grand Heavenmaster had caused everyone to bow their heads in submission. That was a type of power that defied description. Just as Bai Xiaochun had said, the Grand Heavenmaster didn't need to know what everyone was thinking. He just needed everyone to fear him. That was enough.

Within the hall, the grand prince, the second prince, and everyone else present looked as ashen as death. Yet again, they were drowning in humiliation, and fear... of the Grand Heavenmaster. At this point, they knew that it didn't matter what secret schemes they had been working on. In front of the Grand Heavenmaster, they were so weak they could be defeated with a single blow. It was truly terrifying.

More than anything though... they felt grief that the imperial clan had fallen to this level....

At this point, the Arch-Emperor looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun, then rose to his feet. Without casting a glance at anyone else, not even the Grand Heavenmaster, he walked out of the hall. The two sinister old men took deep breaths, glared at Bai Xiaochun, and then followed.

The imperial princes and princesses scrambled after him, not speaking a word. However, all of them looked over at Bai Xiaochun

before departing.

The assembled officials and aristocracy were completely silent as they all looked over at the Grand Heavenmaster on his black throne, who looked back at them with a dark gleam in his eyes.

The truth was that he had been paying very close attention to everyone outside of the hall, including the heavenly marquises and the heavenly dukes. He had been studying the slight changes in their facial expressions, and even the fluctuations of their souls.

Although he didn't say anything, that dark gleam in his eyes was very telling. At this point, he rose to his feet, prompting everyone in the square to clasp hands and bow.

“Farewell, Grand Heavenmaster, Arch-Emperor!”

“You're all dismissed,” the Grand Heavenmaster said. Then he looked approvingly at Bai Xiaochun and said, “Bai Hao, you come with me.”

With that, he turned and headed into the back of the grand hall.

Noting the approval in the Grand Heavenmaster's eyes, Bai Xiaochun loudly said, “You're dismissed! All of you!”

At the same time, he sighed inwardly, and also started to get excited at the prospect of having done something so momentous!

From beginning to end, he had controlled the initiative, and that was a very thrilling thing. Although he still felt a bit of lingering fear, the fact that he had the approval of the Grand Heavenmaster had him trembling with excitement.

“I really performed some meritorious service this time! I wonder how the Grand Heavenmaster is going to reward me?!” Even as he hurried forward to follow the Grand Heavenmaster, he realized that everyone was looking at him. Turning, he saw that many of the heavenly marquises and dukes were looking at him with the contempt of someone looking at a petty person who had unexpectedly achieved a position of power.

And that wasn't very pleasing to Bai Xiaochun at all.

That was especially true of Zhao Xionglin, who was glaring at Bai Xiaochun so fiercely that it seemed he wanted nothing more than to rip him limb from limb!

“How dare you glare at me!” Bai Xiaochun thought.

Then he flicked his sleeve, stuck his chin up, and loudly said, “Now that you've all confirmed that I got a deva soul, I guess that means I got really lucky today!”

With that, he suddenly threw the Foundation Establishment-level soul toward Zhao Xionglin.

“Heavenly Marquis Zhao, I have business with the Grand Heavenmaster, so I'm leaving this deva soul with you for safe keeping. Tomorrow morning at first light, I'll go to your clan to retrieve it. Don't lose it! After all, that's a deva soul!”

Zhao Xionglin didn't even have a chance to react before Bai Xiaochun was gone.

Chapter 777: The Formula For Eighteen-Colored Flame!

“You!!” Zhao Xionglin was both taken aback and infuriated. However, the Grand Heavenmaster was still present, so he didn’t dare to lose his temper. He could only stand there panting, face twisted with rage, cursing inwardly at this blatantly open attack.

“Damn this Bai Hao!” he thought. “He gave me a Foundation Establishment-level soul and is going to demand that I give him a deva soul in return!!” Zhao Xionglin was overwhelmed with anger, grief, and pain. To him, a deva soul was the type of treasure that could be encountered by chance, but never searched for and found.

After all, deva souls were very useful for anyone attempting to become a deva, and could increase the chances of success significantly. Therefore, what Bai Xiaochun had just done was like adding injury to insult.

Zhao Xionglin stood there trembling at how horrible things had just become....

The other aristocrats in the area were stunned as they watched Bai Xiaochun walking off. They could almost feel cold chills running down their backs as they realized that Bai Xiaochun was the type of person who would take any opportunity that came his way.

“Totally ruthless....”

“He’s clearly screwing Zhao Xionglin over....”

“When he goes to get that soul tomorrow... Zhao Xionglin will have to give him a deva soul....”

Although the Grand Heavenmaster was already some distance away, with his back to the square, he was aware of everything that was happening. When he realized what Bai Xiaochun was doing, his cheek twitched.

“Ah, whatever,” he thought. “Chalk it up as a reward for him.” Bai Xiaochun’s performance had been spectacular, and left the Grand Heavenmaster feeling very pleased. Therefore, he simply shook his head and continued to leave.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that the Grand Heavenmaster wasn’t interfering, his eyes lit up with excitement, and he strutted the entire way to Heavenmaster Hall. When they arrived, the Grand Heavenmaster didn’t say much. He just asked Bai Xiaochun to produce his Inspections Manor command medallion, whereupon he waved his finger, sending a black glow into it.

“Henceforth, you command 3,000 troops! Head back and rest up a bit. Before long... your 3,000 corpse troopers can be mobilized, and then you can go get your reward yourself.” With that, he entered Heavenmaster Hall, not having even turned to look at Bai Xiaochun. Furthermore, he had never said a word about the objects Bai Xiaochun had secreted away from Heavenly Marquises Li and Chen. That alone spoke to the profits Bai Xiaochun would have after shaking down more clans.

Excited at the prospects, Bai Xiaochun clasped hands and loudly said, “Grand Heavenmaster, for you, Bai Hao will go through hell and high water!”

After the Grand Heavenmaster disappeared into the hall, Bai Xiaochun turned, feeling profoundly pleased as he left the imperial palace, taking his 1,000 corpse troopers with him. Looking very grand and magnificent, he quickly made his way back to the Inspections Manor.

As for the heavenly dukes and marquises, and all the other nobility and aristocracy, although they hated him so much their gums itched, when he passed by, they didn’t dare to even look at him the wrong way.

Back at the Inspections Manor, the first thing he did was use the command medallion to make connections with more of the

subterranean coffins.

Rumbling sounds filled the entire Inspections Manor as 2,000 coffins shot up into the air!

“Awaken, my army of corpse troopers!” he shouted excitedly. Cracking sounds instantly rang out as the 2,000 coffins opened up, and numerous black-armored, burly men appeared.

All of them emanated auras of rot, and the weakest among them were in the mid Nascent Soul stage. Furthermore, this time, there were four who were half-devas!

As the eyes of the corpse troopers opened, heaven-shaking, earth-shattering murderous auras erupted out!

A black vortex appeared in the air above the Inspections Manor, which instantly attracted much attention from the people nearby.

“There are more corpse troopers over in the Inspections Manor?!?!”

“Is that... 2,000 of them? In addition to the original 1,000, Bai Hao now controls an army of 3,000!!”

“3,000 corpse troopers! That level of power... is terrifying. He alone could start a large-scale war!!”

Many among the nobility and aristocracy of Arch-Emperor City realized what was happening, and they were shaken. Grim expressions appeared on their faces as they realized that Bai Xiaochun was building up terrifying levels of power.

Bai Xiaochun was so excited he was trembling, and his eyes shone with bright light. Looking at his 2,000 new corpse troopers, he waved his hand, causing the original 1,000 to fly out. They quickly formed ranks, whereupon the black vortex above the Inspections Manor grew even larger.

In addition to that, further inspection of the command medallion revealed that, in addition to the 2,000 new corpse troopers, he now

had access to a new divine ability.

After studying it briefly, he sent some divine sense into the medallion, which caused a black glow to appear. The black glow shot toward the corpse trooper who had absorbed some of the toxic gas created by the Heart Of A Woman, and then risen to level of a deva. As soon as the black light touched the corpse trooper, he trembled, and his energy rose. Even as Bai Xiaochun waited in eager anticipation, he threw his head back and roared.

As he did, his aura returned to the quasi-Deva Realm. However, Bai Xiaochun could tell that, if necessary, he could absorb the auras of other corpse troopers to temporarily go back to that peak level of power!

This was one of the powers of the inspections commissioner command medallion which he had been gifted!

“Nobody will dare to provoke me now!” he exclaimed, laughing heartily. Although it wouldn’t be correct to say that he was invincible, it would be as easy for him to take out a deva as it would be to flip over his hand!

He currently had a quasi-Deva Realm corpse trooper, five who were half-devas, and nearly 3,000 in the Nascent Soul realm. That was enough power... that if Bai Xiaochun returned to the eastern Heavenspan region, he could challenge the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

“It was definitely the best choice to side with the Grand Heavenmaster!” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t have been more smugly happy. All of his worries about being glared at by the Arch-Emperor had vanished.

“I’m definitely a big shot in the Wildlands now! Not very many people are as important as me!” Feeling almost intoxicated, he was just preparing to take his 3,000 corpse troopers out for a stroll in the city to make sure everyone knew how awesome he was, when all of a sudden, Bai Hao’s voice could be heard from inside his bag

of holding, and he sounded overjoyed.

“Master! I finally finished the formula for eighteen-colored flame!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide with excitement, and he even laughed aloud. Today was truly a wonderful day, so wonderful that he decided not to go for a walk. Instead, he set his 3,000 corpse troopers out to stand guard in the area, then went into secluded meditation and sealed himself up tight. At that point, Bai Hao flew out into the open.

Bai Hao quickly inscribed the formula into a bone slip, then handed it over to Bai Xiaochun, who began to study it with intense anticipation.

A moment passed, and he retracted his divine sense from the bone slip. After some thought, he looked over at Bai Hao, thinking about how priceless this formula would be anywhere in the Wildlands.

It would be considered even more valuable than a deva soul!

Countless people wanted to have that formula. However, it was something that only belonged to clans with earthly necromancers. And clans like that would not lightly hand over the formula!

“Well done, apprentice,” Bai Xiaochun said sincerely. “If Master can become an earthly necromancer, it will count as an enormous service on your part. What would you like as a reward? Name anything!”

Bai Hao’s heart swelled at having pleased his Master. To him, Bai Xiaochun was a Master, but more importantly, his only family. Just being able to help him, and see him happy, was enough.

“Master, I don’t want any reward right now. Let’s worry about that later. The most important thing now is to follow this line of reasoning on to the formula for nineteen-colored flame!” From the determination in Bai Hao’s eyes, it was obvious that he was

confident in being able to succeed. Furthermore, he was shaking with excitement at the thought of his Master dominating the Wildlands with that formula.

“I'm going to do everything in my power to help Master become... a heavenly necromancer!” Having sworn this oath in his heart, he clasped hands formally to Bai Xiaochun, then returned to his soulhoarding pagoda to start working.

Bai Xiaochun was moved as he looked at the soulhoarding pagoda and sighed. He knew that ghost cultivator techniques were something of great importance to his apprentice, and yet, he had no idea where to get such techniques.

“Where would I be able to get some ghost cultivator techniques...? There are all types of techniques available in the Heavenspan River region. I bet I could find some there.” Having decided this was the best angle to pursue, he sat down cross-legged and began to get familiar with the formula for eighteen-colored flame.

The night passed quickly.

This formula was actually very complicated, but because of his experience within the Flame Harmony realm, in which the faint eighteen-colored flame had become visible, he had a foundation upon which to work.

Therefore, he actually gained a lot from that single night of study. The mere thought of actually trying to conjure that flame and become an earthly necromancer caused his heart to start racing.

“However, if I really want to conjure it, I'll need to do a lot of practicing....” At this point, he looked outside and realized that it was light outside, and remembered that Zhao Xionglin owed him a deva soul. Putting the bone slip away, he stood up, stretched a bit, then stuck his chin up.

“Alright, Zhao Xionglin, Lord Bai is coming for you!”

Even as Bai Xiaochun reveled in his success, he had no idea that back in Giant Ghost City, the Giant Ghost King had made a decision.

After receiving the report from Mistress Red-Dust about what had occurred during the ancestral sacrifices, his eyes had begun to shine brightly.

“What a genius. I definitely didn’t misjudge this Bai Hao. It’s impossible to say how far he’ll go. He’s definitely the perfect son-in-law. I don’t care what his background is!

“Unfortunately, Mo’er’s temper is a problem.... If things keep going the way they have between the two of them, it will be hard for them to get along.” After some thought, his eyes gleamed with a strange light, and he cleared his throat. Then he sent a message to Mistress Red-Dust.

First, he asked some general questions about her cultivation base, and then he said, “Mo’er, I have a certain technique you can cultivate that will give you a seventy percent chance of breaking through into the mid Deva Realm. However, you’ll need to go into secluded meditation and cultivate it secretly!”

Chapter 778: Seizing Every Opportunity

Mistress Red-Dust was surprised. It seemed obvious to her that there was more to the story, but after receiving the technique and looking it over, she couldn't figure out what it was. Besides, the giant ghost king was her father, and couldn't possibly be out to harm her. And yet, she couldn't shake the feeling that there was something fishy going on.

She did a bit more research, but in the end, she was simply too anxious to achieve a cultivation base breakthrough to hold back. Her previous fight with Bai Xiaochun had left her feeling very unsatisfied with her current cultivation base. Therefore, she went into secluded meditation and began to cultivate the technique secretly, just like her father had suggested.

“Good girl!” the giant ghost king thought. “Father isn't trying to hurt you. The technique won't do anything bad. However, after you emerge from meditation, you'll be a bit muddle-headed, and much easier to influence. In some ways, you can almost be brainwashed.... Well, there's nothing else that can be done. You're just too smart, and if we let the situation stand, things will never develop between you and Bai Hao.” The giant ghost king felt a bit guilty, but in the end, reminded himself that he was doing all of this for the betterment of his daughter. And that made him a very good father.

Now that the first step of the plan was underway, the giant ghost king's guilt began to turn into excitement. As soon as his daughter entered her secluded meditation chamber, he called all of her personal guards over and instructed them to let him know as soon as she emerged.

He spoke so strictly that the guards were very nervous, and instantly agreed to follow his instructions.

Having accomplished these things, the giant ghost king sighed.

“Success or failure now depends on fate. If they’re not destined to be together, then nothing will work.”

**

The Zhao Clan was located in Borough 19. Considering that Zhao Xionglin was a heavenly marquis, their clan was very similar to the Li and Chen Clans. The buildings were exquisite and beautiful, and the entire place was so grand that it was very conspicuous within Borough 19.

There were two enormous statues located in the main square of the clan, one on either side. They were dozens of meters tall, pure white, and depicted beastly creatures. Although the statues weren’t made from spirit stones, they had been created using a unique method of equipment forging and special materials, which made them extraordinary, to say the least.

Right in between the two statues was the Zhao Clan’s heavenly marquis pagoda, which emanated powerful fluctuations that ensured that anyone nearby felt a threatening sensation.

At the moment, the various princes and princesses of the clan were practicing fighting techniques on one of the clan’s training grounds, sparring with magical techniques and divine abilities. The eldest son of the clan, Zhao Dongshan, sat cross-legged in the position of honor. Although he seemed to be paying attention to the sparring going on on the training grounds, he was actually preoccupied with other thoughts, to the point where his brow was slightly furrowed.

Occasionally, he would look up into the sky and sigh. The mere thought of how his father Zhao Xionglin had returned the previous day looking extremely angry caused Zhao Dongshan to sigh anxiously. He knew some of what had occurred the previous day in the imperial palace, and it caused his hatred toward Bai Xiaochun to grow even stronger than before.

“So ruthless....”

“He gave our Zhao Clan a Foundation Establishment-level soul and is expecting a deva soul in return! What a vile attack!” Zhao Dongshan sat there grinding his teeth angrily, and yet feeling completely helpless. Yesterday evening, his father had given him a deva soul and instructed him on what to do with it, then had grimly gone into secluded meditation.

“Father, you think this is a loss of face, but so do I....” Zhao Dongshan sighed painfully. After all, the Zhao Clan only had one deva soul to their name, which had been given to them by Heavenly Duke Chen Haosong because of the good relationship between him and Zhao Xionglin.

But now, they had to give it up.... Zhao Dongshan’s mood continued to sink the more he thought about it, and yet, there was nothing he could do. About this time, he suddenly heard a whistling sound up above in the air.

As soon as he heard it, his eyelid twitched. Looking up, he saw several thousand beams of light flying toward him, accompanied by a dramatically murderous aura.

“This shameless Bai Hao just has to go and make a huge scene, all to collect a single soul!” Zhao Dongshan was cursing inwardly, and his expression was extremely grim as he watched the thousands of figures coming to a stop right above the Zhao Clan.

In the lead position was none other than Bai Xiaochun, who flicked his sleeve proudly and spoke in a voice that echoed through the entire clan.

“Heavenly Marquis Zhao! Oh, Big Bro Zhao! Thank you so much for taking care of that deva soul for me. Uh... well, I’m back today to get it, so could you please hand it over?” Bai Xiaochun was feeling very pleased with the whole situation. Furthermore, after noticing that the person present to receive him was Zhao Dongshan, he didn’t feel it appropriate to address him directly, not considering how lofty Bai Xiaochun’s position was. A junior like

Zhao Dongshan wasn't worthy to be greeted.

Zhao Xionglin was inside the heavenly marquis pagoda, meditating fitfully. As soon as he heard what was happening outside, his face twitched, but he forced himself to ignore it.

Down below, Zhao Dongshang gritted his teeth and said, "Take this soul and leave, Bai Hao!"

With that, he flicked his sleeve, sending a piece of crystal flying out. There was something bizarre about the crystal and the way it shone with flickering light. There was also an incredible pressure that it sent out, making it seem completely extraordinary. Inside of the crystal was a ball of flame, which was none other than a fire-type deva soul!

The crystal became a beam of light which shot toward Bai Xiaochun, who grabbed it out of the air. Smiling broadly, he looked down at Zhao Dongshan.

"Hey there, young lad, you must be Dongshan, correct? Hahaha! How courteous of you people! You actually encased my deva soul in some crystal. Not bad. Not bad at all. Very well, young lad. Uncle Bai is in a good mood today, so hurry over and offer formal greetings, and I'll give you a reward." Zhao Dongshan had offended him multiple times in the past, so there was no way he would let him off the hook today.

Zhao Dongshan was so angry he could hardly breathe straight, and the fact that Bai Xiaochun had called him young lad was even more infuriating. However, the mere thought of Bai Xiaochun's incredible battle prowess, and the fact that he was the inspections commissioner, with a force of 3,000 corpse troopers behind him, ensured that he managed to keep his anger in check.

"You have your soul, Bai Hao. Just leave, alright? You're not welcome here!"

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard that, his broad smile vanished,

and his eyes widened into an angry glare. Pointing at Zhao Dongshan, he said,

“What do you mean by that, young lad? I'm not welcome here? I represent the grand heavenmaster! By saying that I'm not welcome, you're also saying that the grand heavenmaster isn't welcome!”

“You....” Zhao Dongshan was so frustrated he wanted to explode, and was even about to explain himself. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't give him the chance.

“By not welcoming the grand heavenmaster, you're showing contempt for the entire court, and the arch-emperor himself! Don't tell me that your Zhao Clan has something to hide!?!?” Even as Bai Xiaochun yelled, his 3,000 corpse troopers emanated such a powerful murderous aura that it created a black vortex in the sky above the Zhao Clan.

“No!” Zhao Dongshan blurted. After becoming the inspections commissioner, Bai Xiaochun had come to fall in love with labeling people with false accusations. All they had to do was open their mouth, and he would strike instantly. After all, Zhao Dongshan's own father had suffered the same treatment.

Even Heavenly Duke Chen Haosong had fallen victim, and had eventually chosen to just keep his mouth shut.

“Eee? Feeling guilty or something?!” From the gleam in Bai Xiaochun's eyes, it seemed that he believed himself to have found some important evidence. Up in the pagoda, Zhao Xionglin's hands were trembling with rage. However, this time, Zhao Dongshan reacted a bit more quickly than before. He quickly stepped forward, took a breath to suppress his anger, and bowed deeply to Bai Xiaochun with clasped hands.

“Senior.... Dongshan... offers greetings.... Greetings, exalted Inspections Commissioner!” Zhao Dongshan felt like he was going crazy, to the point where he might cough up blood. However, this

Bai Hao was not the same Bai Hao from before. Not even Zhao Dongshan's father dared to anger him, and therefore, Zhao Dongshan had no other choice than to submit.

Bai Xiaochun looked discontentedly at Zhao Dongshan, wondering how he had managed to recover his composure so quickly. It was a real pity, considering that he had hoped to take advantage of the situation to extort the Zhao Clan a bit more.

"It's no fun if they give in so easily," he thought. Unfortunately, he had no excuse to keep going. Muttering to himself angrily, he looked around the clan until he noticed the two pure white beast statues.

"Those beast statues look a bit suspicious," he announced. "Men, take them away. Deliver them to my manor so that I can study them more closely." Instantly, hundreds of black-armored corpse troopers flew toward the statues, completely ignoring the Zhao Clan cultivators. Blue veins bulged out on Zhao Dongshan's face and neck. However, considering that his father hadn't issued any orders, he knew he had to simply hold his tongue. The hundreds of corpse troopers quickly took those two statues which the Zhao Clan viewed as priceless treasures, and ripped them up out of the ground....

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few more times as he looked around. Finally, his gaze came to rest on the heavenly marquis pagoda. Obviously, Zhao Xionglin was not planning to make an appearance. Feeling a bit irritated, Bai Xiaochun snorted and then turned to leave with his corpse troopers and the two statues.

"How dare they provoke me! Zhao Dongshan attacked me multiple times! These statues are just going to be interest on what he owes me." Sticking his chin up, he began to strut away.

After he left, an enraged roar echoed out from the heavenly marquis pagoda. Zhao Xionglin was enraged, but his anger was not sated, and could only be vented by continuing to howl in anger.

Zhao Dongshan sat there bitterly, terrified of Bai Xiaochun. If he had known that things would turn out this way, then he would never have dared to offend him.

And thus, Bai Xiaochun returned to the Inspections Manor, deva soul in hand, with two new statues carried by his corpse troopers. After arranging for his corpse troopers to stand guard, he went into his secluded meditation facilities and pondered what the grand heavenmaster had said to him yesterday.

“I’ll just wait for some new orders. I wonder how many clans the grand heavenmaster will have me shake down this time....” Heart pounding with anticipation, he was just about to go back to studying eighteen-colored flame when his expression flickered. A moment later, Zhou Yixing appeared right outside of his secluded meditation facilities.

“Zhou Yixing seeks an audience, exalted one!”

Because Zhou Yixing had been acknowledged by Bai Xiaochun as a member of the Inspections Manor, the corpse troopers often gave him sharp looks, but wouldn’t cause any problems for him as long as he didn’t harbor ill intent.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was very pleased with Zhou Yixing’s service so far. Therefore, he waved his hand, causing the door to the facility to open. Zhou Yixing took a deep breath, and walked in, a very serious expression on his face. Stopping in front of Bai Xiaochun, he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

Trying to imitate the style of the grand heavenmaster, Bai Xiaochun coolly said, “Yixing! Make sure to get good and ready. The Inspections Manor is going to be very busy soon!”

Zhou Yixing immediately voiced his assent. Then, he hesitated, looked left and right, and quietly said, “Exalted one, um... what should we do with Song Que?”

Chapter 779: Poor Child

“Song Que?” Bai Xiaochun was initially stunned, and it actually took a moment of thought before he realized that he had forgotten about Song Que....

“Yeah, him,” Zhou Yixing said in a low voice. “He was the... um, guy who claimed to be the nephew of Bai Xiaochun, who you picked up in the Chen Clan. Song Que.” Zhou Yixing looked at Bai Xiaochun for a moment and then cast his gaze back downward.

“Oh, him. Ai. Silly me. If you hadn't said something, I would have totally forgotten.” Bai Xiaochun actually felt a bit bad. Not only was Song Que one of his big lucky stars, as a member of the older generation, Bai Xiaochun had a responsibility to take care of the younger ones.

“Exalted one,” Zhou Yixing replied hurriedly, “you have a myriad of state affairs to attend to, and an entire nation to look after! Every decision you make is the type that can shake all of heaven and earth. You are constantly at the beck and call of all Arch-Emperor City, and spare no efforts in your duty. Your humble servant shouldn't have bothered you with such a trivial matter as this. My apologies exalted one. Please, watch your health. I won't bother you with things like this anymore.”

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased by the sincerity in his words, and how much they reminded him of the way he himself talked. Nodding approvingly at Zhou Yixing, he said, “Never mind all that, bring him to me.”

“Sir, yes sir!” Zhou Yixing replied loudly, then turned and hurried away. Moments later, he returned with Song Que, who he plopped down in front of Bai Xiaochun.

Zhou Yixing knew that there was some relationship between Song Que and Bai Xiaochun, and therefore, Song Que was currently not wearing the same raggedy clothes he had been back

in the Chen Clan. He was dressed in a rough spun cloth garment, and had been cleaned up quite a bit. However, his eyes were just as intensely stubborn and maddened as ever.

After being thrown onto the ground, he crawled to his feet, where he stood ramrod straight as he glared at Bai Xiaochun and yelled, “If you’re that tough, just kill me!! My uncle will never let you off the hook!!”

Although Bai Xiaochun was a bit startled by how he had yelled, his words nearly caused him to laugh. However, he covered it with a dry cough. Keeping his face straight, he circled Song Que a bit to measure him up.

His gaze caused Song Que’s heart to tremble. As far as Song Que could tell, it was a gaze of terrifying profundity. However, what was worse was how Bai Xiaochun poked and prodded him a bit here and there, leading Song Que to shiver and think about what vile intentions he had. Stiffening, he once again resorted to a shout when he said, “Even if I die, I’ll never yield!”

“Alright, enough with the yelling. Allow me to ask you something. Who is this Bai Xiaochun to you?!” Inside, Bai Xiaochun was smiling broadly, but he kept his expression somber, and even made it seem like he was afraid of this Bai Xiaochun.

The truth, of course, was that he was eagerly awaiting Song Que’s response.

Song Que was a bit surprised to see the expression on Bai Xiaochun’s face. Obviously, not dying was the optimal outcome if it was possible, and therefore, the gears were already turning in Song Que’s head.

“Bai Xiaochun is my uncle!”

Blinking, Bai Xiaochun kept his smile hidden away, and instead plastered an even more serious expression on his face. “What did you just say? I didn’t hear clearly....”

Eyes glittering, Song Que raised his voice and said, “Bai Xiaochun... is my uncle!!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was racing with excitement, and he coughed dryly again to keep himself from laughing. He also tried to look a bit more scared.

“Are you talking about the guy in 1st place on the Hell-Emperor Stele, the one with the shocking cultivation base, the one who countless women are enamored with, and who innumerable men admire? The man who everyone in the Wildlands is searching for? That Bai Xiaochun?”

Song Que was stunned to hear all of this, and Zhou Yixing placed his face into the palm of his hand at how obvious it all seemed... and the shamelessness of it all....

Of course, there was no possible way for Song Que to realize that the person he was standing in front of was actually Bai Xiaochun. However, he was a bit worried by the expression of fear he saw on Bai Xiaochun’s face.

“Yeah, that Bai Xiaochun....”

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t fully satisfied yet, so he plastered a look of disbelief onto his face and said, “Hold on, I want you to be very clear about this. Which Bai Xiaochun? Are we really talking about the same person?”

So far, he was feeling very pleased with the act he was putting on.

Song Que was starting to get a strange feeling, but he proceeded with another explanation. “I’m talking about the guy in 1st place on the Hell-Emperor Stele, the one with the shocking cultivation base, the one who countless women are enamored with, and who innumerable men admire! The man who everyone in the Wildlands is searching for. That Bai Xiaochun!!”

By this point, he was starting to feel like maybe they actually weren’t talking about the same person.

However, this was when Bai Xiaochun gasped and backed up a few steps. Eyes wide, he pointed at Song Que with disbelief. “Heavens! I can’t believe that you’re actually the nephew of that Bai Xiaochun!!”

Zhou Yixing stood there in a near daze, staring at Bai Xiaochun. However, he quickly looked down again, unable to keep watching....

Song Que was now starting to get a bit excited.

“That’s right! I am Bai Xiaochun’s nephew, and his only nephew at that. He really likes me, and has a lot of hopes for me for the future. He’s my aunt’s Daoist partner, so he’ll definitely be coming to save me. If you touch a hair on my head, my uncle will definitely get revenge for me!” He couldn’t have stated it any clearer. Anyone who was listening would be very certain that Bai Xiaochun cared a lot about him. Furthermore, anyone who was interested in catching Bai Xiaochun would obviously not want to kill Song Que.

That in turn would make things a bit safer for him.

Although Bai Xiaochun had no idea what anyone else might think of what Song Que said, as for himself, it made him incredibly happy.

“How could I ever have guessed that, contrary to all expectations, you were actually telling the truth! Your uncle is none other than the heaven-shaking, earth-shattering Bai Xiaochun, whose cultivation base is matchless in all creation.... Well, in that case... alright. Yixing, let’s keep this guy here in the Inspections Manor. Start him out as a servant. And give him some resources to practice cultivation.

“Hmph. With him around, the notorious Bai Xiaochun, who is the ultimate chosen in the world, a person that countless individuals are infatuated with, will definitely walk right into the trap I’m planning for him!” He emphasized his righteous, sincere words with the flick of a sleeve.

When Song Que heard this, he breathed a sigh of relief. Although he still had a strange feeling about the whole situation, he still couldn't put his finger on what exactly it was. Before anything else could happen, Zhou Yixing grabbed him and hauled him away.

With that, Bai Xiaochun closed his door, sealed the place up, and then let loose a stream of uproarious laughter.

“Oh, Que'er! I can only imagine the look on your face if you ever find out who I really am....” The mere thought was exciting, but Bai Xiaochun also decided that he definitely couldn't ever let that happen.

After all, he was a circumspect person in general, and also had to be on guard against Song Que. Considering that he was deep undercover, he obviously couldn't reveal the truth to anyone. Besides, it was wonderful to hear Song Que lavishing Bai Xiaochun with praise. From now on, if he was ever in a bad mood, he could simply call Song Que over, scare him a bit, and then bask in the resulting praise.

Now that Song Que had been taken care of, though, Bai Xiaochun thought about Master God-Diviner.

“I wonder where he is now.... Probably somewhere else in the Wildlands, I suppose.” It was another mission on his list. After all, Master God-Diviner had been one of his followers, and was likely in a horrible situation. Therefore, it was definitely important to find him and save him.

Unfortunately, he had absolutely no clues to work with. After thinking about the matter for a bit, he sighed and put the matter to rest temporarily. Just when he was about to start working with eighteen-colored flame, his expression flickered, and he looked down at his bag of holding. Eyes lighting up, he produced the Eternal Parasol.

The canopy of the parasol had been destroyed by Chen Haosong, leaving behind only the shaft. Thankfully, the beast hide he had

found when shaking down the Li Clan had been a perfect fit.

Now, it was completely recovered. As soon as it was out in the open, it glowed with black light. As for the beast hide which formed the new canopy, it caused the parasol as a whole to emanate fluctuations which were many times more powerful than before. As of this moment, the parasol seemed completely different from before.

As he held it, he could sense an incredible, shocking power inside of it. Unable to contain his excitement, he snapped it open.

Rumbling sounds filled the room, and at the same time, the ghost face appeared on the canopy, with its enigmatic smile, and half-laughing half-crying ghost face.

The ghost face was much clearer than before, and was actually a bit frightening to Bai Xiaochun. However, upon rotating his cultivation base, the feeling went away.

“My Eternal Parasol is finally fully repaired!”

Chapter 780: Shakedown Addiction

Ten days passed by in a flash, during which time Bai Xiaochun never went outside. He remained in seclusion in the Inspections Manor, getting familiar with the formula for eighteen-colored flame.

With Bai Hao's help, he was gradually making progress. He had even attempted to do a few conjurings. However, the resource wastage was incredible.

The formula for eighteen-colored flame was different from other formulas, and took a lot more resources. In fact, to conjure a single eighteen-colored flame required that he first conjure ten seventeen-colored flames.

Despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun had access to vast wealth, he still couldn't sustain such losses.

“What am I supposed to do now...?” he thought. However, even as he pondered the issue, the Grand Heavenmaster did something major!

After ten days of thought and contemplation, he acted in lightning-like fashion to arrest nine of the heavenly marquises!

The arrests shook everyone in the Wildlands, even the four heavenly kings. All of Arch-Emperor City was abuzz, and the remaining ninety or so heavenly marquises were panic-stricken.

Although no action had been taken against any of the heavenly dukes, they were also filled with dread. In fact, all of them chose to go into seclusion, and refused to see anyone who called on them. They simply did not want to get involved in what was happening.

Even Chen Haosong knew that he was in a very dangerous position, and simply kept his mouth shut and went into seclusion.

After the nine heavenly marquises were apprehended, their clans were left behind, trembling in terror. Furthermore, without

express permission from the Grand Heavenmaster himself, none of them were permitted to leave the city.

While everyone in Arch-Emperor City was shaking in fear, Bai Xiaochun finally got his orders from the Grand Heavenmaster. He was to go shake down the offending clans!

At long last, Bai Xiaochun was able to make full use of his skills. He had been waiting for this day for some time. After the destruction of his spirit enhancement shop, he had been cut off from cultivation resource income. Now that he had been ordered to shake down some clans, he would finally get some money back.

As soon as he had the Dharmic decree in hand, he was filled with excitement.

“It’s going to take a lot of souls to practice with eighteen-colored flame. Too many to even calculate. There is really no trick I can use other than to simply practice over and over again!

“Ah, shakedowns.... If I shake down nine heavenly marquis clans, then I can get to work conjuring some flame!!” Without the slightest hesitation, Bai Xiaochun took his army of 3,000 corpse troopers and immediately went to work with the list the Grand Heavenmaster had provided him. The time had come to do something that he was starting to get a bit entranced with... perform some shakedowns!

“Fudge. I started shaking down clans almost as soon as I got to the Wildlands. First in Giant Ghost City, and now here in Arch-Emperor City. In terms of shakedown skills, if I ranked 2nd in the Wildlands, then there wouldn't be someone who ranked 1st!” Looking very proud and even disdainful, he headed toward the first clan on the list.

As soon as he emerged from the Inspections Manor, it caused a big stir in the city. Even the most wicked and vile characters in the city got out of his way. The city folk trembled, and as for the nobility and aristocracy, they felt like they were in a nightmare

from which they couldn't awaken.

One after another, he took his terrifying army of corpse troopers to the clans and shook them down. He cleaned them out, down to the grass on the ground. Anything of value was taken, even building decorations. A storehouse of grain attacked by starving rats wouldn't have ended up as empty.

However, the star of the entire show actually wasn't Bai Xiaochun, but Zhou Yixing. He was a true genius when it came to clan shakedowns, with eagle eyes that could find the most hidden of treasures. Thanks to him, every little thing was taken away.

In order to make sure that he had plenty of resources to work with when concocting flame, Bai Xiaochun even woke up the little turtle. The little turtle was also very fond of shakedowns, and when he worked together with Zhou Yixing, they created a windstorm of calamity for anyone in their path....

Quite an audience went along with Bai Xiaochun to watch him shake down the nine heavenly marquis clans, and the sight left them stunned. Soon, all sorts of stories began to spread.

“This Bai Hao was born to shake down clans.... How heartless!”

“Heavens! He doesn't even let the houses stand... he tears them down!!”

“What eyes he has! Every time he points his finger, he finds hidden treasures!! This Bai Hao... could he have been a packrat in a previous life?!?!”

The entire city was abuzz. Even more shocking to the people who were paying close attention was that Bai Xiaochun's first shakedown took six hours. However, by the time he got to the fourth, he only needed four hours to clean the entire clan out, and even leave most of the buildings in ruins....

By the time he reached the seventh clan, he acted with explosive efficiency. He only took two hours to leave the seventh clan as

little more than a crater in the ground....

And yet, that almost didn't count for anything. Most shocking was the ninth clan.... It only took a single hour, and when he departed, not even a grain of dust was left behind.... It was a stunning event to anyone who could see it.

Although Bai Xiaochun had experienced many things in his life, the amount of wealth he was amassing by shaking down these nine clans caused even his heart to pound. In fact, he managed to get his hand on quite a few complete fifteen-colored flames, and even some flames of higher quality!

Those completed flames were extremely important, because they would enable him to cut down on the souls necessary to practice with eighteen-colored flame.

As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, seventeen-colored flames were like precious treasures.

By the time he reached the ninth clan, it took a lot of restraint on his part not to go shake down the clan located just across from them.

When the members of that clan saw his greedy, bloodshot eyes, they hurried out to confirm that their clan wasn't on the list. After all, it would only take a single order on the part of Bai Xiaochun to send his 3,000 corpse troopers into their clan and ruin it completely.

Because of his frenzied shakedown of the nine clans, the name of Bai Hao grew even more infamous in Arch-Emperor City. In fact, it also spread throughout the Wildlands to certain almighty figures in the sects in the Heavenspan River region, who were privy to some of the things that went on in the Wildlands.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was basically addicted to shakedowns, and thankfully, it was at this point that the Grand Heavenmaster issued another set of arrest warrants. Seven more

heavenly marquises were apprehended!

When the Dharmic decree came down, Bai Xiaochun was delighted. Laughing heartily, he descended upon the offending clans in a storm of shakedowns. As a result, the nobility and aristocracy in Arch-Emperor City began to use every means they could think of to reach out to the Grand Heavenmaster and express their loyalty.

For the first time ever, the Arch-Emperor voluntarily went into secluded meditation, which seemed to be a clear message that he was trying to protect the aristocracy and officials. However, the truth was that he was bowing his head in an attempt to win public favor.

The Grand Heavenmaster knew that, but didn't care. He didn't want public favor; he wanted people to fear him. And that was exactly what he was accomplishing.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased, and shook down the next seven clans with even greater efficiency. The spoils caused his eyes to shine as if they were made from gold.

He was not a person who cared much about wealth, and yet, was struggling against the impulse to go shake down all of the heavenly marquis clans in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty.... However, he was always careful to send ninety percent of the goods to Heavenmaster Hall, with one main goal being... helping the Grand Heavenmaster understand how fabulously wealthy these heavenly marquis clans were.

Furthermore, that wealth was one of the reasons for their wild ambitions!

Sadly, after striking twice against the heavenly marquises, the Grand Heavenmaster didn't do so again.

Bai Xiaochun waited for a while, and then sighed sadly as he thought about the remaining ninety or so clans.

“The Grand Heavenmaster is far too merciful. It would be way better to keep shaking down more of those clans!” However, this session of shakedowns was over, and Bai Xiaochun had no choice but to go back to the Inspections Manor, where he once again went into secluded meditation.

Thanks to all of the multi-colored flame he had acquired, he began to get more and more familiar with eighteen-colored flame. In fact, he advanced by leaps and bounds, to the point where it was almost impossible to calculate how much time and effort he was saving.

The fall of those sixteen heavenly marquises pushed the Grand Heavenmaster’s power to new heights. The Arch-Emperor was now in seclusion, and so were the imperial princes and princesses. Nobody from the imperial clan dared to even take half a step out of their official residences.

Even the four heavenly kings chose to submit to the Grand Heavenmaster in this situation. None of them did anything to provoke him. The Grand Heavenmaster was currently the most powerful and glorious person imaginable, even more so than when he had become a demigod and forced the Arch-Emperor to become his puppet.

Three months passed by. Because of the shakedowns, and because of the Grand Heavenmaster’s power, Bai Xiaochun was more famous than ever. In fact, there were few people in the Wildlands who hadn’t heard of the name Bai Hao. Savages in tribes both large and small feared him, and his notoriety grew as the stories about him spread....

Chapter 781: Dark Undercurrents Appear

“So you’ve also heard of Inspections Commissioner Bai Hao? He kills people without batting an eyelid. He’s vicious and merciless, and a complete madman!”

“He’s a self-proclaimed wife-stealer who cheats his superiors and defrauds his subordinates! Everyone says that he’s an unabashed brown-noser who even managed to hoodwink the Giant Ghost King!”

“He’s very skilled with shakedowns, to the point where he doesn’t even leave the grass behind! He’s shaken down eighteen clans in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, and is so ruthless everyone hates him!”

“He’s a complete villain who cultivates an evil technique that absorbs life force! You can find people all over the place in Arch-Emperor City who had life force stolen away by him!”

According to the stories which were spreading through the Wildlands, this Bai Hao was a person who was wicked beyond redemption. In fact, in many of the savage tribes, his name was a very effective tool used to frighten naughty children.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he didn’t really care at all about that. However, his apprentice did! Bai Hao would occasionally go out into the city, thanks to the infinite shapeshifting abilities that came with being a ghost cultivator. Furthermore, since he was acting as Bai Xiaochun’s soul slave, he could go out and about without attracting any attention, as long as he maintained a stiff appearance. Besides, Bai Xiaochun had arranged for him to be escorted by corpse troopers wherever he went, and therefore, no one ever dared to cause problems for him.

Bai Xiaochun’s flame conjuring was a very expensive thing. Even with everything he had acquired in the shakedowns, he still couldn’t sustain the work for too long. After all, each attempt

required ten tongues of seventeen-colored flame.

As such, both Bai Hao and Zhou Yixing would often go out to acquire more souls for him to use.

It was because of such frequent outings that Bai Hao continued to hear more and more stories with his name in them. From what he could tell, his Master really was ruining his name....

Furthermore, many of the rumors were the type that got Bai Hao worried about potential dangers.

As for Bai Xiaochun, as his resources drained away, he became more and more confident with eighteen-colored flame. In fact, he was fairly certain that with only a few more sessions of practice, he would succeed!

He was actually starting to get anxious, and was worrying about the same dangers that Bai Hao had already begun to worry about. After all, he had behaved with complete madness on the day of ancestral sacrifices, to the point where it clearly put him in a position of extreme danger!

Before, he had been a sharp knife wielded by the Grand Heavenmaster, and had thus benefited from his protection. But now, the Grand Heavenmaster was at the peak of power, and had suppressed everyone. Therefore, the position of inspections commissioner wasn't as important anymore, and would in fact soon be unnecessary. When the world was at peace, there was no need for razor-sharp knives!

Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but worry that the Grand Heavenmaster would eventually just discard him to earn back favor with the nobility and aristocracy. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao had discussed the matter, and both agreed that, considering the level of his cultivation base, no matter how great the danger he faced, there was one way he could save himself.

And that was... to become an earthly necromancer!

By becoming an earthly necromancer at just the right moment, he could definitely get out of even the most difficult situation!

“However,” he thought, “both Hao’er and I agree that the Grand Heavenmaster probably won’t get rid of me any time soon.... Maybe I’m just reading into things too deeply. Maybe the Grand Heavenmaster will continue to approve of me more because of everything I’ve done. Besides, even Hao’er thinks that his attitude might change soon....”

“After all, I was very careful to make sure that ninety percent of what I acquired in the shakedowns was sent to him. I refuse to believe that doing all that didn’t make an impression on him. Although those heavenly marquis clans weren’t rich enough to fund the entire nation, they were still fabulously wealthy....” With that, he looked down at the tongue of fire he held in his hand.

“All of that will be what I rely on for protection.... Maybe nothing will happen. But if there is even the slightest sign of danger, I can rely on the ruthless plan Hao’er came up with.... That plan could buy me some time, but it really is ruthlessly harmful. Although I don’t care too much about my reputation here, it would be best to avoid it if at all possible....”

“However, if the Grand Heavenmaster forces my hand... then I’ll have no other choice but to do it!” Taking a deep breath to still his thoughts, he continued with his flame conjuring.

Even as Bai Xiaochun was worrying about potential danger, and doing everything he could to succeed with eighteen-colored flame, a pair of eyes like those of a viper had come to focus... on Bai Hao!

Certain forces had begun to gather every bit of information they could about him, and at the moment, a meeting was taking place somewhere in Arch-Emperor City, in an unassuming private chamber!

“The soul has no name, but is always at Bai Hao's side....”

“The investigation in Giant Ghost City has concluded, and nobody knows where the soul came from....

“The first time anyone saw it was in Bai Hao’s spirit enhancement shop....

“It looks stiff and numb, like ordinary soul slaves usually do....”

There were thirteen shadowy figures floated within the darkness of the private chamber. It was impossible to see their features clearly, but all of them were gazing steadily at a person who sat in the very middle of them all. She was a beautiful young woman, and she was currently revealing all of the information gleaned from recent investigations into the soul-form Bai Hao.

If Bai Xiaochun were here, he would immediately recognize this young woman. She was Miao Lin’er!

She had fought Bai Xiaochun back in the Necromancer Kettle, and had also plotted against him after he arrived in Arch-Emperor City. However, none of her plotting had come to fruition so far.

“After Bai Hao became the inspections commissioner, the soul disappeared from public view, and remained heavily guarded inside the Inspections Manor. No one was able to get any information about it....

“However, during the past three months, the soul has been seen out in the city more often. Normally, it is acting on the orders of Bai Hao to purchase souls....

“It was last seen three days ago.... According to our calculations, that soul will appear at least one more time during the next two weeks!

“However, it is always escorted by at least 100 corpse troopers. It’s the same with Zhou Yixing.” Miao Lin’er spoke slowly and clearly so that everything she said was very easy to understand. Furthermore, she was no longer dressed in the revealing way she had been before, but rather, more modestly.

“Therefore, I suggest... that we make our move the next time that soul appears out in the open!” With that, she clasped hands and bowed to the thirteen shadowy figures.

The thirteen figures remained silent for a long moment before one of them spoke.

“Are you sure that this soul is actually intelligent? If so, how intelligent? Has it been merely putting on an act to fool outsiders?”

Without the slightest hesitation, Miao Lin'er replied, “Although I've only personally seen the soul a few times, I am absolutely certain!”

Another protracted silence followed, after which another of the shadowy figures spoke in a raspy voice.

“This soul slave of the mad dog Bai Hao is obviously very important to him.... Therefore, you need to be absolutely certain that it can be used... to conjure eighteen-colored flame!!”

Miao Lin'er didn't respond at first. Instead, she produced thirteen bone slips from her bag of holding, which she sent flying to the thirteen shadowy figures.

After catching the jade slips, the shadowy figures studied their contents, and then soon, their eyes began to shine brightly. Clearly, the information they were seeing confirmed the answer to the question that had just been posed.

With that Miao Lin'er went on, “To our clan, the most important factor to consider in eighteen-colored flame is the flame spark.... With the flame spark, my grandfather can rise to the rank of earthly necromancer! Only after that point would he be able to conjure eighteen-colored flame without the use of this type of soul!

“Seniors, I can guarantee that all of you will get the formula for eighteen-colored flame afterward. In fact, my grandfather will even swear a Dao oath to that effect!

“Seniors, clearly you can see that Bai Hao's days are numbered.

The only reason the Grand Heavenmaster is still hesitating about him is that he hasn't found the right opportunity.... In any case, that doesn't matter. Bai Hao is already a toothless tiger. If he can't reign himself in, then we won't need to do anything. We just need to add a bit of fuel to the fire, and the Grand Heavenmaster will definitely kill him to appease the masses. At that point, Bai Hao's reign of terror will finally be over!"

Smiling faintly, Miao Lin'er looked around at the silent figures and said, "What the Grand Heavenmaster wants now is stability. Furthermore, what need would he have to get rid of people who have outlived their usefulness, if those people are already dead?"

Miao Lin'er wasn't feeling anxious at all as she stood waiting for a response. She was extremely confident, and was sure that nothing unexpected would happen in the plan. The truth was that she hadn't paid much attention to the soul-form Bai Hao. Because of the powers of Bai Xiaochun's mask, Bai Hao had always looked like any other soul slave would. It was only when he and Bai Xiaochun were alone together that he would show any signs of being alive.

However... something had happened during the flame conjuring competition with Sun Yifan and Sima Tao! In the moment that Bai Xiaochun created a faint eighteen-colored flame, Bai Hao had been so emotional that not even the protection of Bai Xiaochun's mask had been able to conceal it. In that moment, Miao Lin'er had looked over and noticed the change to his facial expression. Furthermore, the technique she cultivated had something to do with souls, which made her even more perceptive than the average cultivator in that regard.

Miao Lin'er did not belong to the clan of a heavenly marquis, but rather, a heavenly duke. Furthermore... her clan had once given rise to an earthly necromancer!

Chapter 782: Conjuring Eighteen-Colored Flame

The earthly necromancer who had risen up in Miao Lin'er's clan had long since perished. However, before that, he had been spectacularly famous, and had only been half a step away from becoming a heavenly necromancer. Before his death, he had managed to create a magical device linked to the bloodline of the clan, which made it impossible for anyone outside of the clan to acquire their formula for eighteen-or nineteen-colored flame. Not even a demigod would be able to acquire them without their consent.

Therefore, the good fortunes of the clan continued even after the death of that earthly necromancer. Although they had experienced something of a decline, they still had their reserve savings. Furthermore, Miao Lin'er's grandfather was already at the peak of the celestial rank.

His main goal was to rise from the celestial rank to the earthly rank, and then restore the glory which had been brought to the clan by that earlier earthly necromancer. Their clan would shake the Wildlands, and would have a position higher than the clans with heavenly marquises and dukes. They would actually be on the same standing as the Grand Heavenmaster.

Unfortunately, their clan's method for reaching the earthly necromancer rank was unique, and required a very intelligent soul to use as the primary ingredient. Only in that way could the requisite flame spark be created! Because of that, and because of the technique cultivated by the clan as a whole, they were particularly sensitive to the fluctuations of souls.

Unfortunately, intelligent souls were a rarity. Although their clan had managed to produce some throughout the years, none of them were perfect. Without a soul that met all the standards, any

attempts to make eighteen-colored flame would be useless.

After Miao Lin'er noticed something different about the soul-form Bai Hao, she had immediately notified her grandfather. That prompted the clan to do more careful tests, whereupon it was confirmed that Bai Hao was exactly the type of soul they needed to make their flame spark!

Were it not for Bai Xiaochun himself, Miao Lin'er's clan would already have made a move and snatched Bai Hao. Later, Bai Xiaochun skyrocketed to the position of inspections commissioner, and shook everything under heaven. At that point, they didn't dare to provoke him, and simply bided their time.

But now... they saw the perfect opportunity. Although they still feared Bai Xiaochun, their desire to have an earthly necromancer pushed them to make a decision. They spared no cost to propose an alliance with thirteen other clans within Arch-Emperor City. They had showered them with gifts and even offered to swear a Dao oath to make it happen. With the full power of the alliance focused together, they were sure... that they could spirit Bai Hao away without leaving a trace of evidence!

At this point in the meeting, Miao Lin'er felt more confident than ever.

Some time passed, during which the thirteen shadowy figures took more time to think. Then, one by one, they swore Dao oaths and placed them into the bone slips, formalizing the alliance.

Miao Lin'er smiled a beautiful smile, then clasped hands and bowed.

“Excellent. The next time that soul appears, we'll make our move! According to the strategy put in place by my grandfather, we will plan for the worst-case scenario. After we have the soul, our clan members will scatter and go into hiding in your thirteen clans. Three months later, my grandfather will be able to conjure the flame spark! And now, I'll take my leave.”

With that, she gave a curtseying bow, turned, and glided out of the private chamber. Actually, Miao Lin'er was of the opinion that her grandfather was being too careful in all of this. Not even she had any idea where he would go into hiding after the clan dispersed. She didn't even know who the thirteen clans were that she had just been speaking to.

“Well, as long as grandfather is confident in being able to prevent the other clans from backstabbing us, then I guess we should be fine.” Although she couldn't quite wrap her mind around what her grandfather was thinking, she was sure that Bai Xiaochun's days were numbered, and that he would soon be dead.

Half a month flew by in the briefest of moments. Bai Xiaochun was now only a short step away from successfully conjuring an eighteen-colored flame!

His speed in progress was thanks in part to the extravagant wastage of resources, but also because Bai Xiaochun had begun to apply Bai Hao's theories to the formulas of everything from fifteen-colored flame and above. That made things go even more smoothly.

Most importantly, he had already succeeded with a very faint eighteen-colored flame during the competition with Sun Yifan and Sima Tao. Because of that, he was able to save a huge amount of time!

“This time, I'm definitely going to succeed!” he thought excitedly, his hair in disarray and his eyes bloodshot. He had hardly rested at all during the past several months, but he was still in extremely high spirits.

“It has to work! I've wasted virtually all of the resources from all of those clans.... After this current attempt, I'll only have enough for two more tries....” During the recent period of intense work, Bai Hao and Zhou Yixing had been very busy selling items from Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding and using the profits to get more souls.

In fact, both of them were currently outside, gathering the ingredients he needed for his final batches.

Bai Xiaochun took a very deep breath, closed his eyes, and then settled his qi and cleared his mind. After a long moment passed, he slapped his bag of holding and produced ten seventeen-colored flames.

Immediately, his hands flew out to either side, flashing with incantation gestures. At this point, all of his concentration was focused on the ten tongues of seventeen-colored flame, as he oh so slowly began to merge them together!

He had already attempted to do this on several occasions, and was quite familiar with the process. Gradually, the ten tongues of flame transformed into a sea of fire.

Incredible levels of heat rolled off of it, although it was contained within a 300-meter area. Anything beyond that wasn't affected at all.

That was a trick Bai Xiaochun had come up with during his many sessions of practice!

“And now, it's time to start compressing it....” He unleashed the power of his cultivation base, and focused his divine sense. Nothing else in the world mattered to him in this moment; he was completely focused on compressing that seventeen-colored sea of fire.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

His secluded meditation facilities shook as the power being exerted onto the seventeen-colored sea of fire caused it to start shrinking down. From 300 meters, down to 270 meters. Then 240 meters, 210 meters, 180 meters....

And it kept going!

Beads of sweat popped out on Bai Xiaochun's forehead, and he began to pant from the exertion. The fluctuations of his divine

sense were somewhat disorderly, and yet, the sea of fire continued to shrink down. Soon it was 150 meters. Then 120 meters, 90 meters....

“This was where I failed so many times before....” He thought, working hard to maintain full focus. Soon, the sea of fire had shrunk down to 60 meters!

And things weren't over yet! 45 meters. 30 meters. 15 meters!

By this point, the seventeen-colored sea of fire seemed like the sovereign of all types of fire! Intense rumbling sounds echoed out, and the fire leaped and danced as though it didn't wish to be constrained.

However, all of the explosive activity was limited to that 15-meter area. As the shrinking continued, shocking transformations were beginning to occur. The fire began to burn hotter, and the seventeen different colors inside of it were beginning to overlap. It was a dazzling sight that not even Bai Xiaochun's divine sense could make out clearly.

Furthermore, as the seventeen different colors flickered, it was possible to see... another color!!

“This is the last, critical moment!” he murmured excitedly. According to the formula, it was within the 15-meter area that the eighteenth color would appear. It was in that all-important juncture that, despite how his vision swam, he had to locate that additional color!

When he located it, he would have to lock his divine sense on it, causing that color to expand, to grow, to become... the eighteenth color!

At that point, he could make a portion of eighteen-colored soul medicine, or, if he compressed the flame all the way down, an eighteen-colored flame!

He would only have one chance, and if he failed... the flame

would vanish.

The smaller the sea of fire got, the more slowly the colors would flicker, which would make it easier to spot and lock onto the new color. Unfortunately, he needed to exert more force to do that, which meant that the chances of dangerous instabilities were even greater!

This was another point where he had often failed in the past.

“I can’t fail again....” Forcing his breathing under control, he stared at the 15-meter sea of fire and tried as hard as he could to locate the additional color. Unfortunately, every time he sent his divine sense deep into the fire, it was rebuffed.

Time passed, and he was beginning to lose focus.

“I’ll compress it more!” he said with full determination. At this point, he abandoned his search efforts, and began to push the flame down to a smaller size. It was now 12 meters across, and the flickering of the colors was growing slower.

Chapter 783: Dramatic Events!

The slowdown compared to the 15-meter size was miniscule. In fact, most other people wouldn't even be able to notice the difference. However, Bai Xiaochun was so focused on the sea of fire that he could immediately notice the difference.

And yet, even with that change, the flickering colors within the 12-meter sea of fire were still impossible to penetrate with divine sense. Bai Xiaochun's eyes were bloodshot, and he was trembling physically from the exertion. By now, his cultivation base, his mental faculties, and his ability to shrink the sea of fire were all reaching the limit.

And yet, he didn't attempt to shrink the sea of fire down again. He tried yet again to find the eighteenth color. Then he tried a second time, and a third time.... In the short time it takes an incense stick to burn, he was able to glimpse it a total of fourteen times.

“So, I was right. This time, things are going better. The last time, I was only able to glimpse it nine times. This time, that number has increased to fourteen.”

His spirits were lifted. However, despite having glimpsed it clearly so many times, he still wasn't able to reach it with his divine sense. He sighed, then gritted his teeth and gave up on trying to form the eighteen-colored flame with a 12-meter sea of flame. Instead, he chose... to shrink it down again!

It was almost as if a huge pair of hands were physically pushing the sea of fire in on itself. It began to fluctuate, and even seemed to be teetering on the verge of destabilizing. Bai Xiaochun immediately adjusted his method of control, and when it stabilized, he forced it to shrink from 12 meters... to 9 meters!

Sweat poured down his forehead, but quickly evaporated into steam thanks to the intense heat of the sea of fire.

By now, Bai Xiaochun was panting nervously. Shrinking the sea of fire down to 9 meters was something he would only do if absolutely necessary. It was very draining on him mentally, and also caused the sea of fire to behave even more wildly than before.

Worse of all, his numerous practice sessions had led him to the discovery... that 9 meters was the absolute limit!

Although it was possible to shrink the fire down to 6 meters, if he did, it would be destroyed moments later.

After all of his experiments, he was fully convinced that although it was technically possible to shrink the sea of flames down to a size of 6 meters, and that doing so would slow the flickering colors so much that, if he then sent divine sense into it, the result would be the same as had occurred when he was conjuring in the presence of Sima Tao and Sun Yifan. He would create only a dim wisp, not a true flame!

It was only because of the powers of his mask that, over the course of the past few months, no one had ever sensed it when he created such flame wisps.

And in the end, what Bai Xiaochun wanted was, not a flame wisp... but a complete eighteen-colored flame!

“9 is the limit....” he murmured, eyes shining with focused determination. He knew that he couldn’t keep going for very much longer, so he focused all of his mental faculties on searching within that sea of fire for the new flame.

He did it in methodical fashion, not blindly. After the initial attempt failed, he tried a second time, then a third time.... On the fourth time, when he was certain he had identified the newly added color, he unhesitatingly sent his divine sense exploding out.

His eyes shone with glittering light as his divine sense fused with his vision, pierced into the 9-meter sea of fire... and latched onto the newly added color.

As his divine sense merged with the new color, the color became brighter, as though it were struggling with the other seventeen colors. The 9-meter sea of fire rumbled loudly as the other seventeen colors fought as viciously as a nation defending against an invading army!

But Bai Xiaochun was in control of everything, and refused to allow the other seventeen colors to interfere. Within the shortest of moments, the eighteenth color grew brighter and more shocking.

The entire room shook violently as... the eighteenth color appeared in full in the 9-meter sea of fire!!

As of this moment, it was crystal clear that the sea of fire had risen... to the level of eighteen-colored flame!!

Although it was still in the sea of fire state, all Bai Xiaochun had to do was use his flame conjuring techniques to return it to a state of flame, and that was nothing incredibly difficult!

For all intents and purposes, he was now looking at an eighteen-colored flame!

In the instant the eighteenth color appeared in the sea of fire, it was almost as if the fire itself had fused with heaven and earth, instantly causing drastic transformations.

They were clear signs and portents pointing to the fact that an eighteen-colored flame had been brought into existence!

Any given eighteen-colored flame was enough to shake all creation, and gave rise to something like heavenly tribulation. If Bai Xiaochun closed his fist down to create the actual flame, then those signs and portents would grow more intense, until visible manifestations could be seen in heaven and earth.

Even now, in the sea of fire state, there were still incredible fluctuations, although they were currently being covered up by Bai Xiaochun's mask.

“It worked!!” he exclaimed, trembling. He had been waiting for this day for a very long time, had spent months doing research, had performed unending experiments, and had spent outrageous amounts of resources. And it had all been for this moment.

Although his heart was going wild with excitement, he took a few deep breaths, and calmed himself. Then, he began to close his fingers into a fist.

The 9-meter sea of fire churned and writhed, almost as if something inside of it were screaming. As it began to shrink down into his palm, though, certain fluctuations appeared that caused him to hesitate.

Those fluctuations were coming from his mask, and were an indication its powers were wavering.... If that happened, and Bai Xiaochun pulled the sea of fire all the way into his palm to create an eighteen-colored flame, then the drastic transformations that resulted would notify everyone in Arch-Emperor City of what had occurred.

And that would cause problems for his upcoming plan. Eighteen-colored flame was one of his trump cards, and to reveal it too soon would give his enemies the chance to prepare for it.

Eyes glittering, Bai Xiaochun committed every aspect of this conjuring session to memory, so that he could be completely confident in replicating it in the future. He wouldn't necessarily be able to succeed every single time, but he would at least have a sixty percent success rate!

Considering how confident he was feeling, he had to force himself not to go ahead and take the chance and form the flame. However, he could not afford to gamble in this situation. A trump card like this was far too important.

Therefore, he sighed in regret, then grabbed the sea of fire in a way that caused it to transform... into a portion of soul medicine!

It was something even more rare in the Wildlands than eighteen-colored flame... supreme-grade soul medicine!!

In some ways, this portion of soul medicine actually did prove that Bai Xiaochun had broken through to become an earthly necromancer!

He now had a higher standing than the heavenly marquises and dukes, and was someone even the Grand Heavenmaster would have to treat with respect. He was one of only four... earthly necromancers!!

“Eighteen-colored flame.... Dammit, if it weren't for that Hell-Emperor Stele, I would enhance my nascent soul right now.... It's been a long time since I did. That would put me right in the late Nascent Soul stage!” However, doing that would come with other risks. Therefore, he decided to simply wait for the right moment to skyrocket to prominence in one fell swoop.

It was a lot less glorious to be a powerful person who nobody knew about, and it immediately dampened some of Bai Xiaochun's excitement over being an earthly necromancer. However, at least he could tell his apprentice. Feeling very proud of himself, he drew upon his mental connection with Bai Hao to call out to him.

“Apprentice, guess what Master--” However, before he could finish speaking, Bai Hao replied in an anxious voice!!

“Master, help m--”

Before he could finish speaking, it was to Bai Xiaochun's utter shock that their connection... was severed!

Chapter 784: Raging Murderous Aura

There was no possible way that Bai Xiaochun could have been prepared for the sudden and unexpected severing of his connection to his apprentice.

“Hao’er!!” he shouted, leaping to his feet, mind reeling with a sense of deep foreboding.

There was clearly no time to ponder the situation. All of the joy about becoming an earthly necromancer was cast deep into the back of his mind, which was now filled with only one subject: Bai Hao!

Without pausing for even a moment, he walked out of his secluded meditation chamber, flew up into the air above the Inspections Manor, and then shot with lightning-like speed in the direction he knew Bai Hao to have been in moments ago.

He even resorted to teleportations, moving with dramatic speed that caused whistling sounds to echo about. He vanished in the blink of an eye, and when he reappeared, he was on a crowded street near the edge of the borough that was home to the Inspections Manor, which was right in the middle of the city center!

It was a bustling street with many stores, and countless pedestrians walking every which way. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary about the area, but Bai Xiaochun’s sudden appearance, accompanied by intense rumbling sounds, caused countless people to look over in shock. Many even backed away reflexively.

“It’s Bai Hao!!”

“What’s he doing here...?”

As soon as people realized who it was, they started to get nervous. After all, everyone had been talking about Bai Hao recently.

Even more unsettling than his mere presence was the fact that

his expression was profoundly grim, and he was even trembling physically, as if from rage. As soon as he arrived, his divine sense spread out to fill the area, and the killing intent present within it was like an angry wave that swept out in all directions.

In response, countless faces fell, and many people even gasped.

“What’s wrong with Bai Hao?!?!”

“Heavens, what is he going to do?!?!”

“What happened?!?!” Everyone was shaken by the murderous aura radiating off of Bai Xiaochun, and many of them immediately felt as if they were in danger!

It was a rare thing to see him like this; at the moment, he almost seemed out of control. His heart overflowed with anxiety, concern, and self-blame, a combination which pushed him into utter madness. He looked like he was ready to unleash a bloodbath!!

It was with bloodshot eyes that he scanned the street, his gaze soon coming to rest on one particular shop that specialized in selling souls. However, he couldn’t detect any evidence of fighting in the area, not even the fluctuations of magical techniques.

There were absolutely no clues present, and yet, Bai Xiaochun was certain that this was the area from which Bai Hao had messaged him urgently! As for the one hundred corpse troopers who had been assigned to protect Bai Hao, they were not harmed in any way. However, they appeared to have been tampered with in some way, as they simply stood in place unmoving.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and let loose a howl that shook all creation. It was a hoarse cry filled with fury and madness, that swept out like a mad tempest.

“Corpse troopers!!”

Instantly, the corpse troopers back in the Inspections Manor all shivered, and then shot toward Bai Xiaochun in beams of light, their murderous auras raging like vortexes around them.

Dramatic rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as 3,000 corpse troopers converged on Bai Xiaochun's location.

“Lock down this entire area! Search every person, every shop, every alley. Search everything!! Find my soul slave!!” The 3,000 corpse troopers' eyes began to shine with red light, and their murderous auras grew more intense as they fanned out and began to follow the orders Bai Xiaochun had just issued.

They even began to magically seal the entire area, including the soul cultivators, regardless of the level of their cultivation base, their background, or their status.

They searched the shops, and searched the cultivators, even their bags of holding. The shop Bai Xiaochun had identified as Bai Hao's last known location was of particular focus in the investigation.

Of course, everyone was infuriated, and some began to angrily protest, and even refused to cooperate.

Bai Xiaochun remained in place, unmoving, seemingly not possessing any aura at all, only an intense, frigid coldness that caused frost to start to build up in the area.

His face almost looked like that of a corpse, his eyes growing more bloodshot by the moment, until they were almost pure red.

Coupled with his disheveled hair, he looked like a devilish god. Furthermore, the murderous feeling of the icy coldness made it seem like, if this person went crazy, he could eradicate worlds!!

He seemed completely oblivious to the commotion, immune to the shouting. In fact, he didn't even see anything around him. He was completely wrapped up in memories.

First was an image of himself teleporting into the Wildlands and finding Bai Hao's corpse.

Second was when he assumed Bai Hao's identity, went to the Bai Clan, and found Bai Hao's notes written on the floor of his hut....

Third was the Necromancer Kettle, when he actually found Bai Hao's soul....

Fourth was when Bai Hao awoke, then kowtowed and called him Master.

Fifth was in the spirit enhancement shop, where the two of them had relied upon each other for survival, with Bai Hao constantly giving him advice....

There was a sixth and a seventh....

When he finally reached the last of the memories, his heart was as black as the night, and Bai Hao's voice rang in his ears....

“Master, help m--”

As he stood there with a blank look in his eyes, his corpse troopers were causing a huge scene as they searched the area. The commotion was growing more and more intense.

“What are you doing? Do you know who I am?!?!”

“Dammit! Even if you are the inspections commissioner, you don't have the power to do this! I come from Heavenly Duke Situ's clan! How dare you search me!!”

At one point, an old man furiously made his way through the crowd to stand in front of Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Hao, I'm an honor guard from Heavenmaster Manor! If you want to go crazy, fine. I can't believe you're using your corpse trooper army like this all because of a soul slave. I'm definitely going to report this to the Grand Heavenmaster. Let me go immediately so that I can return to Heavenmaster Manor!” Other people feared the Inspections Manor, but this old man was a member of the Heavenmaster Manor. As far as he was concerned, the Inspections Manor was nothing more than an attack dog used by the grand heavenmaster.

Heavenmaster Manor was indeed a very special place. It was

actually the clan of the Grand Heavenmaster, and this so-called honor guard was essentially a personal attendant of the Grand Heavenmaster.

Even as the old man was yelling angrily, Bai Xiaochun looked up, and without saying even a single word, stepped forward and punched him right in the chest!

It happened so quickly and suddenly that the old man couldn't even react. Bai Xiaochun possessed battle prowess equivalent to a half-deva, power which completely overwhelmed this honor guard from Heavenmaster Manor.

A miserable shriek erupted from his mouth, followed by a stream of blood. He flew backward like a kite with its string cut, and before he could even land, the power of the fist strike caused him to explode into bits! A rain of blood and gore then descended onto the city....

Everyone was completely shocked by the sight, and looked over incredulously at Bai Xiaochun. That old man had been from the Heavenmaster Manor...

And yet Bai Xiaochun had killed him without uttering a single word!

“If anyone resists, kill them immediately!” he said in a hoarse, cold voice that echoed out for everyone to hear.

No one dared to offer any further resistance. It was at this point that Zhou Yixing finally arrived, just in time to see the old man getting killed. Then he looked around at the army of corpse troopers, and finally at Bai Xiaochun. The expression on Bai Xiaochun's face instantly struck fear into his heart; he had never seen him like this before.

“Milord--” he began.

Before he could say anything else, Bai Xiaochun looked over and cut him off. “Find my soul slave!”

His gaze caused Zhou Yixing's mind to reel, and even fill him with intense coldness. Without any hesitation, he joined the search effort.

Chapter 785: Warmth From The Giant Ghost King

The search didn't last for long. The corpse troopers were like fiendish monsters, who demanded cooperation even if it wasn't offered. Before long, all of the shops had been thoroughly searched, as had all the people.

Zhou Yixing's efforts were particularly speedy and thorough. Because of all the shakedowns he had participated in, he was able to leave virtually no stone unturned.

Soon, the corpse troopers began to check in.

"Nothing here."

"No clues at all!"

"Nobody here...."

After all 3,000 corpse troopers gave their reports, Zhou Yixing nervously approached Bai Xiaochun, lowered his voice, and said, "Milord, we weren't able to find any clues at all.... We checked all the shops and all the people.... Nobody even saw that soul.... We looked especially closely at those shops over there...."

The more Zhou Yixing spoke, the softer his voice got, until he trailed off nervously and bowed his head.

As of this moment, all of the happiness and glory that Bai Xiaochun had felt were gone, replaced by intense coldness and bitter madness.

And of course, he blamed himself. His best guess was that someone had come to suspect his identity, and had taken Bai Hao in an attempt to get evidence. He also felt guilty; if he hadn't been so distracted and negligent, he wouldn't have failed to provide Bai Hao with sufficient protection.

Most bitter of all was the realization that if he hadn't been so

immersed in flame conjuring, he wouldn't have needed to send Bai Hao out to get souls.

“My apprentice... has done so much for me...” Bai Xiaochun's heart hurt, and it was impossible to keep his emotions under control. He could not comfort himself, and could not even breathe steadily. It was very obvious that this was not just some random misunderstanding, and yet, he had no idea who exactly was targeting him.

With that, he took out his Inspections Manor command medallion and used its special ability to check the records of Arch-Emperor City going back several months.

However, no amount of searching produced any clues. The Inspections Manor had access to all of the intelligence reports in the entire city, and yet... he found nothing helpful.

After all, the Inspections Manor would usually have clues build up after an event occurred, and Bai Hao had gone missing only moments ago. If the Inspections Manor did manage to get some clues, they would likely filter in through reports that would come in days later.

But Bai Xiaochun couldn't wait that long. Every breath of time that passed was a moment of danger for Bai Hao, and Bai Xiaochun knew that if he didn't rescue him, he would live in regret for the rest of his days.

Anxiety rising to maddening levels, Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth and took out a transmission jade slip. For the first time since becoming the inspections commissioner... he took the initiative to contact the Giant Ghost King!

It wasn't that he hadn't thought to do so on previous occasions, or that he couldn't. It was just that, as the inspections commissioner working directly for the Grand Heavenmaster, it wasn't very appropriate for the two of them to have dealings. After all, the heavenly kings and the Grand Heavenmaster weren't

exactly on good terms. However, he had never forgotten the feelings that had grown between them. And right now, Bai Xiaochun didn't care about the detriment of direct contact with the Giant Ghost King!

The events that had played out were too strange, and Bai Xiaochun simply couldn't come up with any ideas about what might have happened. And for some reason, he had the feeling... that considering not a single scrap of a clue had been left behind, he needed the help of someone with the experience and cultivation base of the Giant Ghost King. A demigod!

Back in the royal palace in Giant Ghost City, the Giant Ghost King was currently dining with Mrs. Chen. Even as the two of them laughed and chatted, he suddenly frowned and pulled out a jade slip.

Snorting, he transmitted his voice into the jade slip. "Well, if it isn't the exalted Inspections Commissioner Bai Hao. What could possibly have caused you to think of me today? If you have something important to say, spit it the hell out."

"Your Highness, I've run into some trouble...." As soon as Bai Xiaochun's hoarse, maddened voice reached the ears of the Giant Ghost King, his jaw dropped, and his expression turned serious.

"Calm down, you little brat. What happened. Tell me everything!" As the Giant Ghost King listened, his eyes began to glow, and intense pressure began to radiate off of him. Gradually, he rose to his feet and walked out onto a balcony overlooking the palace. A grim look could be seen in his eyes as he stood there for a moment, and then responded to Bai Xiaochun.

"No evidence. No fluctuations. No clues... Those three facts alone are very telling. I know what happened! A demigod made a move against you. It seems unlikely that it would be the Grand Heavenmaster. After all, if he wanted to do something to you, he wouldn't do so in such a complicated way. He could just wave his

hand!

“However, considering that you’re in Arch-Emperor City, the fact that the deed was done with such seamless perfection indicates that it wasn’t just the work of a demigod. There must have been multiple clans working together to provide support.... That would be the only way to do it without leaving behind even the slightest evidence or clue!

“Bai Hao, you’ve offended so many people that I don’t think even I can figure out who was behind it....

“But at the moment, the more you get involved in this situation, the worse it’s going to get.... You’re a smart person, Hao’er.... Why don’t you just come back to Giant Ghost City? Leave that nest of vipers. Let’s see who would dare to plot against you with me around!” Not once during his little speech did the Giant Ghost King ask why this particular soul slave was so important to Bai Xiaochun, or who the soul slave was....

He had no desire to know, and actually felt that being left in the dark about the matter was the best thing.

The Giant Ghost King’s message caused a warm feeling to rise up in Bai Xiaochun’s heart. However, he knew that if he went back to Giant Ghost City, that it would cause the hatred of all the nobility and aristocracy to fall upon the Giant Ghost King himself. That was something he didn't want to happen.

Furthermore, he couldn’t just accept the fact that Bai Hao had gone missing. In fact, his killing intent only continued to grow stronger, and the intense coldness around him more biting.

“Hang in there, Hao’er,” he said in his heart. “I don’t care what storms arise because of it... Master is going to find you!!”

He swore this oath with the last bit of warmth that existed in his heart, after which it turned completely ice cold.

“I don’t care who did this... even if it’s a demigod. When I find

out who it is... I'm going to exterminate their entire clan!!”

Without the slightest hesitation, he flew up into the air, followed by his corpse trooper army and Zhou Yixing. His destination was... the imperial palace!

Considering that this was a matter which affected all of Arch-Emperor City, the only person who could truly resolve it... was the Grand Heavenmaster!

Although Bai Xiaochun knew that the Grand Heavenmaster's stance toward him had changed recently, and that the Inspections Manor was actually relatively weak within the power structure, he currently had no other alternatives.

“The Grand Heavenmaster treated me well in the past. Perhaps all the things I worried about before are unfounded. Maybe he doesn't really want to get rid of me....”

A blood-colored glow could be seen in his eyes as he shot at top speed through the city toward the imperial palace. Upon arrival, he left most of the corpse troopers outside, and only took his Quasi-Deva Realm guard with him as he headed toward Heavenmaster Hall.

As of this moment, only two hours had passed since his connection to Bai Hao had been severed!

Most of that time had been wasted while the corpse troopers performed their search. Even still, Bai Xiaochun was reacting about as fast as was possible.

The Grand Heavenmaster wasn't alone in Heavenmaster Hall. He was joined by eight other individuals, who were seated in front of him, respectful expressions on their faces as they talked in low tones.

Two of them were heavenly dukes, with one being Chen Haosong, and the other a middle-aged man with a beautiful, flowing beard. Behind those two were six heavenly marquises.

Currently, the person speaking to the Grand Heavenmaster was none other than the beautifully bearded man.

“Grand Heavenmaster, the sects from the Heavenspan region have been particularly active this year. They’ve been building up forces along all four sections of the Great Wall.... According to the clues we’ve unearthed, and the information provided by our spies, we are certain that the Celestial from Heavenspan Island... is preparing for an assault the likes of which comes around only once in a thousand years!”

It was in this moment that Bai Xiaochun requested to see the Grand Heavenmaster.

The request was granted, and Bai Xiaochun entered the hall and stood off to the side. As for the bearded man, he glanced briefly at Bai Xiaochun, and then continued speaking to the Grand Heavenmaster.

“Although the four heavenly kings have their mission to defend the border lands, they can do more than just be a passive threat. They can actively cast fear into the hearts of the enemy! I would like to propose placing more emphasis on watching all four sections of the Great Wall. Furthermore, your humble servant hereby requests to go to the front lines on the northern section of the Great Wall to offer military consultation!”

The Grand Heavenmaster didn’t respond at first. Instead, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, whose murderous aura and bloodshot eyes made him seem very different from usual. The Grand Heavenmaster’s brow furrowed....

Chapter 786: Grand Heavenmaster, Your Humble Servant Has A Plan!

The Grand Heavenmaster looked away from Bai Xiaochun and coolly said, “We’ll discuss your request in a moment.”

When the bearded man heard that, he held his tongue and looked over at Chen Haosong.

Heavenmaster Hall was very quiet. At this point, Bai Xiaochun looked up, took a deep breath, and prepared to speak. However, the Grand Heavenmaster didn't let him.

Looking over at Chen Haosong, he said, “Heavenly Duke Chen, did you also come to speak about the Great Wall?”

Chen Haosong’s expression was the same as ever as he took a few steps forward, clasped hands and bowed.

“Grand Heavenmaster, the situation at the Great Wall is urgent. The slightest unexpected circumstance there would have grave ramifications in the Wildlands. I also believe that we should beef up the defenses. We need to send more soul cultivators and more necromancers to hold the line!

“However, an effort like that would require much soul medicine and other resources. Grand Heavenmaster, would you please consider granting permission for this? Furthermore, I would also be willing to go to the front lines to supervise the war effort!” With that, he clasped hands and bowed again.

Considering that two heavenly dukes were essentially offering the same advice, even the Grand Heavenmaster would need to take it seriously.

“How much in terms of resources?”

Without the slightest hesitation, Chen Haosong said, “8,000,000,000 portions of soul medicine, as well as roughly

1,000,000,000 other items necessary for routine cultivation and spell formation construction. With those resources, I am confident in being able to prevent the Heavenspan River cultivators from taking even a single step into the Wildlands!”

No expression could be seen on the face of the Grand Heavenmaster, although he happened to be tapping the arm of his throne with his index finger. Inwardly, he was feeling very angry. The amount of resources being requested to shore up the defensive lines was much more than usual.

And yet, there was little the Grand Heavenmaster could do about that. Even though much of the aristocracy was loyal to him, everyone had their own personal ambitions, and wanted to further the glory and honor of their clan. That was why war efforts always involved significant expenditure, and also one reason that the Grand Heavenmaster couldn't outright forbid the clans from accumulating wealth.

Again, Heavenmaster Hall fell into silence. Nobody spoke. Even Bai Xiaochun could tell what the Grand Heavenmaster was thinking, that the resources being requested were vast. On any other occasion, he would have been shocked to hear such numbers, but right now, he was so worried about Bai Hao that he didn't have time to think about the matter. Furthermore, every moment that ticked by meant more danger for his apprentice.

However, he could also tell that, to the Grand Heavenmaster, the matters at hand were more important than requests from himself. He couldn't just interrupt. In fact, doing so would most likely make things worse.

He could only hope that the current discussion would be wrapped up as quickly as possible, after which he could ask for the Grand Heavenmaster's help.

Countless thoughts ran through Bai Xiaochun's mind, and because of his worry and anxiety, he didn't even notice that the

Grand Heavenmaster had turned to look at him.

The Grand Heavenmaster could tell that Bai Xiaochun was very anxious, and that he clearly had some important matter he wished to discuss. At this point, his eyes glittered, and an expression of displeasure appeared on his face.

“From the moment you arrived, Bai Hao, it was clear that you had some urgent matter on your mind. Could it be that the Inspections Manor has come up with some important new evidence?”

Shaken, Chen Haosong and everyone else in the room looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun could hardly breathe as he stood there and looked back at the Grand Heavenmaster. The clear displeasure in the Grand Heavenmaster’s gaze shattered any notions within Bai Xiaochun that the the man wasn’t interested in discarding him. Heart trembling, he decided that since things were bad, he would just have to hope to get lucky.

“Grand Heavenmaster, this matter doesn’t have to do with the Inspections Manor. Your humble ser--”

Before he could say anything further, the Grand Heavenmaster waved his hand to interrupt. “Since it’s not an Inspections Manor matter, then keep it to yourself.”

His words struck Bai Xiaochun like lightning, causing his mind to reel. What little bit of hope had existed in his heart was washed away with bitterness. Although he had long since come to suspect that the Grand Heavenmaster’s attitude had changed, to have that suspicion confirmed still caused him to shiver inwardly.

“If you want to get rid of me, fine, but you don’t have to be so obvious about it....” At this point, it was clear that he wouldn’t be getting any help from the Grand Heavenmaster in the matter of Bai Hao’s disappearance.

As for the two heavenly dukes present, their eyes flickered in response to the Grand Heavenmaster's words, and Chen Haosong even smiled coldly.

From what he could tell, the Grand Heavenmaster was sending a clear message here that his previous tool was about to be discarded.

Various expressions could be seen on the faces of the six heavenly marquises, and all of them were chuckling coldly in their hearts. From what they could tell, it was obvious that this Bao Hao was about to be discarded, which would be cause of rejoicing for all of the nobility and aristocracy.

They were all very familiar with the Grand Heavenmaster, and knew that Bai Xiaochun was now like a rowboat in a stormy sea, who could capsize and sink at any moment.

What was occurring right now only provided more evidence of that very fact.

“Bai Hao's days are definitely numbered!”

“It seems he will suffer a much different fate than the last inspections commissioner, Hei Ming.... Let's see if he knows his place. If he's smart, he'll simply resign, and hope that the Grand Heavenmaster gives him a chance to live. If he continues to serve as the inspections commissioner, then he'll definitely end up dead!”

“Hmph. Even if he does resign, the Grand Heavenmaster won't just let him go. He's offended too many people. Everybody wants him dead! Without the inspections commissioner title to protect him, he'll be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt!”

Everyone in the hall was thinking something different, but all of them were looking at the situation with coldness. Although Bai Xiaochun couldn't see it in their eyes, he knew their general attitude.

He was having trouble breathing smoothly, and his eyes were completely bloodshot. Anxiety and worry regarding Bai Hao had completely consumed him. It was only made worse by thoughts of what would happen if his identity were revealed. And then there was the sudden change in the Grand Heavenmaster's stance.

Furthermore, it seemed obvious that news of what had just happened would rapidly spread through Arch-Emperor City. Soon, all of the nobility and aristocracy would know. Before long, their fear of him would diminish, and they would begin to test and challenge him. It wouldn't take long before he would have no way to make it out of the situation alive.

By now, it was obvious why people had felt confident enough to make a move on Bai Hao. Obviously, they had guessed that the Grand Heavenmaster planned to get rid of his inspections commissioner.

If he didn't do something about the situation, then when the people who had taken Bai Hao learned of it, whatever fear they still felt would vanish. Bai Hao's situation would be more hopeless than ever, and Bai Xiaochun would be in extreme danger.

If he wanted to save Bai Hao, he had to stabilize his position. He needed even more power than before. Only then could he strike fear into the hearts of Bai Hao's captors, and at the same time, use his newfound power to get the clues he needed!

Everything revolved around the Grand Heavenmaster. No matter how he did it, he had to convince the Grand Heavenmaster not to get rid of him. And more than that, he needed to make himself more important!

Only then would he have a chance!

"You people are forcing me to do this!" he thought, gritting his teeth as he stood there trembling. At this point, he had to throw caution to the wind. He had to flip the table over! It was now time to follow the plan Bai Hao himself had come up with when Bai

Xiaochun had first been appointed to be the inspections commissioner!

Bai Hao had come up with the plan based on speculations regarding what the Grand Heavenmaster would eventually do. Now, the Grand Heavenmaster was doing just that. In the past, Bai Xiaochun had felt the plan to be too ruthless.

After all, whatever killing intent the nobility and aristocracy felt toward him right now was only temporary, and would likely fade as the years went by. But if he went through with Bai Hao's plan, then the nobles and aristocrats would hate him for the rest of their lives. It would be a hatred that seeped down into their bones, and even their souls!

That was why he had always hesitated to go through with it. But right now, he needed to be more important to the Grand Heavenmaster than ever. And he had to find Bai Hao! And since he couldn't do it by himself, he needed the help of a benefactor. The Grand Heavenmaster! Furthermore, he needed the help of numerous people throughout the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, people who would act as his agents among all of the various clans.

He needed to know about everything that happened in all of the clans. Only then could his investigation produce the results he needed, and reveal the party who had captured Bai Hao!

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he took a deep breath. Eyes bloodshot, he took a step forward in the direction of the Grand Heavenmaster. Clasp hands and bowing deeply, he spoke in the coldest, most sinister of voices.

“Grand Heavenmaster, your humble servant came here today because I have a plan. A plan to solve all of your problems!”

Chapter 787: Vicious Plan Of The Bastards!

In response to Bai Xiaochun's words, all eyes in Heavenmaster Hall shifted to focus on him. The six heavenly marquises were clearly taken by surprise, and all of a sudden, they realized that Bai Xiaochun was the epitome of ruthlessness. Maybe he was a toothless tiger, but even still, he left them feeling very unsettled.

Chen Haosong and the beautifully bearded heavenly duke were visibly displeased, and their hearts were beginning to pound.

The grand heavenmaster looked over at Bai Xiaochun. When it came to his plan to cast him aside, it wasn't the cause of even an iota of guilt within him. As far as he was concerned, everyone in heaven and earth was a pawn to be used at his leisure, and could be classified into only two types: useful, and not useful.

Before, this Bai Hao had been a useful tool. Now, he was not very useful. Of course, he hadn't planned to kill him. Furthermore, the fact that he wasn't useful at the moment didn't outweigh the fact that he was important to both the Hell-Emperor and the Giant Ghost King. As such, he knew that he could potentially be made useful again later.

Furthermore, the words he had just spoken immediately sparked the grand heavenmaster's interest. After all, he had not forgotten that Bai Xiaochun was the one who came up with the plan carried out during the ancestral sacrifices!

"Grand Heavenmaster," Bai Xiaochun continued in a near growl, "your humble servant's plan is the type which should not be made privy to too many people who are not part of it."

Smiling, the grand heavenmaster waved his hand, and before the six heavenly marquises could react, they began to fade away, and were soon gone, removed to a location outside the imperial palace.

Unsightly expressions could be seen on their faces as they

exchanged glances and then snorted coldly.

“He’s bluffing, that’s all it is. It seems this Bai Hao just won’t give up!”

“Hmph! Struggling all the way into the grave! Well, the more he does that, the worse off he’ll be!”

Meanwhile, back in Heavenmaster Hall, the grand heavenmaster’s expression was exactly the same as before as he said, “Go ahead.”

Other than he and Bai Xiaochun, the only people present were Chen Haosong and the bearded heavenly duke, who stood there motionless as they looked at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered as he looked over at the two heavenly dukes. As of this moment, he knew for sure that these two were trusted confidantes of the grand heavenmaster.

“Who would have thought that Chen Haosong is actually a close adviser to the grand heavenmaster....” His brow furrowed slightly as he thought back to everything he knew about Chen Haosong. Something about the whole situation seemed off, but there wasn’t time to ponder the situation right now.

Sighing softly, he looked at the grand heavenmaster and continued, “Your humble servant disagrees with Heavenly Duke Chen about what should be the priority right now!!”

Immediately, the grand heavenmaster’s eyes flickered, and the gazes of the two heavenly dukes turned sharper than ever.

“According to the traditions of the dynasty, there are 108 heavenly marquises, ten heavenly dukes, and four heavenly kings.... They are hereditary positions held in perpetuity, meaning that if a heavenly marquis dies, then as long as his clan isn’t exterminated, or some other drastic situations arise, then there is virtually no chance of someone outside of that clan taking on his mantle. Furthermore, only a direct descendant of the previous

heavenly marquis can succeed him!” Bai Xiaochun spoke in an icy cold voice, and his eyes were both bloodshot and ruthless-looking. At the moment, he had decided to throw caution to the wind. Because he had no suspects in the disappearance of Bai Hao, he currently had to be suspicious of everyone!

“Even if there are no suitable successors because of cultivation base issues, the position will still remain with that bloodline, and they will simply wait for an appropriate person to rise up!

“That is why all heavenly marquises select their successors long in advance, and only from the direct bloodline of their clan. Special attention is given to that person in their cultivation, so that they can be groomed to be the perfect successor!

“That is how the arrangement works for heavenly marquises, and it’s the same with the heavenly dukes and heavenly kings!” Bai Xiaochun spoke with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron, and the grand heavenmaster listened with rapt attention. Clearly, he was very interested to hear what was to be said next.

Chen Haosong and the bearded heavenly duke were frowning, and were clearly completely in the dark about what Bai Xiaochun was getting at.

Flicking his sleeve, Bai Xiaochun raised his voice and continued speaking at a breakneck speed. “Because of this tradition, there are a bit more than a hundred clans who have an eternal place within the dynasty. Furthermore, they only grow more powerful as time passes, and accumulate staggering amounts of wealth!

“That wealth is the true source of their power, and their confidence! It is the foundation of everything! As long as everything goes their way, things are smooth. But with the right spark, they could erupt into violence with the resources of a whole nation at their disposal!

“In fact, if drastic upheavals ever struck the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, and more than one hundred such clans joined forces,

their profound resources would make them far too powerful!”

At this point, Chen Haosong realized what was going on. Eyes cold, he said, “Shut your mouth, Bai Hao. This is complete and utter hogwash!

“Perhaps the heavenly kings are exceptions, but the heavenly marquises and heavenly dukes run huge clans! They have to take care of every clan member, and make sure they have sufficient battle prowess, not for themselves, and not to rise up as independent forces, but as the reserve power of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty!

“In fact, you have simply no idea how expensive it is to take care of a clan and increase its battle prowess. And that's all to maintain the reserve powers of the dynasty!” As far as he was concerned, what Bai Xiaochun was currently saying was very dangerous.

“I don't know?” Bai Xiaochun said, looking over at him. Although Bai Xiaochun generally feared death, and was usually a coward, he knew that now was not the time to fall back on such tendencies.

“I think there are probably few people in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty who know more than I do about such things. How many clans have you shaken down, Heavenly Duke Chen? And how many have I?

“Do you know how much wealth I saw in each of those shakedown? How much reserve savings?

“Well let me tell you. In fact, I'll spell it out very, very clearly. I've shaken down eighteen heavenly marquis clans!! And you know what? Every single one of those clans had amassed wealth that could only be described as sufficient to shake heaven and earth!

“The Li Clan had saved up 1,000,000,000 portions of soul medicine, 279 soulgrounds, and 1,000 inactive large-scale spell formations. And how about the Chen Clan? 2,000,000,000

portions of soul medicine! That alone could fund thirty percent of the military expenditures you just referred to, Heavenly Duke Chen! Can you imagine how many cultivators it would take to use up that many resources?

“In the third wave of shakedowns, the clan of Heavenly Marquis Gongsun Dao turned out to have hundreds of thousands of sets of materials to create spell formations! Plus, they had 10,000,000 soul bombs! If those bombs detonated, they could destroy most of Arch-Emperor City!

“If the heavenly marquis clans are like that, then what do you think the heavenly dukes’ are like?! In this matter, I will not be shutting my mouth. You will!” By the time he finished speaking, he was yelling. Chen Haosong’s chest heaved as he glared angrily at him, and yet, he was incapable of offering a retort. As for the grand heavenmaster, he simply sat there quietly, looking at Bai Xiaochun with shining eyes.

The one to speak next was the bearded heavenly duke. “Even if the heavenly marquis clans have deep reserve savings and power, Bai Hao, that only goes to show how strong the Arch-Emperor Dynasty is. One of the main reasons the Celestial can’t invade us easily is because of how intrepid and valiant we are. The resources we have help us groom our successors, and pass on their strength from generation to generation. They protect the glory of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, and also ensure that there are only 108 heavenly marquises! In fact, that is also why the number of heavenly dukes and kings is limited!

“When you have a sharp blade, you keep it that way, you don’t grind it down until it’s dull!”

Bai Xiaochun waved his hand dismissively at the two heavenly dukes. Focusing on the grand heavenmaster, he said, “Wrong! I believe that the most important principle in the world is fairness. Fairness is the only way to ensure the continued growth of the dynasty. That is the only way to guarantee that a dynasty can

stand strong and tall!

“Why do these clans only view their certain heirs as important? Why do those heirs get all the resources? Why are other children of the clan so vastly unimportant? It's not fair to the other children, and it's especially unfair to the bastards!

“Why is only a designated successor allowed to take over for a dead heavenly marquis, and thus control the wealth of the clan? It's simply not fair to both the other members of the direct bloodline, and the bastard children!

“Therefore, I suggest... that the wealth of the clans that make up the aristocracy be equally distributed.... Give that wealth to all heirs, regardless of their status in the bloodline, and regardless of whether or not they are bastards. Everyone should have the chance to become a successor, and everyone should have an equal share of the resources!

“Heavenly marquises. Heavenly dukes. Heavenly kings.... Their wealth and resources should be equally divided among all their children!

“That would be a gift to the people, and grace to the commoners. Only in that way can the Arch-Emperor Dynasty grow stronger than ever. I hope that in the future, we won't just have 108 heavenly marquises. I hope that we will have many more. And more heavenly dukes too!

“At the same time, everyone will proclaim the glory of the grand heavenmaster, thank him eternally, and offer oaths of unending loyalty!!” As his voice echoed out with thunderous volume in Heavenmaster Hall, Bai Xiaochun flicked his sleeve to add emphasis to his words.

This was... a truly vicious plan!!

Chapter 788: Proclamation of Universal Grace!

It was a vicious plan through and through!!

In fact, it was vicious to a completely shocking degree, to a level that would leave many people bristling with anger. Chen Haosong felt like his heart was being struck by hundreds of thousands of lightning bolts. Face falling, he actually staggered slightly as he stood there.

“Grand Heavenmaster, you mustn’t do such a thing!!” he said, trembling. He had many heirs, and if this plan were carried out, it could shatter his entire clan!

Furthermore, nobody would be able to revolt against the Grand Heavenmaster because of it. After all, he wouldn’t be the one to take away the resources! The chaos which would result in each and every clan would force them all to do everything in their power just to remain stable!

In the end, it would essentially take all the biggest clans and reduce them to dozens of smaller clans!

With no clans able to maintain a dominant position, it would be hard to even state what the political situation would be in the years to come. Chen Haosong didn’t even dare to think about it.

“This Bai Hao is completely ruthless!” he cursed inwardly. “Why won’t he just go and die already!?!?”

This vicious plan was clearly an extenuation of the shakedowns. However, the ones to be shaking down the clans wouldn’t be Bai Xiaochun, it would be the children in the clans, and those people in the clan who were loyal to them!!

Bai Xiaochun was asking to hand a sharp blade to the bastard sons and the members of the direct bloodlines who had no right of succession. Then he would have them raise that blade up over the

heads of the clan as a whole!

It was a very crafty plan. It would sow chaos within all of the nobility and aristocracy by turning the clans on themselves internally. The people who currently held power would be badly burned, and no one else....

After all, all of the children were members of the direct bloodline, and carried the requisite blood of the clan. Short of exterminating all descendents, any given marquis, duke, or king would be incapable of smoothly resolving all of the resulting conflicts.

Contrariwise, it would be a boon to the bastard sons and other children with no right of succession. Although such people normally did get access to better cultivation resources than the average cultivator, it was nothing compared to the true successors. For the most part, they only slightly benefited from the vast wealth of their clans.

But if this plan were to be carried out, everything would change.... Everyone would have equal access to the wealth, successors, non-successors, and bastards alike!

How could people like Chen Haosong not go mad!? How could they not be passionately opposed to it? Of course, unluckiest of all... were the current appointed successors!

They would be suffering catastrophic blows, and their futures would essentially be ruined! One could only imagine how much they would hate Bai Xiaochun. Whatever hatred they already felt would increase exponentially, and would permeate their very marrow.

As for the people currently in power, they would be skating on even thinner ice. All of the wealth they had worked so hard to build up, all of their savings, would be divided up in the clan. It would make it impossible for them to say if they could continue to bask in their previous glory.

On top of that, such people would then be forced to watch helplessly as their chosen successor squabbled and fought with the other children. Their hatred for Bai Xiaochun would reach towering heights, to the point where they would desire nothing more than to drink his blood, dine on his flesh, and crush his bones to bits.

Before, Bai Xiaochun had been a dangerous knife that could be directed at anyone, which was why everyone had wanted him dead. But now, that knife was threatening everyone!

“This is complete insanity!!” the bearded heavenly duke said, chills running up and down his spine. Although he was loyal to the Grand Heavenmaster, the mere thought of how terrifying this plan was left him in utter terror of Bai Xiaochun!

Scalp tingling in fear, he clasped hands toward the Grand Heavenmaster and bowed deeply. “Grand Heavenmaster, you mustn’t do such a thing!”

As for the Grand Heavenmaster, he sat there in his throne, breathing unsteadily, which was a rare thing. As he looked at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes shone with brilliant light.

Never could he have anticipated that Bai Xiaochun would come up with a plan like this. From beginning to end, he had explained everything in perfect detail. As far as the Grand Heavenmaster was concerned, there was no downside. And the upsides... virtually defied description. It was a plot that was tailor-made for him!

Although it wouldn’t necessarily resolve the issues of the military expenditures, it would solve the crux of the issue. The greed of the nobility and aristocracy would be ended. Furthermore, any profits they made in the future would be evenly distributed, which would lead to the overall strengthening of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty as a whole. Plus, everyone who benefited from the new arrangement would be deeply loyal to the Grand Heavenmaster, who would be the source of everything they had gained!

At the same time, it would prevent any one clan from becoming so powerful that they could eventually threaten his position!

The Grand Heavenmaster's eyes were shining brightly. Before, the only use he had found in Bai Xiaochun was how he caused a big scene, striking fear into the aristocracy, and forcing the Arch-Emperor to go into secluded meditation. He had also pushed the Grand Heavenmaster to the peak of his current power.

But now, he thought back to all of the wealth Bai Xiaochun had sent to him during the clan shakedowns, and immediately understood the main point of the argument. And then, the gears in his head started to turn.

Now that he thought about it, the reserve savings of these clans... really were inappropriately large. He also understood that the very extreme circumstances in which he had exterminated eighteen heavenly marquises recently were very unique. At any other time, they would likely have led to a rebellion.

Furthermore, taking out eighteen heavenly marquises was the limit of what he was capable of. If he continued on with such action, it would lead to complete revolt.

That was another reason why he had been contemplating expelling Bai Xiaochun: to sate the anger of the masses.

But the plan which had just been presented was flawless. He didn't have to take any risks, and would come out victorious without ever having to fight. He could dismantle the aristocracy with almost no effort.

If the plan were carried out, not only would people be unable to use it as an excuse to revolt, but most people would be delighted by it. Just as Bai Xiaochun had said, their profound gratitude would be given to the person who had given them the biggest chance of their lifetimes, the Grand Heavenmaster! Supporting him would be the same as safeguarding themselves!

As for the possibility of some unknown factors coming into play, the Grand Heavenmaster was confident in being able to handle them.

With such thoughts on his mind, the Grand Heavenmaster looked at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes shining with praise. As of this moment, he realized that his previous plan of getting rid of Bai Xiaochun didn't make much sense. He was a rare genius!

He could cut down the enemy, handle important matters, and put good plans and ideas forward!

His heart was beginning to pound, and soon, he simply couldn't cover up his pleasure. He began to laugh uproariously, a laughter which filled the two heavenly dukes with incredible terror.

“Grand Heavenmaster, you mustn't do such a thing!”

“Please reconsider, Grand Heavenmaster!!”

Bai Xiaochun completely ignored the two heavenly dukes, and focused completely on the Grand Heavenmaster. And when he saw the praise in the man's eyes, and heard his laughter, he breathed a sigh of relief.

He also knew... that not only had he resolved a major crisis, he had also pushed himself to new heights of power!

And yet, he felt no joy. His heart was still as cold as eyes, and his murderous aura continued to grow stronger.

“Just hold on a little bit longer, Hao'er....”

Laughing, the Grand Heavenmaster ignored the two heavenly dukes and turned to Bai Xiaochun. “A blessing for all living creatures. Divine kindness from above! From the mortals to the nobles, Wildlander clans will no longer be divided by age or bloodline. All wealth will be evenly distributed! Call it a Proclamation of Universal Grace!

“This is a wonderful thing for the Arch-Emperor Dynasty. In fact,

I will support the new arrangement myself. Let it begin in Heavenmaster Manor, and spread to fill the entire dynasty. Heavenly marquises. Heavenly dukes. Heavenly kings. All will comply!” Continuing to laugh heartily, the Grand Heavenmaster rose excitedly from his throne.

“Bai Hao, hear my command!” he said, waving his hand dramatically.

“Your humble servant awaits his orders!” Bai Xiaochun said decisively.

“Henceforth, you will command 5,000 troops in your role as inspections commissioner. You will also be responsible for enforcing the Proclamation of Universal Grace. Take your leave and get to work!” With that, he flicked his sleeve, causing Bai Xiaochun and Chen Haosong to fade away from Heavenmaster Hall.

Only the bearded heavenly duke remained behind, frowning and sighing bitterly. He knew that there was no way to change what was happening, and that the plan was actually perfectly suited for the Grand Heavenmaster.

Taking a few steps forward, he clasped hands and bowed.

“Grand Heavenmaster, you can’t leave that kid alive. He’s truly venomous, a clan-reviling brute! First was the matter with the ancestral sacrifices, and now this.... The nobility and aristocracy all hate him! Even I can’t help but feel coldness in my heart!

“Furthermore, there are some questions about his identity. I think there is a strong chance... that he’s actually Bai Xiaochun!! His heart truly knows no bounds when it comes to evil!” Clearly, this bearded heavenly duke had truly been frightened by Bai Xiaochun’s plan.

“There are going to be a lot of people who support this new arrangement. The bastard sons and auxiliary bloodline cultivators

are going to go wild with joy. The worst off of all will be the arrogant heirs apparent, and the chosen who already have a problem with him. He's basically killing them by proxy!"

Chapter 789: Silver-Armored Corpse

Trooper

The Grand Heavenmaster smiled, and a profound gleam appeared in his eyes. “This isn’t a matter of him getting someone else to do his dirty work for him. He’s going crazy trying to find his soul slave!”

“Soul slave?” the bearded heavenly duke said in surprise.

“Someone just captured that soul slave of his. Whoever it was knew how to do it in just the right way so that I wouldn’t notice in time. Furthermore, no evidence was left behind....”

The bearded heavenly duke was clearly stunned.

“Go look into who did it.” The Grand Heavenmaster knew that whoever had done the deed had planned on him not interfering. And the truth was that, before Bai Xiaochun revealed his plan, he wouldn’t have. But now he was hesitating.

The bearded duke hesitated for only a short moment. “I suspect that only those four would be able to do something like this. Your humble servant... will look into it immediately!” He paused, then added, “However, I still think Bai Hao is a ruthless schemer who must not be left alive!”

“You’re only looking at things on the surface,” the Grand Heavenmaster said with a profoundly intelligent smile. “The Giant Ghost King only has a single daughter, and therefore, Bai Hao’s plan won’t affect him. The fact that his plan protects the Giant Ghost King shows that he knows how to be grateful!

“If he was the completely ungrateful type, I wouldn’t dare to use him. However, considering that he is, I think I’ll bless him just the same as the Giant Ghost King has! If he follows the Giant Ghost King, his prospects will be limited. But if he follows me, he will have no such limitations!

“He is definitely a ruthless dagger, but the important thing is that I hold him in my hand. The Giant Ghost King doesn’t qualify, only I do.

“The Giant Ghost King tried to get him together with Zhou Zimo, right? Well, he likes Chen Manyao, so if he manages this upcoming affair properly, then I’ll give him her hand! Afterward, he can become my stepson!” Although the Grand Heavenmaster did not speak in a loud voice, there was something profoundly meaningful to his words. In response, the bearded heavenly duke simply voiced his assent and left.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun had appeared outside of the imperial palace, a very grim look on his face, his eyes shining with cold light, and his murderous aura seething. He looked like he had gone mad, and was now so tightly wound that he seemed ready to snap and kill someone at a moment’s notice.

He sent out a thought, which caused his army of corpse troopers to fly over, along with Zhou Yixing, who was feeling very apprehensive. It was without a single word that he followed Bai Xiaochun all the way back to the Inspections Manor.

He reached the place with blinding speed, and instead of descending and landing inside, he hovered in the air above it and pulled out his command medallion. After sending some divine sense into it, an image of the area below the manor appeared in his mind.

He saw more than 90,000 coffins, all of them visible in complete detail, and surrounded by a sinister and cold aura.

Without the slightest hesitation, he sent his divine sense sweeping over them, selecting 2,000 and saying to them, “Awaken!”

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The intense sounds which erupted out from the manor caused

the ground to shake and the sky to flash with bright colors. Virtually all of the soul cultivators in the area could feel what was happening.

“Something is happening at the Inspections Manor again!?”

“What... what is that black cloud?!?!”

“Heavens! I can’t believe that so many coffins are visible! How is this even possible?! Isn't everybody talking about how Bai Hao is in big trouble?!?!”

Amidst the resulting commotion, quite a few people flew up into the air and saw what looked like a black cloud above the Inspections Manor, radiating a shocking murderous aura.

Even as everything in the area shook, the coffins began to swirl about through the air.

There were 2,000 of them, a shocking sight, and yet things weren’t over yet. At this point, the coffins began to open up, and numerous black-armored corpse troopers emerged from within them.

Especially noteworthy was the fact that five of the coffins were unique. All of them had ornate designs on them, and as for the last of that group, it was a different color: silver!!

From within the first four of those coffins emerged... hulking, black-armored corpse troopers who had half-deva cultivation bases!

Most shocking, though, was the figure which emerged from the silver coffin, a middle-aged soul cultivator... with silver armor!

Just like all the other corpse troopers, his face was completely expressionless, and he was surrounded by a shockingly cold air. However, as soon as he opened his eyes, thunder crackled in the air above, and the fluctuations of a deva erupted out from him.

At the same time, the command medallion in Bai Xiaochun’s

hand vibrated a few times. There was something completely obstinate and unyielding about this silver-armored warrior that the command medallion instantly identified and connected with.

As the deva fluctuations erupted out, the burly man's murderous aura erupted out, and it was so strong that it immediately caused the other roughly 5,000 corpse troopers to tremble, as if they were matchlessly weak.

As for the nine half-deva corpse troopers, they were also trembling. The only one who didn't was that one corpse trooper who always accompanied Bai Xiaochun. As he looked up, his eyes shone with a strange light, and he also erupted with the shocking fluctuations of a deva. Clearly, he and the silver-armored corpse trooper were equally matched!

Everyone who saw that gasped and was completely taken aback!

“Heavens! He has two deva corpse troopers, nine half-devas, and an army 5,000 strong!!”

“Dammit! Whoever was just saying that Bai Hao is in trouble was obviously just trying to start rumors! He's not in any trouble. He's gotten more powerful than ever!!”

“He's already at the same level as the previous inspections commissioner, Hei Ming! 5,000 corpse troopers....”

“That's the same level of power as the four heavenly kings and the Grand Heavenmaster! Bai Hao is the number one figure under the Demigod Realm!!”

Shocked, people began to take out jade slips to spread the news. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun hovered in the air above the Inspections Manor, looking at the two most powerful corpse troopers facing off. Clearly, the silver-armored corpse trooper didn't want to be controlled. Under normal circumstances, Bai Xiaochun might have been inclined to talk things over, and maybe figure out another way to get the silver-armored corpse trooper to submit.

But right now, he was in a very bad mood, and was in the grips of madness. The silver-armored corpse trooper's obstinacy only served to get on Bai Xiaochun's nerves. Eyes growing colder, he reached out and pointed at the corpse trooper.

Instantly, his Quasi-Deva Realm corpse trooper burst into action, as did his nine half-deva troopers, murderous auras raging as they attacked the silver-armored corpse trooper.

Of course, that wasn't enough. The rest of the 5,000-man-strong army all howled as they attacked along with the others.

Rumbling booms immediately filled the air. At the moment, it didn't matter that the silver-armored corpse trooper was a deva, he could only last for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, whereupon he slammed down into the ground. At first, he still seemed defiant, but the most powerful of the black-armored corpse troopers bashed him with another divine ability, whereupon he shivered and finally showed compliance.

With that, Bai Xiaochun flicked his sleeve and paid no more heed to the matters of the corpse troopers. Flickering into motion, he headed into his secluded meditation chamber, where he sat down cross-legged and closed his eyes.

He was waiting for the official announcement of the Proclamation of Universal Grace!

From what he could guess, it wouldn't be much more than a few hours before that happened. The Proclamation of Universal Grace... would definitely shake the entire city, and quickly shock all of the nobility and aristocracy in the Wildlands!

Furthermore, the news that he had 2,000 additional corpse troopers had been witnessed by many people in the area of the Inspections Manor, and as they began to spread the news, all of the aristocracy in the city heard.

"Wait a second.... What happened? How could this have

happened?!”

“I thought he was in trouble and couldn’t defend himself! As it turns out, he’s as aggressive as ever! Something fishy is going on!”

“Why do I suddenly have a very, very bad feeling?!?!?”

“Something big is about to happen!!!”

Chapter 790: Universal Grace Begins!

The appearance of a whole new group of corpse troopers in the Inspections Manor was a source of complete shock to many people, especially the nobility and aristocracy, among whom numerous speculations began to run wild.

“This doesn’t make sense....”

“Bai Hao is supposed to be stuck in an inescapable quagmire!”

“The only option he had was to resign as the inspections commissioner.... But now, he’s not only fine, he’s actually stronger than before!”

Everyone in Arch-Emperor City was completely shaken, and the nobility and aristocracy immediately poured all the resources they could into investigating what was happening. That was especially true of the leaders of the various clans who had banded together to capture Bai Hao.

Although they felt like something was off about the situation, they could find no explanation. Furthermore, they didn’t dare to make too much of a scene, and could thus only wait, stewing in their speculations until the truth came to light.

The chosen who had been in conflict with Bai Xiaochun were all grinding their teeth furiously that he had unexpectedly extricated himself from a deadly situation, and even come out stronger than before.

“How come he’s not dead!?!?”

“It must be a bluff!”

Virtually all of those chosen soul cultivators were from the direct bloodlines of various important clans, and many of them were the successors selected by the older members of the clan. They were the very ones who had access to vast amounts of cultivation resources, and had thus reached their current level of cultivation.

There were many bastards and other siblings and relatives who were eclipsed by their glory, people who were vastly separated from them both in terms of cultivation base and the resources they had access to.

Of course, such people were still members of great clans, and thus surpassed ordinary soul cultivators in most aspects. But in terms of cultivation resources, their only hope to truly benefit was to make sure they stuck closely to the chosen successors in the clans.

This had been the state of affairs in the aristocracy of the Wildlands for many generations. Although occasional situations arose in which people rebelled against their clan's arrangements, they usually suffered miserable fates.

When Zhao Dongshan heard the news about Bai Hao, he was in a courtyard in his clan. He was so angry that he lashed out at a nearby tree, which shattered into countless fragments that peppered other nearby members of the clan. However, none of them dared to dodge to the side, and merely stood there quietly.

Many of the people present were siblings of Zhao Dongshan, many of them bastards. Outside the clan, they could act in grand and domineering fashion, but inside the clan, they had to bow their heads and act fawningly to the successor, Zhao Dongshan.

At the moment, Zhao Dongshan's face was extremely grim, and his eyes burned with unyielding light.

“Bai Hao!!” he growled through gritted teeth. He feared Bai Hao, but even more so, was jealous of him. Bai Hao had trampled him underfoot from the Necromancer Kettle all the way to Arch-Emperor City. Furthermore, it had only been a few months since Bai Hao had forced him to offer formal greetings the way a junior would to a senior. His anger still burned hot because of that incident.

However, he could only suppress his killing intent in his heart, at

least until Bai Hao was thoroughly and utterly defeated. After all, he couldn't ever forget the fate of Li Tiansheng.

“I refuse to believe that he'll remain in power forever!” Angrily flicking his sleeve, he looked around at those siblings of his who had been born out of formal wedlock. He was a fundamentally irritable person, and because he was the appointed successor in the clan, he often acted in overbearing fashion toward the other clan members.

“All of you line up. I want to do some sparring!” He immediately headed toward one of the younger members of the clan, who was a sibling of his. The young man's expression flickered, but he didn't dare to refuse to fight. However, almost as soon as he made a move, it was obvious that he wasn't a match for Zhao Dongshan. A boom rang out, and the young man tumbled backward, blood spraying out of his mouth.

The other clan members' expressions flickered, and their scalps tingled in fear. However, they had no choice in the matter. One by one, more booms and crashes could be heard as dozens of Zhao Clan cultivators were flung this way and that, coughing up blood.

“Useless trash, all of you!!” Zhao Dongshan shouted. Although his words angered all of the other clan members, they knew that he was venting his frustration, and that they had no option of resisting. They simply had to endure.

Zhao Dongshan was aware that they were only enduring because they had no other choice, and yet, he didn't care. He was the clan's successor, its future heavenly marquis. No matter how angry the other clan members got, they had to simply bow their heads, lest they be accused of rebellion.

Zhao Dongshan snorted coldly and prepared to vent a bit more frustration when, all of a sudden, a bright beam of light shot toward them from some distance away. It was none other than an old servant, who had an expression of alarm on his face, and was

panting furiously, as though he had just experienced some terrifying ordeal.

He was actually preparing to fly right over Zhao Dongshan and head directly to the heavenly marquis pagoda. However, Zhao Dongshan frowned and shouted, “What’s got you in such a hurry, Sun Fu? Some disaster or something?!”

The old man apparently didn’t hear him, which led to no small amount of irritation on Zhao Dongshan’s part. In fact, he waved his hand, causing a rumbling sound to fill the air as the old man was knocked out of the air. Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth as he looked around, surprised. That was when he noticed Zhao Dongshan looking at him with a grim expression.

“Something big has happened, Crown Prince!!” the old man said in a shaky voice. “Everybody outside is talking about it.... The Grand Heavenmaster is about to issue a Dharmic decree, something called a Proclamation of Universal Grace. At its core... it will force all the clans to distribute their resources evenly among all the potential heirs in the clan.... It doesn’t matter if you’re a bastard or a non-successor, as long as you have the right blood in you, you’ll be treated equally!!”

Zhao Dongshan felt completely and utterly thunderstruck. It seemed too incredulous to believe, so much so that he stepped forward and grabbed the old man. “What did you just say?!”

“I’m not making it up!” the old man said, shivering. “Everybody outside is talking about it....”

Zhao Dongshan was just about to start yelling again when, all of a sudden, the sound of bells could be heard from the imperial palace, ringing out to fill all of Arch-Emperor City.

Whenever those bells tolled, it meant something extremely important was happening.

As the bells tolled, a somber voice could be heard speaking,

reaching the ears of everyone in the city!

“The founder of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty once said...

“That all living things should be treated equally....

“From this day forward, from the imperial court on down, the children of the clans, whether they be bastards or non-successors, will have equal access to the wealth and resources of their clans!

“A new golden age is about to begin for our imperial dynasty!”

Everyone who heard the words felt as though their hearts were leaping in their chests. Zhao Dongshan was gasping for breath, his eyes shining with disbelief as he stood there trembling, his mind a blank. All of a sudden, he looked around at all of his siblings.

Before, they had averted their gazes, but now, they looked back at him with blazing eyes. Zhao Dongshan recognized that fire... it was ambition!

“Impossible. This is completely impossible....” he said, shivering. Meanwhile, all of the other clans in Arch-Emperor City had descended into deathly silence. As for the heavenly marquises, their expressions flickered, and their minds felt like they were about to explode.

“This Proclamation of Universal Grace is going to be the end of the dynasty!!”

“This is absurd! What does the Grand Heavenmaster think he’s doing!?!?”

“Dammit. Dammit! Whose idea was this? Why does this Proclamation of Universal Grace seem like just as vicious a plan as what happened on the day of ancestral sacrifices!?!?”

The immediate response to the Proclamation of Universal Grace was for Arch-Emperor City to go completely silent. But then, a huge commotion ensued. That was when the crushing demigod might of the Grand Heavenmaster descended from the imperial

palace.

At the same time, the auras of five heavenly dukes joined the Grand Heavenmaster's to fill the city....

That was when Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes within his secluded meditation chamber in the Inspections Manor. Slowly rising to his feet, he took a step forward to appear in midair above the manor, his bloodshot eyes shining with cold light.

Swishing his sleeve, he loudly said, "Corpse troopers, assemble immediately.... The time has come to enforce the Proclamation of Universal Grace!"

As his voice rang out, all of his 5,000 corpse troopers flew over, murderous auras burning with intense power.

"We'll start with the heavenly marquis clans!" With that, he flew up into the air, followed by the corpse troopers. His first destination... the Zhao Clan!

Chapter 791: This Bai Hao Is A Madman

The nobility and aristocracy in Arch-Emperor City were deeply shaken. Despite the fact that the Grand Heavenmaster and five heavenly dukes had unleashed incredible pressure, there were still other heavenly marquises and dukes who flew out of their clans and headed to the imperial palace to offer formal greetings to the Grand Heavenmaster.

As far as everyone was concerned, this Proclamation of Universal Grace was incredibly malevolent. Furthermore, everyone believed that it mustn't be allowed to stay in effect for very long. If it did...

The consequences would be unimaginable!

However, even as the heavenly marquises and dukes joined forces to head to the imperial palace, Bai Xiaochun was leading his army of fierce corpse troopers toward the Zhao Clan.

He was in a state of madness, moving at top speed, and thus, it didn't take long for his 5,000 corpse troopers to descend on the clan, surrounded by a black vortex that was their murderous aura.

Although the Zhao Clan seemed peaceful and quiet, the bastard children and non-successors of the bloodline couldn't have been more excited. After the Grand Heavenmaster's Dharmic decree came down, the ambitions they had forced to keep hidden for their entire lives suddenly blossomed, causing their hearts to race!

Everyone was to be treated equally! Everyone was to have fair access to resources!

It was a beautiful prospect that had everyone affected bursting with excitement. The only angry one was Zhao Dongshan, as he realized that the assets that were his inheritance by right would soon be divided up equally among everyone else.

Although he was furious to the point of going crazy, he didn't dare to go against the orders of the Grand Heavenmaster. All of his

hopes rested with his father, who had gone to the imperial palace with the other heavenly marquises.

“This isn’t a Proclamation of Universal Grace! It’s Proclamation of Clan Shakedown!!” As he stood there gritting his teeth, he glared around angrily at the bastards and auxiliary bloodline cultivators.

He was just starting to get restless from anger when Bai Xiaochun arrived. He hovered in the air above the clan, expression grim and eyes cold. With every moment that ticked by, his anxiety and madness grew stronger. All of the clan members down below who looked up at the black vortex of the corpse troopers’ murderous aura were shocked. However, many of them had actually been waiting for Bai Xiaochun to show up, and were feeling more excited than ever.

They felt very differently from the last time Bai Xiaochun had come. As for Zhao Dongshan, he looked up, expression flickering, and prepared to speak. Before he could, though, Bai Xiaochun’s cold voice rang out to fill the entire Zhao Clan.

“The Grand Heavenmaster has spoken. He has issued the Proclamation of Universal Grace, which all subjects of the dynasty are required to comply with, regardless of rank or status.... I have come here in my role as the inspections commissioner, to represent the Grand Heavenmaster in enforcing the proclamation!”

Numerous soft gasps could be heard in the clan, many of them filled with excitement. The bastard children and non-successors all looked on with brightly shining eyes.

Zhao Dongshan’s face fell even further, and his eyes widened. “It was you!! Dammit. It was you! This vicious plan was yours all along! That’s why you were able to consolidate your power with the Grand Heavenmaster!!”

Zhao Dongshan understood everything in an instant. After all, it

wasn't a very difficult puzzle to solve. The recent stir from the Inspections Manor happened right before the Proclamation of Universal Grace was issued. The slightest amount of thought into the matter would reveal the underlying truth.

Zhao Dongshan's madness, and his previous hatred, made it so that he couldn't hold back from shouting. "Bai Hao, you'd--"

But he had picked the wrong time to react in such a way. The madness in Bai Xiaochun's own heart had reached the point that he could erupt with brutal violence at any moment.

"Hmm?" Bai Xiaochun said, a cold light flickering in his eyes. He took a step forward, vanishing and then reappearing right in front of Zhao Dongshan. Without the slightest hesitation, he then clenched his hand into a fist and punched out!

The fist strike seemed to be filled with all the fury that existed in his heart. It caused the air to vibrate and shatter, and although the shocked Zhao Dongshan tried to defend himself, his battle prowess was vastly inferior to Bai Xiaochun's. Blood sprayed out of his mouth as he was flung backward several hundred meters, where he slammed into a building that then collapsed on top of him.

Although some of the other nearby clan members had instinctually stepped forward to interfere, most of them subsequently stopped in place. Then, they simply watched with glittering eyes as Bai Xiaochun took another step forward, placing him right in the middle of the collapsed building, directly in front of Zhao Dongshan, who had been struggling out of the rubble. Zhao Dongshan's eyes went wide with terror at the realization that Bai Xiaochun had come after him again, and he immediately tried to back up.

But Bai Xiaochun was too fast. His hand exploded out with lightning speed to grab Zhao Dongshan by the throat and lift him up into the air. Then, he sent some cultivation base power pouring into him to seal him.

“Was it you?!” Bai Xiaochun asked, his eyes as cold as midwinter snow as he stared at Zhao Dongshan. The way his gaze stabbed into Zhao Dongshan’s eyes made it seem like he was capable of seeing all the secrets inside of him. Zhao Dongshan’s heart immediately began to pound, and he started panting.

Without even thinking about it, Zhao Dongshan tried to struggle free, but couldn’t. The strength of Bai Xiaochun’s right hand was completely terrifying. “What are you talking about? Don’t do anything rash....”

That was what he tried to say, but actually couldn’t. The only thing which came out of his mouth were some indistinct gurgling sounds. By this point, a sense of imminent deadly crisis had risen up in his heart.

“He’s crazy!” he thought. “Dammit, this Bai Hao is a madman!!” Zhao Dongshan’s heart pounded in his chest as he realized that he was likely moments away from death.

Bai Xiaochun looked at Zhao Dongshan for a moment, then slowly closed his eyes. Zhao Dongshan’s expression had revealed nothing but fear of death. Considering how hot-headed he was, if he had been involved with the incident with Bai Hao, then the fact that he knew something about it would have shone in his eyes.

“So he’s not in on it...?” he thought, his anxiety mounting. However, he didn’t release Zhao Dongshan. Instead, he turned to look at the young clan members in the area, the ones who were obviously Zhao Dongshan’s siblings.

“The Proclamation of Universal Grace will be enforced, and I’m here to supervise.... All of you should have fair and equal access to the resources of your clan!

“The people to benefit from the proclamation are those of you who never had any hope of becoming the successor of the clan, and those of you who were born bastards. If you refuse to support the proclamation, then the only people you will be hurting are

yourselves!

“If you want the proper amount of resources, then I need you to tell me everything you know about your clan. Tell me about your parents, the members of the elder generation, the heavenly marquis.... The extent of the wealth of your clan will determine how much resources you get!

“The more you tell me, the more information I’ll have for my records. That’s the only way to ensure that the resources are distributed evenly. And in the end, you will get the fairest division of the clan assets!

“I have the power to grant rewards during the carrying out of the Proclamation of Universal Grace. Therefore... whoever among you gives me the most information will get the biggest rewards!

“As all of you can tell, this entire thing is for your benefit. That is why... I need to know everything about the Zhao Clan. And sometimes, the clan’s assets are not physical items, but rather information, reports, and secrets. Such things are oftentimes far more valuable than the material assets!!” The other clan members were getting more excited by the moment, and their eyes were already shining with greed.

They were bursting with excitement and ambition, to the point where some were on the verge of going crazy. From what Bai Xiaochun had just said, they could all tell that the Proclamation of Universal Grace really had been issued to benefit them!

If they wanted to get their share of the assets, then it was important to have a true understanding of what the clan possessed.... And when it came to that, no one on the outside could possibly know as much as the people inside the clan itself.

By this point, Zhao Dongshan’s terror had reached the point of panic. On the one hand, he was terrified at the prospect of dying, but on the other hand, if people took the clan assets, they were basically taking away his inheritance.

Although it was driving him into madness, his cultivation base had been tightly sealed, and he was being physically held by Bai Xiaochun. He had no choice but to wait and see what would happen, his heart filled with mixed emotions of all sorts.

Bai Xiaochun could see how excited everyone was. Looking back at Zhao Dongshan for a moment, he then tossed him into another nearby building, which also collapsed on top of him. Then he flew into motion, taking his 5,000 corpse troopers with him as he went on to his next target... the next heavenly marquis clan!

As he left, Zhao Dongshan crawled out of the rubble of the second building, staggering a bit as he looked around at all of the familiar faces around him. These were his siblings, who he had known for many years, but now, they looked like a pack of wolves....

His heart trembled, and suddenly, the sky seemed dark.

“I'm finished....”

Chapter 792: The Talk Of The Town

Bai Xiaochun took action at the perfect time: the very moment that the Grand Heavenmaster's Dharmic decree was sent out, shaking Arch-Emperor City and causing all of the heavenly marquises to band together and go to the imperial palace.

It was a time when the nobility and aristocracy were completely unstable, and because of that, Bai Xiaochun swept across them like a windstorm. The successors were struck with fear, and the bastards and direct bloodline non-successors were shown staunch support. For the latter... they now had a justification to be ambitious, as well as something they had never even been able to dream of before: hope!

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun hadn't planned out his timing at all. He had simply been anxious, and hadn't dared to delay any longer than necessary. He would have shown up at the clans even if the heavenly marquises hadn't left. After all, he had two deva corpse troopers, four half-devas, and 5,000 in the Nascent Soul stage. He could even assault the manors belonging to heavenly dukes, much less those of the heavenly marquises.

It was with rapid speed that he began to move out from the Zhao Clan into the other boroughs, toward the other heavenly marquis clans.

There were roughly ninety of them, scattered throughout Arch-Emperor City. Virtually every borough in the city had one, and as soon as Bai Xiaochun arrived, he would immediately take action and grab the appointed successor of the clan.

And he would ask the same question of each one. Was it you?

He accompanied the words with raging killing intent, casting fear into the hearts of the clan successors he grabbed. However, he didn't turn up any clues, which caused his anxiety to grow, and his voice to grow more filled with rage.

At every clan, he would address bastards and direct bloodline non-successors alike, repeating the words he had first spoken in the Zhao Clan. The only difference was that he began to speak more and more directly.

“Tell me everything about your clan!

“Tell me what assets your clan has!

“Tell me about your clan’s reserve savings!

“And tell me about your clan’s troop movements. Did anyone new show up recently? Was there any suspicious activity among the elder generation? What has your heavenly marquis been up to...? Tell me your clan’s secrets, your hidden resources, your intelligence reports!!

“The more you tell me, the greater your share will be!!

“Whoever tells me the most will receive personal backing from me!!” He spoke such words in clan after clan.

Of course, no matter how quickly he moved, making his way through all ninety of the clans was not something he could accomplish in a short time. Eventually, he split up his force of 5,000 corpse troopers, sending them to other clans with explicit instructions on what to do and say.

Before long, news of what was happening filtered up to the heavenly marquises, who were waiting outside of Heavenmaster Hall to see the Grand Heavenmaster.

They were infuriated, but had no idea what exactly to do. Some stamped their feet and returned to their clans to try to restore order, others remained behind in the hopes of getting an audience with the Grand Heavenmaster.

It didn’t take long before the ambitions in the hearts of the bastards and non-successors began to grow like weeds in a field!

The waiting heavenly marquises began to grow more and more

anxious, and were constantly sending and receiving messages to stay up to date on what was happening in their own clans. The fact that their children were all starting to go completely mad had their hearts pounding with anxiety.

“This good-for-nothing Bai Hao!!”

“He was the one that came up with this vicious plan!!”

“Dammit, dammit, DAMMIT!!”

Expressions of madness appeared on their faces as they realized that things had already reached the point of no return. The storm had come, and calming it would be no easy task!

Once ambitions arose in the heart, they could not be erased easily. Although it wouldn't be completely impossible, for all intents and purposes, it was.

None of them had actually met with the Grand Heavenmaster, and yet thanks to Bai Xiaochun, their clans were all descending into chaos. It was already worse than an enemy invasion!

Some clans had it better off. But for those who were truly in pandemonium, their respective heavenly marquises eventually had no choice but to head back to put out the proverbial fires.

By the time the doors of Heavenmaster Hall opened, there were only about twenty heavenly marquises left behind, who then entered the hall with bitterness written on their faces.

It was impossible to say what exactly they talked about, or how the Grand Heavenmaster managed to placate them. But in the end, they all left, unsightly expressions on their faces as they chose to simply hold their tongues on the matter.

By that time it was night, and Bai Xiaochun was waiting anxiously in the Inspections Manor. At a certain point, his transmission jade slip vibrated, and messages began to filter in from some of his most important contacts out in the clans.

After the heavenly marquises had returned, they quelled much of the chaos, and cast fear into the hearts of all their children. Because of that, Bai Xiaochun wasn't getting a huge amount of news.

However, he wasn't willing to resign himself to fate. Virtually every day, he would take his army of corpse troopers out to visit the clans, and reinforce the ambitions which had taken root in the hearts of the people there!

Although he experienced some friction with various heavenly marquises, considering he had 5,000 corpse troopers at his command, he didn't have much trouble dealing with it. Furthermore, he had Zhou Yixing go out and spread more information to boost the confidence of the bastard children.

Things went on like this for three days. The Proclamation of Universal Grace still stood, and the Grand Heavenmaster didn't seem likely to rescind it. Despite the threats of the heavenly marquises, Bai Xiaochun's transmission jade slip continued to vibrate as more information and secrets came in.

Another three days passed, and the heavenly marquises continued to quell the chaos in their clans using all sorts of methods. Some used callous techniques, others were more conciliatory. Whatever they did, it was exhausting. After all, they not only had to prepare for what happened if Bai Xiaochun showed up, but they also had to work hard to control internal affairs.... Everyone involved had the blood of the clan in them, which meant that no outsider could be relied upon for help. The marquises had to handle everything personally. Some of them even resorted to executions.

Because of that, more and more people began to act in secret. As a result, Bai Xiaochun's transmission jade slip vibrated with increasing frequency.

Soon, when word spread that some of the heavenly marquises

had brutally killed or imprisoned some of their own children, Bai Xiaochun took his corpse trooper army over and fought them openly as punishment.

The fighting got other heavenly marquises worked up, and they joined in the fighting. However, the bastard sons of the clans, who had been suppressed viciously for more than ten days straight, and who had also been incited into action by Zhou Yixing, finally made a move!

At this point, true chaos erupted in many clans.

Things had reached a boiling point, and all of Arch-Emperor City was being shaken. Eventually, the Grand Heavenmaster took action to stop the fighting. The heavenly marquises couldn't worry about Bai Xiaochun anymore, and returned to their clans to prevent more chaos from erupting.

Of course, things had only calmed down on the surface. The clans were buzzing with activity. And at the same time, Bai Xiaochun's transmission jade slip began to vibrate almost nonstop. There were more than 10,000 bastards and other direct bloodline non-successors who were sending him messages.

“My clan has 3,700,000,000 portions of soul medicine!!”

“Exalted Bai Hao, my clan has a secret treasure room. Normally, only the successor is allowed in!”

“I once saw our heavenly marquis with a deva soul! It was metal-type!”

“My clan has a 100,000-man-strong personal army!”

Although the bastards and other direct bloodline non-successors all seemed shaken, they were secretly going crazy, and were beginning to reveal all of their clan secrets to Bai Xiaochun.

By now, Bai Xiaochun basically had spies in all of the clans. And before long, he not only knew everything that was happening in the clans, but could also directly influence the course of events!

Chapter 793: Heavenly Duke Clan

Many of the bastard children and direct bloodline non-successors had hated Bai Xiaochun in the past. But now, he stood on their side, and even represented them! As the person enforcing the Proclamation of Universal Grace, they were all on the same team!

It wasn't that none of the heavenly marquises had thought of defying the order. However, as time progressed, the truly vicious aspects of the Proclamation of Universal Grace only became clearer. Each clan had one successor. However, the heavenly marquises were all people with profound cultivation bases, as well as multiple wives and concubines. It was only natural that they would have many children. Furthermore, all of those children were members of their clans. And now, all of the bastards and direct bloodline non-successors were on the side of the Grand Heavenmaster!

Unless the heavenly marquises completely exterminated their own bloodlines, the unrest inside their clans would never be completely quelled, and there was no way they could defy orders in rebellion!

Furthermore, in the final analysis, the Proclamation of Universal Grace kept all clan resources within the clan itself, and also within the bloodlines of the various heavenly marquises. As such, the Grand Heavenmaster could only be said to be acting reasonably!

Justice and reason were on his side, and thus, everyone supported him. Thus, the truly ferocious nature of the entire plan was revealed. And what was even more terrifying... were the common citizens of Arch-Emperor City!

The nobility and aristocracy were vastly removed from the common people. Therefore, when the Proclamation of Universal Grace was announced, the common people staunchly supported it!

Although it wouldn't directly benefit them, they were generally

envious of the nobility and aristocracy, and especially the successors. Therefore, they were very happy to see everyone within the nobility and aristocracy treated the same.

It would immediately cause very powerful people to fall, and although they would likely rise to prominence again, the disparity between them and the common people would be greatly reduced.

As such, the common citizens in Arch-Emperor Dynasty were all very excited about what was happening.

Furthermore, they supported the Grand Heavenmaster more than ever. Yet again, the Grand Heavenmaster's prestige rose to a higher level, a level that was completely and utterly unprecedented!

In fact, he was now in the position to smoothly establish his own new dynasty if he wished to!

That filled the heavenly marquises with dread and bitterness. The heavenly marquises were all profound schemers, and therefore, it didn't take long for them to realize how truly terrifying the Proclamation of Universal Grace was!

And yet... that realization did them no good. Knowing the facts and being able to do something about them... were two very different things.

“If Bai Hao really did come up with this idea... then he's completely terrifying!!”

“His ability to craft and scheme could terrify even ghosts and gods! He's a complete master at manipulating people!”

“What kind of person do you have to be to come up with a vicious plan like this...? Wait a second.... This Bai Hao was born a bastard! Dammit! I bet he came up with this idea all the way back in Giant Ghost City, in the Bai Clan!!”

And yet, the storm was only just beginning. Things had started in Arch-Emperor City, but they soon spread to other parts of the

Wildlands. It wasn't just the heavenly marquis clans who were affected. Many necromancer clans erupted into pandemonium.

And the person responsible for all of it was Bai Xiaochun, who currently sat cross-legged in the Inspections Manor. He did nothing to cover the exhaustion in his eyes. Up to this point, he still hadn't rested. Instead, he read each and every message that came his way, analyzing it and hoping to piece together any clues he found.

About half a month had passed since Bai Hao had gone missing, and Bai Xiaochun's madness had become like a raging sea of fire that threatened to burn both the people around him and himself.

He simply couldn't stop worrying about Bai Hao and his safety. Unfortunately, none of the information he had received up to this point had been of any help. He was deeply worried and sick at heart, to a level he had never experienced before.

The only time he could keep his breathing straight and his aura steady was when he was immersed in looking for clues. Although he had plenty of information stored in his jade slip now, none of it was comprehensive. He knew that any hope of finding Bai Hao rested in getting more clues.

“The wildfire caused by the Proclamation of Universal Grace... needs to burn a bit hotter!!” With that, he looked up, focusing his gaze on a certain direction.... Arch-Emperor City's Borough 5!

Borough 5 was the location of a heavenly duke clan!

“The time has come to make a move against the heavenly dukes. Not only will I be able to get more good information, I can also instill a bit of confidence in the cowards there!” Gritting his teeth, he flew into the air, and was soon leading his corpse troopers toward Borough 5!

Many, many people were paying attention, and noticed what was happening. Countless eyes tracked the army of corpse troopers as

it flew through the sky, and before long, people realized that he was heading to Borough 5, which was the location of a heavenly duke clan. At that point, people began to gasp in excitement.

“A heavenly duke clan!?!?”

“This Bai Hao is too gutsy. He’s actually going to a heavenly duke clan to enforce the Proclamation of Universal Grace!!”

As the conversation buzzed, 5,000 corpse troopers descended on Borough 5, with Bai Xiaochun in the lead position. He was flanked by two corpse troopers who emanated deva fluctuations, one in silver armor and one in black. Next in the procession were nine half-deva corpse troopers in black armor.

They didn’t even pause for a moment after entering Borough 5. They headed right for the heavenly duke clan.

Bai Xiaochun vaguely recalled this heavenly duke as being an old man with whom he had had a few relatively cordial dealings. Unfortunately, he was running out of options at this point. As he neared the clan, a glowing shield of light suddenly appeared to block his path.

A face appeared on the surface of the shield, a middle-aged man who looked at Bai Xiaochun with cold eyes.

“Inspections Commissioner, if you have something to say, go ahead and say it. However, you are not permitted past this point!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes narrowed as he looked through the shield at the clan, where numerous clan members were staring up at him. Although they all looked calm, he could see glints in the eyes of some that revealed to him that even many people in this heavenly duke clan were looking forward to the effects of the Proclamation of Universal Grace. Unfortunately, they could not act out in any way because of the unbelievable power of the heavenly duke himself.

After a moment of thought, Bai Xiaochun chose not to try to use

force. He simply hovered there and projected his voice with his cultivation base so that it passed through the shield.

“I'm here on the orders of the Grand Heavenmaster, to supervise the enforcement of the Proclamation of Universal Grace!

“Heavenly marquis clans and heavenly duke clans alike must comply. Even the four heavenly kings are not exempt!

“Clan resources must be split fairly within the clan. Whether you are bastards, or direct bloodline members with no right of inheritance, all of you....” With that, he proceeded on with his usual speech.

When he was finished, the expressionless middle-aged man looked at him and said, “Finished? Please see yourself out!”

With that, the face of the man faded away, and Bai Xiaochun was left hovering there, a slight frown on his face. After a moment passed, he turned and headed to the second heavenly duke clan.

After that was the third, and the fourth.... Before long, he had visited every clan between Borough 1 and Borough 5. He had visited nine heavenly duke clans, and they had all treated him the same way as the first one he had visited!

Not a single heavenly duke allowed him to enter their clan. They permitted him to speak outside of their spell formation shield, and then unceremoniously asked him to leave.

It was cooperation of a sort, but their attitude left Bai Xiaochun with a very unsightly expression on his face. As for everyone who had gathered to follow him and watch the show, various thoughts ran through their heads.

Furthermore, the children in the various clans were also watching, and it caused their hearts to sink.

“Don't tell me that the Proclamation of Universal Grace isn't going to last much longer....” All of them were wondering about the potential profits and losses at hand.

The nobility and aristocracy watched as Bai Xiaochun grimly arrived at the location of the final heavenly duke clan, the Chen Clan!

Chen Haosong's clan took up nearly half of the entire borough, and had a heavenly duke pagoda that rose up far higher than any of the heavenly marquis pagodas.

Everyone in the clan sat silently waiting. As for all the children of the clan, the events which had played out among the heavenly marquis clans because of the Proclamation of Universal Grace had been very exciting to them.

And yet, none of them had dared to act. After all, the difference between a heavenly marquis clan and a heavenly duke clan was difficult to even put into words!

Back in the initial bloodbath, the Grand Heavenmaster had put an end to eighteen heavenly marquises. However... not a single heavenly duke had been affected. Generally speaking, as long as the heavenly dukes didn't openly betray the dynasty, their positions were unshakable. They were devas, and whether it was in the Wildlands or the Heavenspan River region, such people existed on a higher level than everyone else!

As Bai Xiaochun arrived at the Chen Clan, the glowing shield sprang up, preventing him from entering. Then, a voice echoed out loud and clear.

“Speak. And when you're done, get the hell out of here!” The scorn and loathing in that voice couldn't have been more clear.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes narrowed as he looked through the shield at the heavenly duke pagoda, and then suddenly... he smiled!

It was a cold smile, a smile... filled with unrestrainable madness!

Chapter 794: Even The Heavenly Duke Bites His Tongue!

The audience that had built up looked on silently. The fact that the ten heavenly dukes wouldn't even let Bai Xiaochun in was something that led to all sorts of varied thoughts on their part.

News had been spreading, and more and more people in Arch-Emperor City were paying attention to what was happening.

Within the shield, the numerous members of the Chen Clan had placid expressions on their faces as they looked through the shield at Bai Xiaochun.

[Chen Xiong](#) was there. He was a member of the direct bloodline, but had no hope of becoming the successor. In the past, he had hated Bai Xiaochun, but now his feelings had changed. He knew the type of reserve savings his clan had built up, and also knew that if they were fairly distributed to someone like him... that a single portion would be enough to cause countless people to drool in envy, and would essentially support him for the rest of his life.

As various similar thoughts ran through the heads of many other clan members, Bai Xiaochun smiled coldly on the other side of the shield, and his eyes burned with madness. He had known from the very beginning that the heavenly duke clans would be much more difficult to handle than the heavenly marquis clans.

Therefore, he had already made up his mind to throw caution to the wind, and leave the Chen Clan for the very last. After all, he had butted heads with this clan before.

His plan all along had been to see what happened with the other clans, and if things didn't go well, to go crazy on the Chen Clan!

And now, he didn't even need to find an excuse. The Chen Clan's attitude was enough to set him off. Pointing dramatically at the clan, he said, "Corpse trooper army, break down that spell

formation shield!”

Countless jaws dropped when people heard his words. Whether it was the people in the Chen Clan or the audience who had gathered, no one even had a chance to react before Bai Xiaochun’s 5,000 corpse troopers howled at the tops of their lungs and charged forward in attack!

The silver-armored corpse trooper moved especially quickly, and was the first to slam into the shield.

Even as the shield shook, the nine half-deva corpse troopers arrived, unleashing heaven-shaking, earth-shattering power!

Things weren’t over yet, though. Next came the rest of the 5,000 troops, who unleashed a torrent of magical techniques and divine abilities. This was like warfare, as 5,000 attacks became like a huge wave that slammed into the Chen Clan’s spell formation shield!!

“What are you doing, Bai Hao?!?!” shouted the same voice as before, except this time there was no scorn in it, only fury. As for all of the Chen Clan cultivators inside, their faces fell.

The audience looked on with incredulity.

“This Bai Hao... he....”

“Heavens! He’s actually ordering an attack on a heavenly duke clan!!”

“I can’t believe he dares to do such a thing!!”

The onlookers were starting to get very enthused, and quickly began to spread word through the city. Everyone else who had been watching events play out from other locations in Arch-Emperor City had strange expressions on their faces.

Many of the heavenly marquises flew out from their pagodas and looked over at the Chen Clan with expressions of complete disbelief.

The other nine heavenly dukes were all shocked, and sent

streams of divine sense over to observe what was happening directly. When they realized that no reaction at all could be seen from the imperial palace, they grew more taciturn than ever.

The bastard children in the clan were all as shocked as wooden chickens, and a single thought ran through all of their heads.

“He’s insane!!”

Even if the Chen Clan’s spell formation shield was stronger than it was, it couldn’t withstand a sea of divine abilities like this. Under the battery, it quickly began to fragment, and then eventually just exploded!

Chaos immediately swept through the Chen Clan, and a roar of rage echoed out from the heavenly duke pagoda.

“Do you have a death wish, Bai Hao?!” Powerful fluctuations surged out from the heavenly duke pagoda, rushing forward to meet the sea of magical techniques and divine abilities that were entering the clan.

A huge boom resulted that was distinctly audible even in the imperial palace. The sea of invading attacks shattered, and the 5,000 corpse troopers were shoved backward, with the exception of the silver-armored corpse trooper and the nine half-devas. All of them shot toward the heavenly duke pagoda!

Before they could arrive, the air around the pagoda swirled dramatically as a projected version of Chen Haosong’s face appeared. Looking at the silver-armored corpse trooper and the other corpse troopers it led, he uttered a curse in a shouting voice.

“Cleaving!”

Suddenly, numerous mountains formed out of thin air, descending from above to slam into the corpse troopers. Moments later, Chen Haosong’s face twisted and distorted, and then a violet beam of light shot out, slashing through everything in its path as it headed directly toward Bai Xiaochun!

Cheng Haosong was actually trying to kill Bai Xiaochun! However, at this point, deva fluctuations rolled out from the black-armored corpse trooper who had stayed behind to defend Bai Xiaochun.

Without the slightest hesitation, that corpse trooper took a step forward and launched a fist strike at the beam of violet light. The light shattered, and the corpse trooper shuddered as he staggered backward several paces. At the same time, his entire right arm was shredded out of existence!

If he had possessed a flesh and blood body, then it would have been a very serious injury. However, corpse troopers were essentially impossible to permanently injure. A moment later, the area where the arm had been severed began to wriggle and grow, as a new arm appeared!

Having failed to destroy Bai Xiaochun, Chen Haosong stepped out of the heavenly duke pagoda, where he waved his sleeve, sending a blast of wind at the silver-armored corpse trooper, and the other nine who followed him.

The nine half-deva corpse troopers trembled and tumbled backward, but the one in the silver armor only took a single step back. That caused Chen Haosong's face to fall, and he even began to pant slightly.

The deva fluctuations rolling off of Chen Haosong grew even stronger. Never before could he have guessed that this Bai Hao would actually dare to attack him and his clan! Although there had been friction between them in the past, he had always been of the opinion that Bai Xiaochun only looked like a force to be reckoned with, but was actually cowardly at heart, and mostly put on a show of false bravado. He had also come to the conclusion that although he could act in ruthless fashion, he valued his own life too much to do anything risky.

Therefore, Bai Xiaochun's sudden decisive action left him feeling

very shocked.

“Do you know what you’re doing, Bai Hao?!” he said coldly.

Bai Xiaochun looked back at him, waving his hand to cause all of the corpse troopers to stop moving. And yet, his killing intent only grew more and more intense.

Chen Haosong’s eyes slowly narrowed. Although his cultivation base surpassed the silver-armored corpse troopers by quite a bit, he knew that he was surrounded by a huge group of them, and that they all had undying bodies, as well as further unknown abilities. And that was not to mention Bai Xiaochun’s quasi-Deva Realm corpse trooper. All in all, it was a shocking force arrayed against him!

Bai Xiaochun’s expression was as cold as ice as he looked at Chen Haosong. Then he took a step forward, and another, until he passed the point which had once been defended by the shield, and was now inside of the Chen Clan!

“According to the Proclamation of Universal Grace, everyone must be treated equally!

“The bastard children of the Chen Clan, as well as the direct bloodline members with no right of succession, are all welcome to send me what information they know. I will guarantee that they get their fair share of the clan assets. It is only fair and just!

“If you are cowardly, and don’t take advantage of this opportunity, if you allow the distribution to be unfair, and allow the so-called successor to get the majority of the assets, then the results will be obvious. What little you gain, will also be taken away from you!

“At the moment, none of you have to actually do anything. Just... tell me everything you know about your clan. What secrets are there? What resources exist? Has anyone new shown up recently? All you have to do is secretly pass word to me about these matters.

“I’ll do all the dirty work!” Although Bai Xiaochun spoke calmly, it was also with great power, allowing everyone in the Chen Clan to hear him. Immediately, the hearts of many clan members began to race.

An unsightly expression could be seen on Chen Haosong’s face as he hovered there in the air. However, when he looked up at the imperial palace and saw absolutely no reaction, he realized that no one would be interfering with the day’s events.

After Bai Xiaochun finished speaking, he gave a piercing look to the assembled crowds, then turned to leave. However, after only taking a few steps, he looked back at the Chen Clan, his eyes shining with cold light.

“Oh right. Just now, who was it that so brazenly defied the Proclamation of Universal Grace of the Grand Heavenmaster, and even told me to ‘get the hell out of here?’” Almost immediately numerous bastard children within the clan all looked over at one particular old man. Even Chen Xiong joined in that group.

The old man’s face fell, and before he could even say anything in response, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand.

“Execute him!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, all 5,000 corpse troopers attacked simultaneously. A scream echoed out as the old man was killed in body and soul. Chen Haosong’s face grew so grim it was almost as black as iron. Clearly, Bai Xiaochun was ready to fly off the handle at the slightest provocation. Considering how delicate the situation was, Chen Haosong had no choice but to simply bite his tongue and stare with narrowed eyes at Bai Xiaochun as he walked off.

Chen Xiong was one of the first chosen to clash with Bai Xiaochun in Arch-Emperor City, back in the arc that started in chapter 725

Chapter 795: A Clue!

Bai Xiaochun didn't need to do this to every single one of the heavenly duke clans. All he needed to do was show his general stance. The children of the other nine heavenly dukes would immediately begin to ponder the significance of what had happened, not to mention the children in the heavenly marquis clans.

What he had done was enough!

In fact, the very day he left the Chen Clan, he got more messages than he had during the past half month!

Some information was genuine and some was not. When reports came in about the assets of the various clans, Bai Xiaochun merely glanced at them. What he was more interested in was information about what unusual events had transpired in the clans recently.

During the following days, information poured in, and Bai Xiaochun immersed himself in it, searching for clues. Many things were happening behind the scenes in the heavenly duke clans because of the Proclamation of Universal Grace.

The storm was building up to the point that the heavenly marquis clans were starting to lose their grip of control. It was also at this point that, at long last... the four heavenly kings were affected.

The War Champion King got off somewhat lightly, because he had fewer children. Other than the Junior Champion King, he only had five, and was able to keep them under control without resorting to any violent methods.

The Giant Ghost King came off almost completely unscathed. His only daughter, Mistress Red-Dust, didn't even know what was going on; she had not yet ended the session of secluded meditation her father had encouraged her to begin after the ancestral

sacrifices.

However... the Nine Serenities King had it very rough. He had over a hundred children, all of whom were thrilled about the situation and instantly sided with the Grand Heavenmaster and Bai Xiaochun. Zhou Hong wanted to cry. After all, if he wanted to eventually take over the position of king, then he needed a demigod cultivation base. And his only hope of doing that was by using all the resources the clan had built up. But now... his hopes were dashed. And of course, he came to detest Bai Xiaochun more bitterly than ever.

The Nine Serenities King was a bit worried about the matter. Considering he had a demigod cultivation base, he initially didn't pay much attention to it, but the squabbling and fighting among his children quickly became quite a headache to deal with. However, all he had to do was think about the Wildlands' famous Spirit Advent King, and suddenly, he realized that his concerns were of little note.

The Spirit Advent King... was the one going most crazy of all!

Currently, he was shouting so loud that his voice echoed out from Spirit Advent Hall to fill the entire city.

“Damn that Bai Hao! That little punk is too ruthless!! All I did was break up him and Shanshan, right? Aghhhhh! I didn't do anything that bad! What, I'm not even allowed to watch over my own daughter?! This revenge of his is obviously targeting me!!!” He was so angry he was shaking, and the mere thought of how many children he had caused him to howl with grief.

He just had too many offspring.... Considering sons alone, he had over 3,000. And if you added in the daughters... well it was roughly double that. In fact, even he wasn't sure exactly how many children he had.

The thought of his life savings being divided up among roughly 6,000 children was so infuriating and distressing that not even his

demigod cultivation base could keep him calm. And of course, his countless children were very excited by the Proclamation of Universal Grace.

And the fact that they were all siding with the Grand Heavenmaster and Bai Xiaochun was monumental. After all, if the Spirit Advent King resisted the proclamation, it was entirely possible that all his children could join forces and actually fight him.

Spirit Advent City was already in complete chaos, with 6,000 of the king's own children pooling all of their resources and power structure together.

The Spirit Advent King had no options at hand. He couldn't kill all of his children to save his own clan assets.... And therefore, he simply stared morosely in the direction of Arch-Emperor City.

“That Bai Hao is definitely doing this on purpose!”

Most furious of all was the official heir apparent in Spirit Advent City, who sat with gritted teeth and bloodshot eyes, his hatred for Bai Xiaochun rising into the heavens.

Xu Shan lay on her bed gazing in the direction of Arch-Emperor City, sighing constantly. As far as she was concerned, there was something fishy going on with Bai Hao. She really wanted to go find him and talk about it, but her father had her on complete lockdown, making it impossible for her to leave the city.

As far as Chen Manyao was concerned, she was still in secluded meditation on the orders of the Grand Heavenmaster.

As the four heavenly kings dealt with the situation in various ways, Bai Xiaochun was sifting through volumes of information, trying to find that needle in a haystack that was the clue he needed.

“Miao Lin'er went missing.... Her clan used to have an earthly necromancer.... Her entire clan is missing....” All of a sudden, his

killing intent surged, but he quickly suppressed it. Now was not the time to act impulsively.

He could only take action when he was absolutely sure of the facts. That was his only hope of saving Bai Hao.

After all, if he made his move, and then failed, then his enemies would be even more on alert, and it would be almost impossible to track them down.

“I'm only going to have one chance! I just don't have enough clues! However, I definitely need to figure out where the Miao Clan went!” With those thoughts on his mind, he sent a message to Zhou Yixing and had him start searching for Miao Clan cultivators, with orders to keep eyes on those he found, but not make any sort of contact.

“The only people I haven't touched now are the four heavenly kings.... Who exactly was it that did the deed that day!? Once I find that out, then I can use all of the information I've collected to figure out... where Bai Hao is!” Although he was clearly exhausted, his heart still burned with intense madness.

He hadn't rested at all for nearly a month, and his nerves were stretched taut. However, he continued working, using the resources of the Inspections Manor to reach out to the children of the heavenly kings.

His instructions were for them to personally come to the Inspections Manor within three days so that he could deliver the Proclamation of Universal Grace to them personally.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun knew that, considering this wasn't an order from the Grand Heavenmaster, the heirs apparent could simply ignore it. However, he didn't care about that, or how much they hated him.

He wanted to see how many of the children who had no right of inheritance would come. Those people would be his eyes and ears

within the palaces of the heavenly kings!

The Giant Ghost King ignored the message, as did the War Champion King and his children. But the children of the Nine Serenities King and the Spirit Advent King rushed excitedly toward the teleportation portals in their city to meet with Bai Xiaochun at the Inspections Manor!

When the day came, Bai Xiaochun emerged from his private chamber to find a shocking number of people waiting for him. Furthermore, the fact that ninety-seven percent of them were from Spirit Advent City left him feeling stunned.

As soon as all these royal children caught sight of him, they clasped hands passionately and bowed.

“Greetings, Inspections Commissioner!”

“You are a true hero of the ages, Inspections Commissioner. The Proclamation of Universal Grace is a sign of the coming golden age of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty!”

All sorts of talk could be heard from the mouths of the thousands of people present. In response, Bai Xiaochun gave a slight nod. He was in no mood for chit-chat. Looking out at the crowd, he somberly said, “Ladies and gentlemen, the Arch-Emperor himself has ordered that from this day forward, everyone from the Grand Heavenmaster to the royal officials will no longer have solitary heirs apparent!

“Everyone will now have the chance to win the position of king, even if you don’t have a demigod cultivation base. According to the stipulations of the Proclamation of Universal Grace, all of you now have the right to start out on equal footing to become the appointed heir apparent!

“However, the true judge of how fair this will all be is your own understanding of your clans. Tell me everything you know about them. The more information I get, the more likely that I can make

you all happy!

“As of this moment, I have sufficient information from the heavenly marquis clans and the heavenly duke clans, as provided to me by the bastard children and those from the direct bloodlines who have no official right of inheritance. The only people I need information from now... is you here.” Everyone present was already roughly familiar with what had been happening, and took his words in stride. In fact, all of them felt very grateful.

It was only natural for them to support an arrangement in which they could secretly pass the information to him, and he would do the dirty work. When it came to information about clan assets, such things wouldn't normally be passed to outsiders. But he'd already done this same thing with the heavenly duke clans, and no one had come to be in any danger. And when it came to the demigod clans, no one would punish these children, not even if they were considered to have betrayed the clan by revealing secret information.

After all, they had the blood of heavenly kings in them, even if they weren't heirs apparent. Normally speaking, they could do whatever they wished without fear of any reprisal. As such, the very day that everyone left the Inspections Manor, news began to filter in to Bai Xiaochun.

As of this point, Bai Xiaochun now had an information network that filled the entire Arch-Emperor Dynasty. Reports came in almost every moment. Even the common people joined in, sending him information about virtually everything.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been busier. Eventually... after five days passed, he suddenly looked up, and his hand clenched down so hard on the transmission jade slip that it nearly shattered. At this point, the killing intent in his eyes burned with complete insanity.

He had found the clue he needed to fit all the pieces together. The

impenetrable fog that had surrounded the disappearance of Bai Hao faded away!!

“Their clan used to have an earthly necromancer.... Thirteen clans working together.... The Nine Serenities King.... Miao Lin'er's grandfather.... He's hiding in one of those thirteen clans!” Killing intent surging, he looked down at the transmission jade slip and found a message from one of the children of Heavenly Marquis Zhou!

“There's a celestial necromancer in our clan that I've never seen before. He's very mysterious. Supposedly he's in secluded meditation performing spirit enhancements on some magical items, but I doubt that's true!”

Bai Xiaochun looked up again, and his eye were crimson. “This is what I needed!”

Chapter 796: Fighting Into The Zhou Clan!

“Zhou Wudao!” The coldness in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes was such that the entire private chamber suddenly seemed as frigid as the dead of winter!

Although he didn’t fully understand the reason Bai Hao had gone missing, he now had a general idea. A patriarch in Miao Lin’er’s clan was a necromancer at the peak of the celestial rank, who planned to use Bai Hao’s soul in a flame conjuring to achieve a breakthrough!

Out of fear of Bai Xiaochun, he had allied with thirteen other clans, and had also somehow called upon the aid of the Nine Serenities King. That was how they had managed to snatch Bai Hao the previous month without leaving a single trace of evidence behind!

Afterward, the Miao Clan patriarch had gone into hiding in one of the clans, a clan where no one would think to look. After all, when it came to the heavenly marquises of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, Zhou Wudao was neither among the ten most powerful, nor among the ten weakest. He was somewhere in the middle. He wasn’t a very well-spoken person, and thus didn’t have many dealings with others. He was basically the quiet type.

He was one of the people in the dynastic court who almost never spoke. If he was ever forced to speak, he would always go along with the majority. He was so unassuming that many people even forgot he existed.

Bai Xiaochun had never heard of him before the Proclamation of Universal Grace. However, it was a bastard son of Zhou Wudao who secretly sent the critical information. Never could Bai Xiaochun have guessed that Bai Hao would be in that clan!

Of course, Zhou Wudao’s clan was one of the thirteen who had helped the Miao Clan. As for who the other twelve clans were, Bai

Xiaochun had still not yet unearthed any clues.

However, he wasn't very concerned with that information. All of his efforts during the past month had been focused on finding Bai Hao.

As far as what he had just learned, he had no intention of reporting it to the Grand Heavenmaster.

The matter was simply too important, and he couldn't risk the chance that the Grand Heavenmaster would refuse him the right to act. If word leaked out, and if his enemies were alerted, then it might very well become impossible to track Bai Hao down again.

He couldn't gamble when it came to something this vital!

As he rose to his feet, his murderous aura grew stronger. The time had come to vent all of the madness which had been building up over the last month. The time had come to do some killing!

Without the slightest hesitation, he sent a message to Zhou Yixing with certain instructions. Then he strode out into the open and flew up into the air above the Inspections Manor. With the wave of a sleeve, he sent some divine sense out, and then headed at top speed toward the location of Zhou Wudao's clan.

At the same time, rumbling sounds could be heard as countless corpse troopers flew up to follow him. In this case, he didn't take 5,000, but rather, 4,000!

The other 1,000 were in Zhou Yixing's hands to handle other matters!

Bai Xiaochun plus 4,000 beams of light shot through the air, surrounded by a black vortex that was the most powerful of murderous auras. The sky rippled, and a screaming wind kicked up, attracting the shocked attention of numerous individuals in Arch-Emperor City.

Bai Xiaochun ignored all of the gazes which came to focus on him, nor did he attempt to prevent his eyes from being completely

bloodshot. He looked completely mad, and engulfed by a shocking killing intent.

His veins of steel pulsed explosively, as though he had become a devilish god!

As he raced along, the anxiety in his heart mounted. He felt guilt, frenzy, nervousness, apprehension, and all sorts of other emotions, all of which shoved him deeper into madness!

Very rarely in Bai Xiaochun's life did he ever wish to kill people, but in this situation, he had been pushed too far. He had just spent a month searching for clues, and now that he had a target, it was impossible for him to dispel that killing intent.

Of course, through it all, he reminded himself that his main goal right now was not revenge; it was to save Bai Hao.

He and his 4,000 corpse troopers sailed over dozens of boroughs until they closed in on Borough 61, where a heavenly marquis pagoda rose high into the air. When Bai Xiaochun saw it, his eyes flashed with sharp light.

This place was the Zhou Clan!

After scanning the place with divine sense but finding nothing, he turned and transmitted a message to his silver-armored corpse trooper. "Can you detect a hidden chamber anywhere in the Zhou Clan? A chamber containing a celestial necromancer?!"

The silver-armored corpse-trooper's eyes flashed, and he studied the Zhou Clan. After a moment, he shook his head. "There must be some unique secret magic at work that defies divine sense...."

Bai Xiaochun's eyes narrowed, and yet he didn't hesitate. As soon as he was outside the Zhou Clan, he loudly said, "I want 2,000 corpse troopers to form a perimeter. No one is allowed to enter this clan from the air or the ground. Nor may anyone leave!!" Instantly, 2,000 of the corpse troopers flew out and formed ranks, locking down everything around the Zhou Clan!

They... were completely surrounded!

The 2,000 corpse troopers quickly created a spell formation which caused black smoke to roil out and cover the entire Zhou Clan, sealing it completely!

Cries of alarm rang up from inside the clan, especially from the appointed successor in the clan. As for the marquis himself, he looked up angrily at the corpse trooper army, at the seal locking down the clan, and at Bai Xiaochun with his murderous aura.

It only took a moment for the heavenly marquis to realize what was happening. He was one of the very few people in the clan who knew that Miao Lin'er's grandfather was hiding amongst them, and that his clan had been one of the people involved in the abduction of the inspections commissioner's soul slave.

Therefore, his anger regarding the Proclamation of Universal Grace had mostly been a mask to cover his anxiety.

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had suddenly shown up caused his face to fall and his mind to reel with the realization that... he knew the truth!!

“Activate the formation!” he said. Then he bit down on his tongue and spit out a mouthful of blood. That blood was a key aspect needed to activate the clan's spell formation. A moment later, a huge blood-colored shield sprang up, instantly spreading out to protect the clan.

That was the exact moment in which Bai Xiaochun and his 2,000 corpse troopers arrived. Without the slightest hesitation, he immediately had the corpse troopers violently attack the shield!

Most shocking of all though, were not the brutal corpse troopers, but Bai Xiaochun, who had a vicious snarl on his face as he attacked with the explosive violence of an erupting volcano.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Heaven and earth shook violently, and a huge shockwave blasted

out in all directions, causing many nearby structures to rock back and forth.

The blood-colored shield immediately began to twist and distort, and then, after only a few breaths of time passed, it shattered into countless fragments that rained down onto the clan below.

The clan was thrown into a huge commotion, with many cultivators coughing up blood and looking up with incredulity. Some even began to cry out.

“What are you doing, Bai Hao?!?!”

“Our clan didn’t break any rules, nor did we offend you! What are you doing?!?”

The heir apparent of the clan was also present. Eyes flashing with anger, he shouted, “This is an abuse of power, Bai Hao! You’re using your public office to get revenge for personal matters! The Grand Heavenmaster is going to find out about this, and the rest of the nobility and aristocracy too! Nobody will be able to protect you then. You’ll die for sure!! Fellow clan members! Join forces! If we stand against him for long enough, someone will definitely come to rescue us!!”

However, even as he spoke these words, he fled in the direction of his heavenly marquis pagoda!

Although not everyone in the clan leaped to obey the orders of the heir apparent, many of the senior generation flew angrily up into the sky toward Bai Xiaochun. Even some of the most loyal of the clan servants joined them.

There were more than a thousand in total. And yet, as soon as they met Bai Xiaochun’s advancing corpse troopers, fierce fighting broke out, along with agonized shrieks.

Chapter 797: Killing And Crushing!

The Zhou Clan was fundamentally incapable of resistance. Blood sprayed out of the mouths of those who came forth to fight, and they were sent tumbling backward. Then, a chilling voice rang out, which belonged to none other than Bai Xiaochun.

“That’s right, I am here for personal revenge. But I only want to kill three people. And if anybody tries to stop me, I’ll cut them down!” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t care less whether the other members of the Zhou Clan lived or died. However, there were two people who had long since been on his list to kill. One was Zhou Wudao, and the other was Miao Lin’er’s grandfather. Now, there was a new person on that list... the heir apparent!

Without pausing for a moment, Bai Xiaochun shot with lightning-like speed toward that very heir apparent!

The heir apparent’s face was pale white as he sped toward the heavenly marquis pagoda. Just when he was about to reach it, Bai Xiaochun suddenly appeared in front of him and unleashed a fist strike!

That fist strike contained all of Bai Xiaochun’s anger and madness; it ripped the air apart, and provoked a shrill scream from the heir apparent. A profound sensation of deadly crisis filled him, as though he knew that there was no longer a place for him to live in this world.

This was his clan, where he was supposed to be safe, and yet, unprecedented deadly danger had found him!

“Father!! Save me!!!” he shouted.

At this point, a beam of dazzling light shot out from the heavenly marquis pagoda, accompanied by a cold and sinister voice.

“If you dare to kill my son, Bai Hao, then your soul slave will be destroyed beyond the shadow of a doubt!!”

Currently sitting in the heavenly marquis pagoda was a middle-aged man of average height and appearance. He was a half-deva, but among half-devas, could not be considered particularly strong. However, with the power of his heavenly marquis pagoda, he was capable of battle prowess roughly equivalent to a full deva.

That was why, despite how Bai Hao had attacked his clan and destroyed their shield, he had waited patiently inside of the heavenly marquis pagoda.

At the moment, he felt hesitant and fearful, not of Bai Xiaochun, but of his corpse troopers, especially the one wearing silver armor.

At the same time, he still felt confident in some aspects. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had come here showed how important his soul slave was to him. And therefore... Zhou Wudao was confident that he wouldn't kill his son. He was just trying to create some pressure, or perhaps bring about a scenario in which he could offer a trade for his soul slave. Whichever was the case, the inspections commissioner definitely wouldn't resort to killing!

After all, Zhou Wudao was a heavenly marquis, and this was Arch-Emperor City. The inspections commissioner still answered to the grand heavenmaster, and despite how crazy he was acting, he hadn't become irrational.

“I just need to buy some time!!” he thought. With that, he produced a transmission jade slip to send a message asking for help.

However, in Zhou Wudao's moment of confidence, Bai Xiaochun's eyes turned more bloodshot than before. Ignoring the beam of light shooting down from the heavenly marquis pagoda, he sent his fist flying forward with even greater speed than before!!

It pierced through the air like the gust of a storm wind, landing directly onto the back of the fleeing heir apparent.

The heir apparent had a mid Nascent Soul stage cultivation base,

whereas Bai Xiaochun had battle prowess similar to a half-deva. How could this heir apparent possibly defend himself against that? Intense rumbling sounds filled the air as a scream escaped the young man's lips that vastly surpassed anything from before.

However, the scream didn't last for long. The explosive power of the fist reduced him to nothing more than a haze of blood and gore!

Even his nascent soul was incapable of escape, and was ripped to pieces. The heir apparent... was destroyed in body and soul! Not even his bones remained behind!!

As for the beam of light from the heavenly marquis pagoda, the silver-armored corpse trooper stepped forward and took the blow for Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Hao!!!” Zhou Wudao shouted in apoplectic rage as he leapt to his feet. “How... how dare you kill a child of mine!!!”

Never in his wildest imagination could he have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would actually be so decisive, and also so uncompromising.

The other members of the Zhou Clan who had just witnessed what happened were left shaking physically. His chilling words from earlier had already prompted a large number to give up thoughts of interfering with him, but now, all of them were terrified to the extreme.

It wasn't just them. A crowd had already begun to build up in the area beyond the perimeter created by the corpse troopers, and when they saw what had just occurred, many of them gasped.

To kill a heavenly marquis' son in this way... showed how deep his enmity went!

“I guess I haven't killed enough people since coming to Arch-Emperor City,” Bai Xiaochun said in a fierce and brutal tone. “Well, since you and your friends decided to attack me

personally.... Then not only will I kill your son... I'm going to kill you too!"

Even as his words continued to echo in the air, he burst forward with explosive speed toward the heavenly marquis pagoda.

As he closed in, several beams of dazzling light shot out from the pagoda toward him. Simultaneously, the side of the pagoda rippled as a shadowy figure emerged.

That shadowy figure was one of the miraculous abilities of the heavenly marquis pagoda, a magical clone which immediately shot toward Bai Xiaochun in attack.

It was at this point that the corpse troopers, including the silver-armored one, split off and began to search the buildings for Miao Lin'er's grandfather.

Obviously, Bai Xiaochun had given them the order to do so. He didn't need the help of his corpse troopers for this fight. In fact, he wanted a chance to vent the anger, madness, and guilt which had built up over the last month!

Rumbling booms could be heard as the dazzling beams of light landed on Bai Xiaochun, and yet, he didn't even blink in response. He only picked up speed, hurtling toward the magical clone at top speed. As he closed in, he shoved out his right hand.

An explosive blast of wind spread out in all directions in response. In response, the magical clone of Zhou Wudao snorted coldly and performed an incantation gesture, summoning a horde of illusory pythons to attack Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's expression didn't change at all. He clenched his right fist, which caused a black vortex to appear, along with a terrifying gravitational force. It was as if all of the energy in the entire area were being sucked into that vortex!

Even Bai Xiaochun's aura vanished, until it almost seemed like he didn't exist. However, that was when a domineering figure

appeared behind him!

This was none other than... the Undying Emperor's Fist!!

It was an attack that had left Mistress Red-Dust visibly surprised, and was very close to the power of a deva!

A massive amount of force was building up around Bai Xiaochun. It almost seemed like night was falling in his area as all of the light was sucked into that black vortex!

Zhou Wudao's shadowy clone felt an intense sensation of deadly crisis building up, and let out a shout, simultaneously performing a double-handed incantation gesture that caused the pythons to all form together into a 300-meter wide defensive formation.

However, that defensive formation was as effective against Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist as a mantis was against a war chariot!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The python formation was ripped to shreds, becoming a cloud of gore and bones which rapidly transformed into nothing more than ash!

Zhou Wudao's clone couldn't have looked more shocked at how wildly destructive the Undying Emperor's Fist was!

Things weren't over yet, though. As the darkness of night grew stronger in the area, the heavenly marquis pagoda began to shake. Inside, Zhou Wudao coughed up a mouthful of blood, and his face turned as white as a sheet as he spared no effort to fight back with the powers of the pagoda.

"Time to double it up!" Bai Xiaochun said, eyes glittering. Clenching his hand into a fist, he unleashed the Undying Emperor's Fist again, this time with double the level of power!

The darkness in the area converged on itself, making a huge black fist that caused everyone who saw it to gasp in shock. Then

that fist slammed into the heavenly marquis pagoda!

Heaven and earth shook violently; all of Arch-Emperor City trembled!

A moment later, the Undying Emperor's Fist faded away, and the heavenly marquis pagoda still stood!

Bai Xiaochun hovered just outside of it, his expression as cold as ice.

Inside the pagoda, Zhou Wudao was coughing up more blood, and had visibly aged, and yet was laughing madly.

“So what if you have a deva-level fist strike? This is a heavenly marquis pag--” However, before Zhou Wudao could finish speaking, cracking sounds could be heard. His face fell, and then drained of blood as he saw... a crack appear right beneath him!

“Impossible. Impossible....” Zhou Wudao felt like his mind had been struck by lightning, and his face was covered with an expression of unmitigated horror.

Then, more cracking sounds could be heard. More and more cracks began to spread out through the pagoda, as, within the space of a few breaths of time... it collapsed!!

Chapter 798: Ill Give You Ten Breaths Of Time!

As the heavenly marquis pagoda collapsed, complete silence filled the area. Everyone in the clan felt like their minds were being struck by lightning from the heavens. To a heavenly marquis clan, their heavenly marquis pagoda was a symbol of how lofty and amazing their clan was!

It was the most important legacy in their clan, passed on to each successor as a means to defend the clan.

And right now, the Zhou Clan's heavenly marquis pagoda... was collapsing into pieces!!

Although this was not the first such pagoda to be destroyed after the Arch-Emperor Dynasty relocated to the Wildlands... it was the only one to meet such a fate in the past thousand years! The significance of this event defied imagination!

If that was how the Zhou Clan reacted, then there was little need to wonder how everyone else in the audience was reacting. There were countless people observing events on behalf of other powerful groups, and also just random people interested in watching, and all of them were dumbstruck.

“The Zhou Clan's heavenly marquis pagoda... is collapsing....”

“This Bai Hao actually dared to destroy a heavenly marquis pagoda!!”

Zhou Wudao emerged from within the collapsing pagoda, blood spraying out of his mouth, and looking visibly older than before. The instant he appeared in the open, he didn't charge toward Bai Xiaochun in attack, but rather... turned and fled!

He had no other choice than to do so. Bai Xiaochun's fist strike had been unimaginably shocking, so powerful that it actually destroyed a lofty and magnificent heavenly marquis pagoda!

To Zhou Wudao, it was almost inconceivable. Most people only knew a little bit about how heavenly marquis pagodas actually worked, but as a heavenly marquis, he had complete control over his own pagoda, and was thus deeply struck by what had just occurred.

He knew that the so-called heavenly marquis pagodas were not created by heavenly marquises. Instead... they had been built along with Arch-Emperor City itself! More specifically, they were shocking magical devices that could focus and release the power of an unseen spell formation!

After all, what was visible of Arch-Emperor City right now was actually only a part of the true extent of the city. There was more buried underground. And as for the heavenly marquis pagodas, they could enable a half-deva heavenly marquis to unleash battle prowess equivalent to a full deva.

And of course, the heavenly duke pagodas were even more impressive!

The power of the pagodas was limited to some extent. After all, they were expensive to fully power up, and that would not be permitted unless the Arch-Emperor Dynasty were under direct threat.

Even still... they were powerful enough that no ordinary person could possibly attack them successfully. In fact, the one which had been successfully destroyed a thousand years ago... had been during a battle of demigods!

Because of that, there was no way that Zhou Wudao could ever have guessed that his heavenly marquis pagoda would collapse. Although he wasn't sure how it was happening, he had his suspicions, and they terrified him.

"If it isn't his cultivation base, then it must be some special divine ability.... That fist strike is actually a magical technique! But what?" Zhou Wudao's face was ashen as he realized that he had

provoked someone he was most certainly not powerful enough to have provoked. Thus, it was without the slightest hesitation that he fled as quickly as possible.

An icy glint appeared in Bai Xiaochun's eyes. He didn't know much about heavenly marquis pagodas, and therefore, was a bit confused by Zhou Wudao's reaction.

It was with lightning-like speed that he immediately gave chase, when suddenly... a shadowy blur appeared from within the rubble of a collapsing building at the edge of the Zhou Clan. The figure was partially translucent, and was moving directly toward the corpse troopers who had the area locked down.

Not only was the figure moving quickly, it was using some sort of divine ability that slowed the corpse troopers down. As a result, it seemed to be just on the verge of breaking through the blockade.

However, that was when Bai Xiaochun stopped, turned, and vanished. When he reappeared, he was right in front of the shadowy figure!

It was almost as if he had been waiting for this person to make a break for it!

“So, you finally show your face!” he said, his eyes radiating icy coldness and killing intent. Rumbling sounds echoed out as the air around him began to swirl like a vortex.

Unexpectedly, the intensity of his killing intent actually surpassed what had appeared when he had attacked Zhou Wudao!

“You!!” the shadowy figure blurted, suddenly backing up. At that point, it resolved into the image of an old man. He seemed alarmed; clearly, he had believed himself very clever for attempting to flee when the heavenly marquis pagoda fell, and Bai Xiaochun went chasing after Zhou Wudao.

By fleeing at that time, and using his special technique to slow the reactions of the corpse troopers, he had been very confident in

being able to make his escape.

Never could he have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would be prepared for just something like this. The old man was caught completely unaware.

The truth was that as soon as Bai Xiaochun had arrived at the Zhou Clan and found that neither he nor his silver-armored corpse trooper could use their divine sense to find this old man, he had come up with his plan.

One of the reasons he had killed the heir apparent was to vent his anger, but the other was to prevent Zhou Wudao from buying time and getting help.

The whole point to his offensive had not been to kill anyone, but to give Miao Lin'er's grandfather what he believed was a chance to escape. Only by pushing things to the very limit, and by making his opponent think that he was completely mad, would the man be confident enough to try to escape.

That was why he had attacked with such ruthless efficiency, and had immediately resorted to the Undying Emperor's Fist. The whole time, his divine sense had been spread out through the clan, and especially focused on his corpse troopers!

He knew that the old necromancer would attempt to escape by breaking through the sealing blockade, and that was exactly what he had been waiting for!

Now that the old man was backing away from him, Bai Xiaochun stepped forward. At the same time, he sent a thought out to his corpse troopers, causing them to reinforce and shrink the perimeter. Meanwhile, the silver-armored corpse trooper unleashed the power of his deva cultivation base and headed toward the old necromancer!

It only took moments to lock down everything above and below. As of this point, it didn't matter what special technique this old

man had, he would not be escaping!

Zhou Wudao was also affected, and had to start backing away from the corpse troopers. There was simply no way he could break through that barrier.

Miao Lin'er's grandfather could see that it was a critical moment. Eyes flickering with madness he suddenly looked over at Bai Xiaochun and shouted, "Let me go, Bai Hao! If you don't, then a single thought from me will wipe your soul slave out of existence!"

Apparently worried that Bai Xiaochun might be convinced that his soul slave was dead, the old man performing an incantation gesture, causing a soul shadow to appear on his forehead.

That soul shadow was Bai Hao, who was trapped in the old man's forehead, slowly being burned and clearly in critical danger.

Bai Xiaochun stopped in place, trembling inwardly as he looked at Bai Hao's soul shadow. The corpse troopers also stopped, including the silver-armored one, although his deva fluctuations grew more intense.

"If you let me go," the old man said nervously, "I'll give you back your soul slave!" His eyes darted back and forth between Bai Xiaochun and the silver-armored corpse trooper with the deva cultivation base. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had stopped moving instantly boosted his confidence; he could clearly see how important this soul slave was to him. "Back down now! I'll give you ten breaths of time!"

The old man's eyes were glittering more brightly than ever, and off to the side, Zhou Wudao's heart leaped with anticipation.

Bai Xiaochun looked away from Bai Hao's soul shadow and into the eyes of the celestial necromancer. Although he was very nervous, he was feeling more merciless than ever. Voice cold, he said, "I'll give you ten breaths of time to decide. Either you die, or every last member of the Miao Clan dies. The choice is yours!"

Waving his hand, he summoned a screen of light, within which was an image!

It depicted the Inspections Manor, within which were tens of thousands of soul cultivators. There were men and women of all types, and they were all trembling with fear. Miao Lin'er was there, her face pale and covered with dread.

They were surrounded by an army of corpse troopers who pulsed with murderous auras, their leader being none other than Zhou Yixing!

Miao Lin'er's grandfather was clearly shocked by the image. Even more shocking was that the people in the image could see him. They quickly began to call out in anxious voices.

“Save us, Patriarch!!”

“Help me, grandfather!!”

“Patriarch, it's me, Tan'er! Help me!!!”

Chapter 799: You Tricked Me, Bai Hao!

Shockingly, these were all of the members of the Miao Clan!

They only represented about seventy to eighty percent of the clan as a whole, but that was still a large number. Furthermore, many of them were chosen of the clan, people who the patriarch had spent blood, sweat, and tears, not to mention significant cultivation resources, to groom as necromancers.

They represented the reserves of the entire Miao Clan, as well as its future!

This Miao Clan patriarch had carefully split his clan into smaller groups and hidden them away where he thought no one would be able to find them. Never could he have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would have the resources to track them all down!!

Actually, that was one of the first clues Bai Xiaochun had found, and a task he had immediately assigned to Zhou Yixing. Furthermore, the reason he had ordered him not to do anything at first was for fear of alerting his enemies.

The reason he finally made a move on the Zhou Clan was because he had gathered all the clues he needed, and he had decided to close the net. Of course, the ordinary cultivators of the Miao Clan weren't necessarily very useful on their own. But Bai Xiaochun had long since come to the conclusion that if Bai Hao were still alive, then he would end up in this very situation, where the Miao Clan patriarch would use Bai Hao to threaten him.

And therefore... he would use the Miao Clan itself to threaten the patriarch, as his trump card! That was another of the reasons why he had unhesitatingly cut down the heir apparent of the Zhou Clan. That menacing action would be even more powerful than a mere spoken threat.

“Bai Hao! You!!!” The Miao Clan patriarch's eyes were completely

bloodshot, and his mind was reeling. Within that projected image, he saw Miao Lin'er and all of the other young ones in the clan that he had not just painstakingly groomed, but also dearly loved.

He thought back to life in his clan, how these young ones had been so attached to him, and suddenly he began to breathe raggedly. At the same time, a look of struggle appeared in his eyes.

As of this moment, their life or death would be decided by one simple action on his part!!

“This isn't everyone in your clan,” Bai Xiaochun said, slowly and clearly, “but don't worry. If my soul slave perishes, then trust me, I will do everything in my power to track down every last child of the Miao Clan, no matter where they are hiding, and put them to death! I will ensure that the Wildlands never again has a hint of a clan named Miao! Every bloodline will be wiped away!”

Bai Xiaochun knew that the fact that the Miao Clan patriarch was using Bai Hao to threaten him indicated that his identity had not been revealed. If it had, the patriarch wouldn't need to threaten him. He could overturn Bai Xiaochun's entire world with ease, and place him in the most dangerous of deadly situations!

Something else that made Bai Xiaochun tremble in anger was the knowledge that the Miao Clan patriarch could not easily soulsearch Bai Hao. And yet, the patriarch would obviously have wanted to know exactly how Bai Hao had come to be. Because of that, Bai Xiaochun could only imagine the suffering and torment he had undergone. And yet... the Miao Clan patriarch had failed in his efforts!

Bai Xiaochun had already been unwilling to abandon his apprentice before, but that added realization bolstered his convictions!

The Miao Clan patriarch's lips quivered, and his eyes grew increasingly bloodshot. He was even finding it hard to breathe. It was almost like he had split into two people, one of whom

represented his clan, and the other of whom represented himself. And the two of them were fighting back and forth for the superior position. Would his desire to become an earthly necromancer outweigh his duty to his clan?

It was in that exact same moment that Bai Xiaochun once again spoke.

“Under no circumstances will I allow you to leave here today. And I don’t need to rely on luck to make sure that happens. You will die today, no matter what. Either give me my soul slave, and be the only person to die, or... you, your clan, and my soul slave... can all die together!

“There is no escape for you, and no one will come to your rescue. Don’t bother trying to buy time. I’ll say it only once more. You have ten breaths of time!

“After that, I will give the order for my corpse troopers to attack. Then, you can watch the blood of your clan flow in rivers toward the Netherworld as you die along with them!” Although Bai Xiaochun’s heart was racing in anxiety, his face didn’t show it. He seemed cold, ruthless and emotionless, and his voice contained decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron.

With that, he flicked his sleeve, looked at the image of Zhou Yixing, and said, “Start the countdown, Zhou Yixing. After ten breaths of time, execute the Miao Clan!”

“Ten!

“Nine!

“Eight!”

The Miao Clan patriarch shivered and panted more than before. Bai Xiaochun’s words were like sharp knives that stabbed deep into his heart and mind, pushing him to the brink of complete collapse.

That was especially true considering that Bai Xiaochun had said that he would die no matter what. And he only had ten breaths of

time to make his decision. By this point, he was convinced that Bai Xiaochun truly had made a decision to kill him, and that there was no way out of the situation.

“What do I do?” he thought. “What am I supposed to do!?!?”

As the Miao Clan patriarch chuckled bitterly, and Zhou Yixing counted down loudly, the Miao Clan cultivators began to beg and plead even more loudly than before. “Save us, Patriarch!!”

“Five!”

“Four!”

Zhou Yixing’s words blasted into the Miao Clan patriarch’s ears like thunder. The patriarch stared at Bai Xiaochun, hoping to get some clue from him to indicate that perhaps he was bluffing. But no matter how he looked at him, he seemed cold and ruthless. He looked like he would go to any lengths necessary to see the patriarch dead!

“He cares about this soul,” he thought, his heart pounding, “but not enough that it can be used as a threat against him....” Clearly, Bai Xiaochun either wanted the soul for himself, or didn’t want anyone else to have it!

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun was actually far more nervous than the Miao Clan patriarch. And yet, he had to keep that hidden, down to the tiniest scrap.

He knew that if he let the Miao Clan patriarch go, he would lose the initiative, and his opponent would be in control of Bai Hao’s life. At that point, if the other twelve clans and the Nine Serenities King took action, it would be virtually impossible for him to save Bai Hao!

Delaying matters wouldn’t do any good. He needed to decisively end matters right here and now.

His only hope was to see which of the two of them was more vicious. He had to make it seem like he wanted the man dead no

matter what. Only by destroying his opponent's hope for life could he possibly awaken his sense of responsibility toward his clan. At that point, the man would be forced to choose who died: himself, or his clan. In the end, most ordinary people... would pick the former!

The former was not death, it was... sacrificing oneself for one's people!

If the patriarch somehow saw through Bai Xiaochun's act, and realized that he cared about the situation even more than the patriarch, then Bai Xiaochun would be forced to compromise, and let him go....

“Three!” Zhou Yixing's killing intent grew stronger, and the murderous aura of the 1,000 corpse troopers raged.

“Sacrifice yourself to save your clan?” Bai Xiaochun said coldly. “Or be buried along with them? The choice is up to you!” He raised his hand up into the air, and everyone could see that, if he dropped it, it would indicate that the executions were to be carried out!

He didn't need to make lengthy speeches. In fact, saying too much right now could actually be counterproductive.

“Two....” Zhou Yixing said. The pleading of the Miao Clan became like a sound wave that battered at the patriarch's heart and mind. He was on the verge of complete mental and emotional collapse. With the weight of death looming over him, his sense of duty toward his clan was now starting to outweigh his own selfish interest!

To some extent, the scene playing out was a mockery. Although the patriarch seemed to be ready to sacrifice himself for his clan, the truth was that if he could sense the slightest bit of hesitation in Bai Xiaochun, the slightest chance that he might make it out alive, he would make a very different decision!

“One!” As the word left Zhou Yixing's mouth, the Miao Clan

patriarch smiled bitterly. Then he reached up to his forehead, grabbed Bai Hao, and threw him toward Bai Xiaochun!

“Let my clan go,” he said. “A man must take responsibility for his actions; therefore, my life is yours for the taking!”

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding so hard that his veneer of coldness shattered. His anxiety erupted as he reached out to grab Bai Hao.

Bai Hao was clearly very weak, but as soon as Bai Xiaochun grabbed him, he opened his eyes and stared in shock and incredulity.

“Master....” he said. Then he passed out.

Heart trembling, Bai Xiaochun sent some divine sense out to confirm that Bai Hao was merely unconscious. Then he put him into his soulhoarding pagoda in his bag of holding.

When the Miao Clan patriarch saw all of that, his eyes went wide, and his mind began to spin. He heard Bai Hao call Bai Xiaochun Master, and saw how much Bai Xiaochun cared about him. Finally, everything suddenly clicked into place. The patriarch began to gasp for breath as the sacred feeling of having sacrificed himself for his clan was replaced by pure humiliation.

“You tricked me, Bai Hao!!!”

Chapter 800: Master And Apprentice Reunited

The Miao Clan patriarch's howl was one of utter defeat. He had lost many things a moment ago. His wisdom. His judgement. Bai Hao. And his own life!

He had been completely and utterly vanquished!

“Kill those two!” Bai Xiaochun said coldly, flicking his sleeve.

All of the corpse troopers, even the one in silver armor, took to action, murderous auras raging.

The silver-armored corpse trooper alone would have been enough, but they all attacked. Therefore, there was nothing that the Miao Clan patriarch or Zhou Wudao could do to fight back. They were killed in body and soul.

They had been able to struggle a bit while Bai Hao was still in their custody to use as a threat. But right now, their screams and curses filled the air as their bodies were ripped to shreds. Blood and gore exploded out in all directions, and their nascent divinities were shattered!!

For the Zhou Clan, it was the end of an era. Although they still existed, for all intents and purposes, they were dead!

Their heavenly marquis pagoda had been destroyed, and their heavenly marquis killed. Their heir apparent was dead, and the Zhou Clan... would be stricken from the list of the heavenly marquis clans!

The Miao Clan had once been one of the most powerful clans in the Wildlands with their earthly necromancer. But now, they had no pillar of strength to support them.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun did not go back on his word. He said that he would spare the Miao Clan, and he did. However, he had Zhou

Yixing secretly place branding marks on all of them. Although they escaped with their lives, if Zhou Yixing ever needed to, he would have a way to easily threaten them. And if they ever harbored truly ill intentions, he could easily kill them.

Not all the Miao Clan cultivators got off easily, though. Bai Xiaochun had Miao Lin'er imprisoned in the Grand Asylum. Her incredible good looks would obviously cause wicked thoughts to rise up in the men in the prison, but at the moment, Bai Xiaochun wasn't feeling merciful.

The events of the day immediately caused a stir in Arch-Emperor City. There wasn't a single person who didn't hear about what had occurred. As for the heavenly marquises, they were stricken with fear down to the last one.

Although all of them had had conflicts and even some fights with Bai Xiaochun, so far, none of the interchanges had ever escalated to the point of people dying. But now... a heavenly marquis and his successor had both been cut down!!

Even a heavenly marquis pagoda had been destroyed. After the initial gasps of shock, everyone assumed that what had happened had been ordered by the Grand Heavenmaster.

However, it didn't take long before the Grand Heavenmaster expressed his anger about the matter! At that point, the heavenly marquises realized... that the inspections commissioner had been acting for personal reasons!!

“This Bai Hao is crazy! I can't believe he actually killed people!!”

“He actually went and killed a heavenly marquis without the consent of the Grand Heavenmaster?!?!”

“This defies all laws and principles, even those of the heavens!!”

“This guy cannot be tolerated any longer! The inspections commissioner has too much power! If he can go crazy and kill Zhou Wudao, then who will be the next person he targets for death?!?!”

“This Bai Hao is a traitor! This is Arch-Emperor City! Who does he think he is, the second Grand Heavenmaster!?!?” The heavenly marquises were all enraged. Their previous hatred, especially that caused by the Proclamation of Universal Grace and the losses they had sustained because of it, caused them to detest Bai Xiaochun with all their being.

Because of their hatred and fear, there was no way that they would let Bai Xiaochun’s one enormous illegal act just go unanswered. It didn’t take long before the heavenly marquises were heading en masse to the imperial palace!

“This time he’s going to die beyond the shadow of a doubt!”

“There’s no way that this Bai Hao will escape by the skin of his teeth this time!!”

“No superhuman abilities will help him this time. He won’t even have a corpse left!”

“Nobody can save him! The inspections commissioner’s power comes from the Grand Heavenmaster. Today... he will face major tribulation!”

The heavenly marquises weren’t the only ones to take action. The ten heavenly dukes left their heavenly duke pagodas and also headed to the imperial palace. Chen Haosong took the lead, a cold smile on his face. He knew... that not even the Grand Heavenmaster would be able to protect Bai Hao this time!

Bai Hao’s crime was far too dramatic, and had crossed a bottom line that nobody in Arch-Emperor Dynasty could accept!!

All of the nobility and aristocracy were up in arms. As for the common people, when they heard about what had happened, they gasped at the enormity and insanity of it all.

It didn’t take long for the news of Bai Xiaochun killing a heavenly marquis to reach the farthest corners of the Wildlands.

When the Giant Ghost King heard of it, his anger flared. He

quickly pulled out a jade slip to send a message to Bai Xiaochun, but after a moment, put the jade slip away. Then he stamped his foot in anger, causing the entire royal palace to shudder.

“Too reckless!!”

When the Nine Serenities King got the information via jade slip, he frowned. He didn't care much that Zhou Wudao and the Miao Clan patriarch had been killed. The only reason he had helped them to begin with was because it benefited him. Although he didn't particularly care for Bai Xiaochun, he viewed him like an ant whose life or death didn't matter at all.

However, he did care about the fact that a heavenly marquis pagoda had been destroyed.

“Strange....” he murmured.

Meanwhile, in another part of Nine Serenities City, Prince Zhou Hong heard the news and immediately broke out into delighted laughter.

“Bai Hao, ah, Bai Hao. How will you possibly avert disaster this time!?”

Virtually everyone felt the same, that the situation was completely unresolvable.

As the Wildlands was shaken by the news, Bai Xiaochun was back in the Inspections Manor, where he had gone immediately after the events in the Zhou Clan.

He tossed his inspections commissioner medallion into his bag of holding, and dismissed Zhou Yixing with orders to lay low until things calmed down. As for his corpse troopers, they stood in ranks, motionless.

At the moment, the only thing Bai Xiaochun cared about was Bai Hao, who lay in his soulhoarding pagoda, slowly recovering. Eventually, his eyes fluttered open, and the first thing he saw was his Master, looking very haggard.

“Finally awake!” Bai Xiaochun said, a smile on his face. “You need to be more careful in the future. Come, come. Let Master tell you what's happened in the last month. Hmmmphh! You have no idea how awesomely your Master handled things. No one dared to provoke me! I even went and accused devas!”

Smiling, he went on to explain everything that had happened. To him, things already seemed like they had been a month before, with he and Bai Hao together, depending on each other for survival.

However, the more he talked about everything, the more Bai Hao's eyes began to glaze over.

“Master....” he said, trembling. When he heard that his Master had enacted the Proclamation of Universal Grace for him, and then learned of everything after that, he was suddenly struck deeply with a feeling of warm gratitude. Eventually, he flew out of his soulhoarding pagoda and dropped to his knees to kowtow to Bai Xiaochun.

“I never thought I would see you again, Master....” he said, his heart surging with emotions that he couldn't even express. After being captured, he had endured a month of torment, and yet had never revealed any of his Master's secrets. As of this moment, it all seemed worth it!

After all, the person Bai Hao cared about most in his heart was his Master!

To Bai Hao, the past month had been one of endless darkness and pain. He had felt himself being slowly burned away as the Miao Clan patriarch refined him. There had even been times when the patriarch attempted to soulsearch him. The Miao Clan's flame conjuring techniques required that they soulsearch and torment the intelligent soul until it submitted. Only then could the flame be conjured successfully. It was only possible to imagine how much pain Bai Hao had experienced!

During that time, he had been completely powerless to do anything. There were times when he had almost wished he could die, but in his determination, he had refused to give in. His Master had not yet conjured nineteen-colored flame, and in fact, he had not yet seen him succeed with eighteen-colored flame! And he had sworn an oath that he would make sure his Master fulfilled his dream of becoming a heavenly necromancer.

Therefore, he couldn't die. Nor did he want to! Maybe he would die one day, but it would only be after he helped his Master accomplish everything he needed to. Only then could he close his eyes in that final rest.

There were just too many things left to be done. Furthermore, he was also worried about what his Master would do without someone to watch over him. Presumably, he would get himself in all sorts of dangerous situations, and Bai Hao knew he needed to be there to give advice, and to help solve the problems!

That was his focus and determination, and it kept him going the entire month. He wasn't sure how much longer he would have been able to hold out, and eventually, he simply lapsed into unconsciousness. And then, he opened his eyes to see... his Master.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the look in Bai Hao's eyes, he felt very pleased with himself, and mused that he really was a trustworthy and inspiring Master. Tossing Bai Hao's hair, he said, "Hahaha! Moved? Well, didn't Master tell you that after you become his apprentice, you wouldn't regret it...?"

Bai Hao immediately kowtowed deeply and said, "Master, you have shown me incredible kindness. You saved my life! I will never forget this for the rest of my life!!!"

It was almost exactly the same as the scene which had played out in that mountain cave when he had just regained his mind after being a vengeful soul.... He kowtowed with no regrets and with full sincerity!

Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and flicked his sleeve.

“You’re my apprentice,” he said grandly, “and if anyone dares to lay a hand on you, they’re basically slapping me in the face! Proclamation of Universal Grace? Ha! If that hadn’t worked, my next plan was to get the lands of Heavenspan to invade the Wildlands to save you!”

As of this moment, he didn’t look at all like the cold and ruthless person he had been in the past month. He was finally back to normal!

Chapter 801: Is This Some Kind Of Joke?

Bai Hao was deeply moved, and his lips moved as if he wished to say something, but couldn't find the words. But then... Bai Xiaochun looked curiously at him, and asked a question which he couldn't hold in any longer.

“Hey, that plan with the Proclamation of Universal Grace worked pretty good. I've been wondering ever since you came up with it if your inspiration was being a bastard son of the Bai Clan?”

“Uhh....” Bai Hao was quite taken aback. His Master really was very changeable. In one moment he was domineering and heroic, and then, he switched to asking embarrassing questions.

After seeing how curious his Master seemed, Bai Hao hesitated for a moment, and then nodded.

When Bai Xiaochun saw his apprentice admit the truth, he sighed, then reached out and tousled his hair again.

“Now it makes sense why Madam Cai wanted to get rid of you.... That plan was really vicious....”

“Uhh....” Bai Hao really didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Bai Xiaochun had other questions he wanted to ask, but before he could, his expression flickered, and he looked up to see a red beam of light flying in his direction.

Even as it was still approaching, a voice rang out to fill the Inspections Manor!

“Bai Hao, you shameless lowlife! I'm gonna kill you!” It was the voice of a woman. Soon, she came into view, wearing a crimson robe, her fair face contorted by murderous rage. It was none other than Mistress Red-Dust, Zhou Zimo.

Earlier, Zhou Zimo had been in secluded meditation trying to break out from the early Deva Realm, and had thus been unaware

of the commotion caused by the Proclamation of Universal Grace.

Moments ago, she had come out of meditation, depressed at having failed to break through. Furthermore, she found that her thoughts seemed sluggish and unclear, although she wasn't sure why. Chalking it up to a reaction from failing in her breakthrough, she decided not to worry about the matter. That was when she had heard about the Proclamation of Universal Grace, and immediately erupted in anger.

She had already detested Bai Xiaochun, and although some of the issues between them were misunderstandings that had eventually been resolved, she still hated him. That was especially true considering how he seemed to have tossed the Giant Ghost King to the wayside after being appointed as the inspections commissioner.

And now there was the issue of the Proclamation of Universal Grace. On any other occasion, Mistress Red-Dust would have been able to see past the surface of the situation, but right now, she wasn't thinking clearly. In her current state, she had somewhat of a one-track mind, and therefore, without taking the time to think about the situation, she flew up into the air. On the way, the Giant Ghost King sent her some messages, but she was so wrapped up in her determination to teach Bai Xiaochun a lesson that she ignored them.

Bai Xiaochun was startled. Initially, he had assumed the Grand Heavenmaster had sent people to apprehend him. Never could he have guessed that it would actually be Mistress Red-Dust, whom he hadn't seen in quite some time. Backing up, he tried to offer an explanation.

“Zimo, you need to listen to--”

“Shut up!” she yelled angrily. Landing in the Inspections Manor, she pointed accusingly at Bai Xiaochun and continued, “You ungrateful cur! Are you the one behind that Proclamation of

Universal Grace?!?!”

Deva fluctuations erupted out from her, becoming a crimson beam of light that shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Quickly putting Bai Hao away, he dodged the beam of light and said, “Listen, I can expl--”

However, before he could say anything further, Mistress Red-Dust attacked again.

She was at the peak of the early Deva Realm, and was attacking with full force, which meant that Bai Xiaochun was no match for her. That was even more the case considering he had already used the Undying Emperor’s Fist twice today. Although he seemed fine on the outside, he actually needed more time to recover.

Mistress Red-Dust seemed very angry that he was dodging out of the way. Next, she performed an incantation gesture to summon a magical item, a red lotus, which began to rotate rapidly and cast bright light out in all directions.

As rumbling sounds filled the air, Bai Xiaochun backed up more. The fact that Mistress Red-Dust was attacking with full force, and not even letting him explain himself, caused his anger to spark.

“You crazy old biddy! Do you really think that I, the inspections commissioner, am afraid of you!?” A mere thought on his part caused all of his corpse troopers to look up, and bristle with murderous auras. Although none of them attacked, the silver-armored one stepped forward, his deva cultivation base surging with power. A moment later, the Quasi-Deva Realm black-armored corpse trooper also stepped forward.

The two corpse troopers began to fight with Mistress Red-Dust, who used her red lotus to slowly push them back. However, the apparent backlash from her failed breakthrough seemed to get worse, and her head suddenly began to swim. Snorting coldly, she contemplated the fact that she couldn’t actually kill the damned

Bai Hao. However, he was definitely a thankless wretch and an ungrateful cur who fully deserved a good beating.

Considering how extraordinary these two corpse troopers were, she finally backed up and even turned to leave. However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't willing to simply let things drop.

“Activate formation! Seal that woman in place!” Instantly, his nine half-deva corpse troopers flew out into the open to surround Mistress Red-Dust. The rest of the 5,000 also joined, creating a huge net-like seal that made it impossible for Mistress Red-Dust to escape.

An unsightly expression could be seen on Mistress Red-Dust's face as she realized that she was trapped. At the same time, her hatred for Bai Xiaochun grew stronger. Calling upon the power of her red lotus, she managed to break an opening into the lines of corpse troopers, and yet the moment she did, the backlash from her failed breakthrough worsened. Her divine sense didn't seem capable of keeping up with her desire to fight, which also caused her red lotus to lag.

On any other occasion, even that wouldn't have been a big problem. But she was facing the two most powerful of the corpse troopers, and they immediately detected her weakness. They pressed the attack, and booms rang out as Mistress Red-Dust's face drained of blood. At this point, it didn't matter how muddled her thoughts were, she realized that she was acting recklessly. She definitely should not have come looking to cause problems for Bai Xiaochun right after having failed at a breakthrough, and still suffering a backlash because of it.

Furthermore, she'd had no idea that Bai Xiaochun's corpse troopers were at this level. Before, he had commanded 3,000, but now he had 5,000. Plus, the silver-armored one was fully in the deva level.

“Too many things happened while I was in secluded

meditation....” she thought, frowning. She began to back up, an unsightly expression on her face, but as she did, the net created by the 5,000 corpse troopers tightened around her.

That was when Bai Xiaochun saw his opportunity to take action. Jumping forward, he clenched his right hand into a fist and unleashed a fist strike in her direction!

“You’re not going anywhere!” he shouted. The two most powerful corpse troopers attacked, backed up by the rest of the 5,000. Mistress Red-Dust was completely trapped, incapable of breaking free, and even her cultivation base was being sealed.

Not pausing for even a moment, Bai Xiaochun reached out, grabbed her arm, and pulled her down toward the ground. The two of them fell down, and by chance, she landed on her back, with him on top. Immediately, he could feel her soft curves, which instantly lit a fire inside of him. Without even thinking about it, he looked down at her beautiful, enticing lips.

“How dare you, Bai Hao!!” she shouted, her heart bursting with regret and alarm as she began to struggle against him. However, her cultivation base was sealed, an effect which would last for at least the time it took half an incense stick to burn.

The more she struggled, the more Bai Xiaochun’s body tingled in response to what he was feeling. He even took a few deep breaths as he marveled at how attractive she was. However, externally, he put the fiercest expression possible onto his face and glared at her.

“Don't even think of trying to seduce me!!”

“You!!” she yelled angrily, her face flushing bright red and her eyes burning as if with fire. And yet, she could also see how her struggling was affecting her captor, so she stopped moving.

“You walked right into this trap, Zhou Zimo,” he said harshly. “Fudge! Don’t tell me you really want to get into my bed?!”

“Shut up, you shameless jerk! You ungrateful cur! You villain!

How dare you treat me like this after how well my father took care of you!”

Bai Xiaochun frowned, examining her to try to determine if this was just an act.... From what he remembered, Mistress Red-Dust didn't usually behave like this. How could she really be confused by the situation with the Proclamation of Universal Grace? Unable to hold back, he reached out and place his hand on her forehead.

“No fever? Have you just gone stupid?” All of a sudden his eyes lit up. “Wait, does that scoundrel the Giant Ghost King actually have other children out there in the world? Ohhhhh.” He clicked his tongue disapprovingly. “You're not the only one? No way.... How many secrets does the old man have?” The more he thought about it, the more it made sense.

“Shut up! I'm my father's only daughter!” She was about to continue cursing him, when all of a sudden, her jaw dropped as she realized the truth of it all.

“Um... is this some kind of joke?” he asked. “If you're the only one, then you can't seriously expect me to believe that you didn't realize the Giant Ghost King was the person least affected by my plan! The other three kings all have multiple children, and now they'll be weakened. When the time comes, our family can easily take them out!”

With that, Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times. He had intentionally used the words 'our family' as a way to test things out. If this woman was going to come and pretend to be stupid, then he at least had to play along in some way.

Chapter 802: Summons From The Grand Heavenmaster

“Shut your mouth! What do you mean our family? It’s my family!” As she glared at him angrily, her flush deepened. Despite how muddled her thoughts were, she still felt humiliation and anger rising up inside of her.

First of all, she was currently pinned by Bai Xiaochun, and was very displeased at being touched in such a way. Second of all, she was coming to the realization that something strange was going on. Her thinking was too clouded. Furthermore, if she focused on an issue, it seemed that she would instantly make a decision about it and stick obstinately to that decision no matter what.

“How could this be happening? It’s not that complicated of a situation. How come I didn’t get what was going on...?” Mistress Red-Dust was really starting to feel suspicious. In all her years of cultivation, she had never experienced anything like this before. All of a sudden, she thought back to the technique her father the giant ghost king had encouraged her to cultivate. However, merely thinking about the technique suddenly caused her thoughts to grow murkier, and her heart to feel more obstinate....

“It was definitely father....” she thought, gritting her teeth.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun looked into her phoenix-like eyes, and suddenly felt his heart seize as surely as if a tiny hand had grabbed it. He swallowed hard, thinking about how Mistress Red-Dust’s body wasn’t bad at all. Furthermore, the way her cheeks flushed when she was angry made her even more attractive than usual.

Mistress Red-Dust was fundamentally beautiful, and to see her confused and out of sorts only enhanced that beauty. All of a sudden, his heart began to race.

There was something different about Mistress Red-Dust. Hou

Xiaomei tended to glare, and Song Junwan was soft on the outside but filled with dangerous thorns. But Mistress Red-Dust was like a beautiful serpent that you just wanted to reach out and touch to see what would happen....

“She’s more of a vixen than Junwan!” he thought, gasping slightly. He immediately tried to get himself under control, but it was difficult considering that he was laying on top of her. Furthermore, although she wasn’t struggling as fiercely as she had been before, she was still moving here and there in a way that caused his heartrate to increase by the moment.

“Ai, what powerful demon magic! Well, whatever. I, Bai Xiaochun, cannot let the Miao Clan patriarch outdo me in being willing to sacrifice. I guess I just need to put this demoness in her place!” Heart bursting with righteous intentions, he placed his right hand... onto her chest, just below her collarbone... and pushed down.

“Time to get put into place, demoness!” he shouted righteously. The fact that Bai Xiaochun was pushing his hand down onto her chest at first caused Mistress Red-Dust’s jaw to drop. Then she screamed.

“Get your hands off me!!”

“So, the demoness dares to fight back!” he said grimly. “Good! Excellent! Just watch and see how I put you in your place!” For the sake of righteousness, he then placed his other hand onto her chest and pushed down....

“Do you have a death wish, Bai Hao?!?!” she yelled, her rage burning to incomprehensible heights.

The corpse troopers stood around them, no expressions on their faces whatsoever as they watched the struggling man and woman whom they had surrounded.

It was a charming scene that, if any random passerby happened

to glance at without understanding the circumstances, would seem like....

However, the charming scene didn't last for very long. Perhaps it was because Mistress Red-Dust was being upset in a way that she never had been before, or perhaps it was some other reason. In either case, the sealing which had been placed onto her suddenly shattered.

When her cultivation base erupted with power, Bai Xiaochun immediately leaped away from her and backed up. As for Mistress Red-Dust, her eyes shone with cold light as she lunged forward to try to grab him.

Thunderous booming sounds filled the air, as well as a screaming wind. Bai Xiaochun shrieked as he fled, and Mistress Red-Dust chased him, her hair flying around crazily, and her face covered with a murderous look.

“I'm gonna kill you, Bai Hao!!”

“Men, stop this demoness!” Immediately, the previously stiff-faced corpse troopers leaped to intercept Mistress Red-Dust, their murderous auras seething.

Mistress Red-Dust's rage seemed to have increased her battle prowess quite a bit, and she managed to send quite a few corpse troopers flying out of her way. However, the silver-armored trooper was still a match for her, and before long, it was to her frustration and anger that she realized she couldn't get past him. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun was encircled by a ring of corpse trooper bodyguards, who were escorting him further and further away from her.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was blushing a bit, and realized that, considering the level of his own willpower, he shouldn't have acted like that just now. Apparently, Mistress Red-Dust's demon magic was just too powerful. Unwilling to admit that openly, though, he said, “What are you doing, Zimo? I was trying to help

you! Um... it's obvious that you were ensorcelled by some demon magic! I was just trying to get rid of it!"

"Shut up!" Mistress Red-Dust retorted furiously. She was so angry she couldn't even come up with words to speak. She simply hovered in the air, staring at Bai Xiaochun behind his protective ranks of corpse troopers, and gnashed her teeth angrily.

Feeling a bit guilty, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. Flustered, he began to babble a bit. "Um... look, this was just a misunderstanding. What were we just talking about? Oh, right. You said that it wasn't our family it was your family.... Zimo, you're being to standoffish. Come on. Your family, my family. It's the same thing!"

Mistress Red-Dust glared at him coldly, but was aware that she had instigated the situation. Furthermore, it was just as Bai Xiaochun said: the Proclamation of Universal Grace did take the Giant Ghost King into consideration. However, when she thought of the humiliation which had just occurred, she couldn't suppress her fury.

Just as she was about to begin shouting again, her expression flickered, and she looked up into the air.

Bai Xiaochun's pupils constricted as he did the same. Up above, the air was distorting, and soon, a dark, shadowy figure stepped out of thin air.

He wore a black cloak that covered even his face. From the perspective of Bai Xiaochun and Mistress Red-Dust, he looked like little more than a black shadow!

His face was impossible to make out, and he was surrounded by inky darkness that seemed to be part of him, and him of it.

This man was none other than... the Grand Heavenmaster's most trusted aide, the previous inspections commissioner, Hei Ming!

When Mistress Red-Dust realized it was Hei Ming, she was clearly

taken aback. As for Bai Xiaochun, he took a deep breath as he realized that... the moment he had been waiting for had arrived.

No one could see Hei Ming's expression. The only things anyone could see were his eyes, deep within the hood of his cloak. And yet, they didn't contain even a hint of emotion. After studying the Inspections Manor for a moment, he ignored Mistress Red-Dust and focused on Bai Xiaochun.

"Give me the command medallion," he said in the most sinister of voices, a voice which made the Inspections Manor seem to descend into the depths of winter.

Mistress Red-Dust's expression flickered, and Bai Xiaochun stood there quietly for a moment. Although it was no surprise that the inspections commissioner medallion was being taken away from him, he was still very nervous. And yet, he was also confident in being able to make it through the coming trouble.

Pulling the medallion out, he looked down at it for a moment, then tossed it out in front of him. It immediately became a streak of violet light that shot toward Hei Ming.

Hei Ming caught the command medallion and put it away. Then he spoke yet again in that sinister voice of his.

"Come with me, Bai Hao. The Grand Heavenmaster is awaiting an explanation!"

With that, he turned and flew up toward the imperial palace. Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and quickly reviewed the preparations he had made for this moment. Then, he flew up after Hei Ming.

Mistress Red-Dust watched all of this happen, and although she was still angry with Bai Xiaochun, she also felt hesitation in her heart. After they left, she pulled out a transmission jade slip.

There were quite a few messages from the giant ghost king in the jade slip, but Mistress Red-Dust wasn't in the mood to check any of

them. Instead, she sent an urgent message.

“Father, Hei Ming took away Bai Hao’s inspections commissioner medallion. Then he led him away....”

Back in Giant Ghost City, the Giant Ghost King was sitting there anxiously. According to his original plan, he was supposed to have brainwashed Mistress Red-Dust a bit after she came out of secluded meditation. Instead, she had headed toward Bai Xiaochun with murderous intentions.

He had sent her several urgent messages, but she was completely focused on her own desires, and had ignored him. The Giant Ghost King was left with no other option than to smile wryly and sigh. But then, he got a message back, and after he saw it, his eyes began to shine brightly.

“Bai Hao is not the type of person who makes decisions rashly.... I wonder what secret weapon he has up his sleeve?”

Chapter 803: Think You Can Take Me On?

As the Giant Ghost King sat there in silence, Bai Xiaochun followed Hei Ming up toward the imperial palace, trying as best he could to look calm and collected.

Of course, inwardly, he was anxious to the point of being terrified. He frantically reviewed his plan to make sure there were no holes in it; after all, if he made the slightest mistake, there would be no hope of making a comeback.

“I doubt anything will happen that I couldn’t adjust for.... I couldn’t have prepared any better....” He felt a bit better after a thorough analysis, but still couldn’t stop wondering about what might or might not happen.

And thus, he and Hei Ming proceeded along in silence.

From the moment Bai Xiaochun had chosen not to consult the Grand Heavenmaster, but instead to attack the Zhou Clan with deadly force and lightning-like speed, he had known that it would cause a huge commotion!

But he had no regrets. He didn’t trust and rely on the Grand Heavenmaster like he had in the past, and Bai Hao’s safety had been of paramount importance. If even the slightest word had gotten out to alerts his enemies, the consequences could have been unimaginable.

And just as the Giant Ghost King had surmised, he had dared to act in the way he had because he had a secret weapon ready to go!

“I bet all of the heavenly marquises and dukes are there in Heavenmaster Hall, demanding that I be put to death....” Although he had his secret weapon, he still couldn’t help but feel a bit anxious. However, it was an anxiety mixed with anticipation!

He couldn’t wait to reveal his secret weapon to all of the important officials in the dynasty. And when that happened, the

more they had antagonized him in the past, the louder the sound of the figurative slaps to their faces would be!

“In the past, I always relied on the power of the Grand Heavenmaster to fight with the aristocracy. But now... I'm not going to rely on anybody except myself! I'm going to personally slap them all, right upside the face!

“89 heavenly marquises. 10 heavenly dukes... 99 important members of the aristocracy. I wonder what it will feel like to slap them....” The more he thought about it, the stronger his anticipation grew, to the point where he had trouble breathing calmly.

Before long, he and Hei Ming were in the imperial palace, and heading toward Heavenmaster Hall. As he walked along, his heart rate increased, and his nervous anticipation grew more intense.

At one point, when they were very close to their destination, Hei Ming suddenly stopped in place.

Bai Xiaochun was so wrapped up in his thoughts of what was to come that he was taken completely by surprise, and almost walked right into Hei Ming.

After a moment passed, Hei Ming said, “You acted... recklessly.”

Although his voice was just as sinister as it normally was, if one listened carefully, one would be able to detect a bit of concern!

When Bai Xiaochun realized that, he looked surprised. Hei Ming had always acted very cold and detached, and therefore, this sudden presence of concern was totally unexpected!

Hei Ming didn't turn around. Back facing Bai Xiaochun, he said, “All the heavenly marquises and all the heavenly dukes... are working together. Even if the Grand Heavenmaster wanted to shield you from them, it would be very difficult.”

Although no one was there to see it, mixed emotions were in his eyes.

He could tell that a storm of extermination was brewing in Heavenmaster Hall, a potential catastrophe for Bai Xiaochun. Furthermore, many of the things Bai Xiaochun had done in his time as the inspections commissioner caused Hei Ming to think back to when he had held the same office.

As such, it would be hard to find someone else in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty who could sympathize with how Bai Xiaochun felt better than Hei Ming.

They had both been inspections commissioners. And right now, the events which were playing out closely resembled what had occurred to Hei Ming all those years ago. The main difference was that Hei Ming had a very close personal relationship to the Grand Heavenmaster, and as such, had been protected. He had escaped death in that situation, and had stuck like a shadow to the Grand Heavenmaster ever since.

Most importantly, he had actually not committed a crime as serious as killing a heavenly marquis!

So in many ways, Bai Xiaochun's situation was different.

"Your only hope is the Grand Heavenmaster.... Bai Hao, you must... look out for yourself." Sighing, he proceeded onward.

Bai Xiaochun looked at Hei Ming as he walked off, and was moved. He had always taken Hei Ming to be cold and distant, but now, when Bai Xiaochun was facing imminent calamity, the fact that he had offered comforting words warmed his heart.

He peered intently at Hei Ming's back for a moment, then nodded softly and continued onward... to Heavenmaster Hall!

Not a sound could be heard from the closed door of the hall. However, as soon as he got close, he could sense that a complex, violent aura pulsed inside.

Hei Ming faded away into nothing, and Bai Xiaochun stood there waiting. A long moment passed, whereupon a voice echoed out

from inside.

“Come in, Bai Hao!”

Bai Xiaochun shivered and took a deep, long breath. He knew that the show was about to begin, which made him nervous, but at the same time, more excited.

“Fudge, what do I have to be scared of? My secret weapon is so awesome that I’ll be able to slap those dukes and marquises until they look as ugly as pigs! They’re just waiting inside for me to go beat them up, right?! If they’re not afraid, then what am I afraid for?! Heck, it would be a shame to not hit them considering they’re sticking their faces out right in front of me and just waiting around!”

Gritting his teeth, he stepped forward and pushed the door open.

Immediately, more than a hundred gazes locked onto him!

The weakest of those gazes belonged to a half-deva, and the strongest belonged to a demigod. All of the aristocracy of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, all of the most powerful experts, were gathered here, their gazes fused together to create pressure that could shake all creation. Even with his secret weapon, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but lose much of his nerve thanks to all of those gazes.

The Grand Heavenmaster sat on the Heavenmaster Throne at the head of the hall, a grim look on his face. The ten heavenly dukes stood beneath him, their expressions icy cold.

Then came the 89 heavenly marquises.... they were now all of the heavenly marquises remaining in Arch-Emperor City, and all of them were looking coldly at Bai Xiaochun. Some had cold smiles, some had sneers, and other had eyes filled with pure killing intent.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding, and sweat began to pop out on his forehead. For the first time in his life... he found himself at a disadvantage in a staring contest.

But there was little he could do about it. After all, he was single-

handedly facing more than a hundred people!

“What shameless bullies!” he thought, shivering inwardly. However, he couldn’t let them defeat his spirit before he even walked through the door. Gritting his teeth, he looked through the crowd until he found Zhao Xionglin staring viciously at him.

“It doesn’t matter how many they have on their side!” he thought. “Lord Bai can at least defeat one of them! No surrender!” With that, he glared back steadily at Zhao Xionglin.

Zhao Xionglin was clearly taken by surprise, and couldn’t help but think of the friction which had occurred between the two of them. All of a sudden, he felt uneasy.

“With all these people staring at him,” he thought, “why did he have to latch onto me! What’s he doing?!” He was immediately enraged. Unfortunately for him, though, he was definitely not as skilled in staring contests as Bai Xiaochun was. Bai Xiaochun’s gaze looked like it was filled with blade light and sword projections, a windstorm of blood and carnage, a type of madness that seemed to be willing to die fighting with the enemy! Zhao Xionglin was shaken, and could only assume that in the face of death, this mad dog was somehow going to try to kill him as he went out....

Then he thought about all the incredible things Bai Xiaochun had accomplished so far, and how, despite being faced with so many enemies in one place, he was still acting like this. That in itself was very telling. Before long, Zhao Xionglin was completely convinced of his earlier theory, and considering how dangerous that made things for him, he finally just looked away.

Seeing that Zhao Xionglin didn't dare to look at him caused Bai Xiaochun’s spirits to soar. “Think you can take me on?” he thought. “Yellow-bellied wimp!”

Feeling very impressive, he stepped into Heavenmaster Hall, clasped hands and bowed to the Grand Heavenmaster.

“Your humble servant Bai Hao offers greetings, Grand Heavenmaster!”

Chapter 804: Ganging Up

The Grand Heavenmaster wore a grim expression, and was feeling very irritated. He was actually very angry at what Bai Xiaochun had done, and especially his timing; right at one of the most important moments of the Proclamation of Universal Grace.

Everything had been going well and according to plan. The important clans in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty were beginning to fall. But now... thanks to Bai Xiaochun, the aristocracy was now more united than ever!

Earlier in the meeting, they hadn't said it outright, but had clearly implied that if Bai Xiaochun didn't die, they would reject the Proclamation of Universal Grace!

Although the Grand Heavenmaster was the type who would normally agree to such a demand, the fact that Bai Xiaochun's two vicious plans had benefited him so much caused him to hesitate.

A moment passed, and then the Grand Heavenmaster said, "Bai Hao, I've called you here today to provide an explanation regarding the matter of Zhou Wudao. Please clarify the situation."

Obviously, he was giving Bai Xiaochun a chance to try to resolve the situation on his own, which would save himself a lot of effort and frustration.

"Grand Heavenmaster," Bai Xiaochun began, "your humble serv-

Before he could get any farther than that, one of the heavenly marquises laughed coldly and then cast a murderous gaze at him. Stepping forward, the man clasped hands formally to the Grand Heavenmaster!

"There's no need for you to try to defend yourself, Bai Hao," he said. "The penalty for murder is death! It's a law of the heavens! Grand Heavenmaster, I would like to submit an official request to

the court that Bai Hao be stripped of his title of inspections commissioner and executed on the spot. Only in this way can justice be served to Heavenly Marquis Zhou's spirit in the heavens!"

Bai Xiaochun glared at the man, and yet, before anything else could happen, another heavenly marquis stepped forward.

"I completely agree. Grand Heavenmaster, this Bai Hao acted without any official permission to kill one of the heavenly marquises of our grand imperial dynasty. It was a foolhardy and illegal act that should be punished by death!"

"Grand Heavenmaster, I would like to submit an official request to the court that Bai Hao be executed!"

"Grand Heavenmaster, I would also like to submit an official request to the court to have Bai Hao put to death immediately!!"

The heavenly marquises were acting like hornets whose nest had been disturbed. It only took a brief moment for eight of them to step forward with biting words, using the incident with Zhou Wudao to demand that Bai Xiaochun be put to death.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were already starting to get tired from all the glaring, so eventually he looked away, and just waited for them to submit their requests. The entire time, his anger continued to burn hotter and hotter.

Gritting his teeth, he murmured to himself, "It seems that I didn't visit enough clans during my rescue of Hao'er. I should have gone to a few more!"

The Grand Heavenmaster sat there silently, and the wily old foxes who were the heavenly dukes didn't say anything. A moment passed, and some more heavenly marquises stepped forward to make requests. One of them was named Liu Yong.

"Grand Heavenmaster," he said, "according to my calculations, this Bai Hao has committed over 100 serious crimes. I would like to

take this opportunity to recite that list in front of all the other government officials here today!”

Everyone gasped in response to his initial words. Heavenly Marquis Liu Yong was actually ranked in the middle of the heavenly marquises in terms of his cultivation base, roughly the same as Zhou Wudao. However, he was an outgoing person, and was actually very excited to be participating in this rare alliance of the aristocracy.

Therefore, he hoped to take advantage of this moment to make a big scene, and hopefully earn a bit of respect.

Even the heavenly dukes were paying attention to him now. As for the Grand Heavenmaster, he looked him over, both intrigued and shaken by the idea of hearing Liu Yong list all of the supposed 100 crimes.

Bai Xiaochun was startled, and couldn't hold back from gasping slightly. Looking over at Liu Yong, he noted that he seemed familiar. However, he couldn't place his face, and was very surprised to hear that he planned to list out 100 supposed crimes.

When Liu Yong saw that he was now the center of attention, his excitement grew, and he took a few steps forward.

“This Bai Hao killed members of his own clan,” he began loudly, “and gravely breached social norms. This is the crime of clan rebellion!

“In Giant Ghost City, he was known as a wife-stealer who was completely devoid of conscience. This is the crime of aggravated robbery!

“He actually took the soulgrounds of the Cai Clan by force, and inflicted grave injuries in the process! This is the crime of larceny!

“He plundered the treasures of the Chen Clan, causing them to sustain grievous losses. This is the crime of burglary!”

Liu Yong talked at high speed and without stopping. His words

filled Heavenmaster Hall, until everyone's eyes slowly began to glaze over.

As Bai Xiaochun listened, he began to pant, and to stare at Liu Yong with gritted teeth. Obviously, Liu Yong had done a lot of research in preparation for this moment, otherwise he wouldn't have been able to list off all of the crimes so quickly.

“In the Necromancer Kettle, he absorbed the life force of a whole host of chosen by means of an evil cultivation technique. This is the crime of taboo cultivation!

“Furthermore, after coming to Arch-Emperor City, he threw the Giant Ghost Legion into chaos, and set the entire place on fire. This is the crime of arson!”

The more excited Liu Yong got, the louder his voice grew. In fact, as he looked around and saw the other heavenly marquises and dukes looking on in complete silence, he became more confident, and spoke even louder.

“In his spirit enhancement shop, he charged exorbitant rates for soul medicine and spirit enhancements. This is the crime of price gouging!

“After becoming the inspections commissioner, he stuffed his own pockets by shaking down clans. This is the crime of embezzlement!”

As Liu Yong listed out crime after crime, time ticked by. Eventually, enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, and yet, he still wasn't finished. Furthermore, instead of slowing down as he spoke, he actually began to speak faster and faster.

Everyone was shaken, and Bai Xiaochun was completely stunned. In fact, he even began to admire Liu Yong a bit....

A strange expression could be seen on the Grand Heavenmaster's face, and he had to admit that Heavenly Marquis Liu's ability to dig up information and compile it was completely beyond ordinary.

“.... This is the crime of dereliction of duty!”

“.... This is the crime of abuse of power!”

“.... This is the crime of accepting bribes!”

“And finally, he slaughtered an innocent heavenly marquis, in the most brutal fashion imaginable. This is the crime of murder!!”

Another incense stick’s worth of time had passed, and Liu Yong was finally finished. After catching his breath, he looked around proudly, then clasped hands to the Grand Heavenmaster.

“Grand Heavenmaster, this concludes my report. Bai Hao is the amalgamation of all types of evil. Any one of those hundred crimes could be punished by death with a thousand cuts. Therefore, I would like to submit an official request to the court that this supervillain Bai Hao be executed on the spot! Let him be hacked into a million pieces to serve as a warning to any who would follow in his vile footsteps!!”

Everyone was completely and utterly shaken. For many, a new world had just been opened up, and they felt like they were coming to know Liu Yong for the first time. A moment passed, whereupon more people began to step forward and clasp hands toward the Grand Heavenmaster.

“I second the motion!”

“I also submit the same request to the court!”

“The 100 crimes listed by Heavenly Marquis Liu are damning evidence! I also second the motion!”

It wasn’t just one or two people; dozens of heavenly marquises all stepped forward to say similar things. As of this point, more than half of the heavenly marquises had joined in the effort.

As for everyone else, they exchanged glances, then clasped hands and, in unison, said, “We second the motion! Execute Bai Hao!”

Their voices were like a sound wave that crashed back and forth

in all directions. Bai Xiaochun looked around at the group, and especially at Liu Yong, and suddenly felt fear rising up inside of him.

“Can this guy shapeshift into a rat or something? I can’t believe he scurried around and dragged up all of that information about me!!” Bai Xiaochun immediately decided that he would not forget this Liu Yong, and would be sure to teach him a good lesson.

The Grand Heavenmaster frowned. The entire aristocracy was united in opposition to a single person. Before, he might have been able to think of a way to resolve the situation. After all, Bai Xiaochun was now completely and utterly isolated, which meant that if the Grand Heavenmaster managed to save him, he would earn eternal loyalty.

But right now, the Proclamation of Universal Grace was the most important thing to consider. If the dynasty truly became unstable, it would have a big effect on the Grand Heavenmaster. Only by having an unassailable position of reason could he save Bai Xiaochun. Even if Bai Xiaochun was his adopted son, it would still be difficult to defend him.

Inwardly, he was sighing, and was also cursing Bai Xiaochun for getting himself into this situation. Furthermore, he began to hesitate and waver about what to do.

And yet, things still weren’t over. After the heavenly marquises finished speaking, Chen Haosong’s eyes glittered at the sight of the Grand Heavenmaster hesitating. Stepping forward, he clasped hands formally.

“I was a bit stunned to hear what Heavenly Marquis Liu just had to say. Our Arch-Emperor Dynasty has lasted for many generations, and in any generation, a person who committed 100 serious crimes would definitely suffer the penalty of clan extermination. Therefore, I would also like to submit an official request to the court that Bai Hao be killed!”

The bearded heavenly duke, as well as the other eight, also stepped forward and clasped hands. Although none of them said anything, their actions alone spoke to their stance.

The Grand Heavenmaster's eyes flickered, and the hesitation vanished. Just as he was prepared to state his decision... Bai Xiaochun's voice rang out!

“Is your little show over now? It's my turn!”

He didn't seem anxious or nervous at all because of what he had seen, and in fact, a cold smile could be seen on his face.

**

Note from Er Gen: Ahem, this chapter has a secret in it....

Chapter 805: Conjuring Flame In The Hall!

Bai Xiaochun's words had the same effect as a cup of water thrown into a vat of boiling-hot oil. The heavenly marquises all exploded in rage.

“What incredible gall you have, Bai Hao!”

“You committed 100 crimes! How dare you act so impudently here in Heavenmaster Hall!!”

Liu Yong's eyes shone especially brightly. Apparently thinking he had Bai Xiaochun in a no-win situation, he pointed at him and yelled, “You have no respect for elders and superiors, Bai Hao! In this hallowed place, you go so far as to reduce our righteous indignation to nothing more than a show? These are the crimes of defaming royalty, of weaving lies, and of outright slander! As of this moment, you have committed, not 100 crimes, but 103!”

Everyone else in the hall seemed enlivened by what they were hearing, and as far as they were concerned, Liu Yong was like an immortal god in their little alliance.

Everyone began to join in the shouting and clamoring.

Smiling coldly, Bai Xiaochun ignored the enraged heavenly marquises, and turned to clasp hands and bow to the Grand Heavenmaster.

“Grand Heavenmaster, I have something I'd like to give you!”

Everyone else in the hall began to chuckle coldly, and most of them were thinking the same thing: “What, is he going to pull out proof that Zhou Wudao was a traitor or something? Even if he did, he still couldn't avoid the death penalty!”

After all, Bai Xiaochun was not the one who would be making the decision about what happened!

The Grand Heavenmaster's eyes narrowed slightly as he looked

at Bai Xiaochun. He had been watching him this entire time, and had noticed that, while he did seem nervous, there was no despair in his eyes. That went contrary to what the Grand Heavenmaster would have expected, so therefore, he nodded, curious about what Bai Xiaochun planned to give him.

Having acquired permission from the Grand Heavenmaster, Bai Xiaochun slapped his bag of holding to produce a portion of soul medicine. It was bright and colorful, dazzling to say the least, with the light it cast instantly filling all of Heavenmaster Hall. It almost looked like a precious gem, a gem that emanated soul power fluctuations of the ultimate level!

This was none other than... a portion of supreme-grade soul medicine... which required the watershed ingredient of eighteen-colored flame to produce!!

Upon seeing the soul medicine, the Grand Heavenmaster's eyes began to shine brightly. And he wasn't the only one to react in such a way. Chen Haosong and the other heavenly dukes all looked shocked, and the heavenly marquises' eyes went wide.

The heavenly marquises immediately began to shout out loud in surprise and shock.

“Supreme-grade soul medicine!!”

“You need eighteen-colored flame to concoct that.... It's supreme-grade soul medicine!!”

“Supreme-grade soul medicine can also be called earthly soul medicine. Even a single portion of it can be considered extremely rare! And yet this Bai Hao actually has one....”

Almost immediately, though, they began to wonder the same thing. “What does that portion of earthly soul medicine have to do with the death of Zhou Wudao?”

At this point, Liu Yong spoke out loud, a cold expression on his face. “Offering a portion of soul medicine isn't enough to wipe out

more than 100 grave crimes! What are you trying to say, Bai Hao?! Don't tell me you're going to say that you concocted it!?"

In response to his words, the faces of many of the heavenly marquises began to flicker. Then, all sorts of expressions of shock and astonishment could be heard within Heavenmaster Hall, along with expressions of anger.

"He did make a very faint eighteen-colored flame before...."

"Impossible! Earthly necromancers don't just show up out of nowhere!"

"Don't even think of trying to pull a fast one, Bai Hao. Do you think that pulling out a portion of soul medicine will make you an earthly necromancer or something?! Completely preposterous!"

At this point, Bai Xiaochun threw caution to the wind and shouted, "All of you shut the hell up!"

His sudden outburst caused many people to look at him in shock.

Obviously, his plan was not to use the soul medicine itself to try to convince people that he was an earthly necromancer. He actually wanted them to question him and accuse him. That way, when it came time to slap them with the truth, it would be even more thrilling.

His secret weapon was none other than his status as an earthly necromancer!

Since these people were trying to use the laws of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty against him, then he would pull the rug right out from under them, and strike back with those very laws!! In the current age, there were only three earthly necromancers in the entire Arch-Emperor Dynasty. In fact, even in the distant past, around the time when the dynasty had just been transplanted into the Wildlands, there had only been five.

It was easy to imagine the status that earthly necromancers occupied, and it went without saying that in the codified laws of

the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, earthly necromancers... had the power to do anything they wanted, as long as they didn't betray the dynasty itself!

This was the power that Bai Xiaochun had to rely on, the authority of an earthly necromancer!

“Since you people don't believe that I made this portion of soul medicine, then on this day, right here in Heavenmaster Hall, in the presence of everyone here, I... will conjure an eighteen-colored flame!!” He accompanied his words with the proud flick of a sleeve, and he also bolstered his words with his cultivation base. As a result, the clamoring heavenly marquises were instantly silenced.

The Grand Heavenmaster's eyes began to sparkle brightly. As for the ten heavenly dukes, and especially Chen Haosong, their breaths caught in their throats. Obviously, they found it hard to believe that this Bai Xiaochun could actually be an earthly necromancer.

“A cornered beast will still fight,” Chen Haosong said with narrowed eyes. “You're bluffing!”

The other heavenly dukes quickly began to suspect that Chen Haosong was right. As for the heavenly marquises, despite being shaken, they gritted their teeth and began to speak out in anger.

“That's a big claim, Bai Hao. If you can concoct an eighteen-colored flame, then I, Zhao Xionglin, will drop to my knees and kowtow to you!”

“That's right. Struggle on your deathbed if you wish. Becoming an earthly necromancer isn't a simple thing!”

“You overestimate yourself!”

They were all completely confident that this was the end of the line for Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun smiled coldly as he looked the group over, his gaze lingering on Zhao Xionglin. Then he ignored them, slapping his

bag of holding to produce ten tongues of seventeen-colored flame!

These seventeen tongues of flame had been acquired by Zhou Yixing, with the help of many of the bastard children in the city, while Bai Xiaochun had been looking for Bai Hao.

Actually, this was only a portion of the stockpile he had. In order to be fully confident in his secret weapon, he had put together three full sets of the ingredients necessary to conjure eighteen-colored flame. That way, he could be confident in success even if some mishap occurred. Right now, it was without the slightest hesitation that he sent all ten of the seventeen-colored flames flying out. He also made sure to send the flames perilously close to Zhao Xionglin, Liu Yong, and some of the others who had been particularly vocal against him.

Everyone backed up, even the heavenly dukes. Only the Grand Heavenmaster remained in place, and in fact, he actually leaned forward, his eyes sparkling.

“If he actually conjures an eighteen-colored flame,” he thought, “and becomes an earthly necromancer... then this so-called tribulation facing him will be completely nullified!” The Grand Heavenmaster’s eyes narrowed as he paid close attention.

Bai Xiaochun knew that it was a critical moment, and was also confident that no one would dare to interrupt him. After all, this was Heavenmaster Hall, and he was attempting to rise to the rank of earthly necromancer.

“You just watch how I cause all your jaws to drop. I’ll strike you mute with shock! Maybe your eyes will even pop out of your skulls!” At the moment, he was filled with intense, seething anticipation.

After all, he really liked being the center of attention like this....

At the same time, he knew that although he couldn’t afford to make any mistakes, he was actually in a fairly safe position at the

moment.

Therefore, he tuned out everything except for the flame. Performing a double-handed incantation gesture, he looked at the flames, and then pushed his hands down.

Instantly, the tongues of seventeen-colored flame began to merge together. Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been more focused. Enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, during which time the ten tongues of seventeen-colored flame turned into a seventeen-colored sea of fire!

At the moment, his expression was utterly serious as he performed more double-handed incantation gestures, causing his cultivation base power to erupt out. He was moving on to the next step of the process... compressing the flame!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Intense rumbling sounds filled Heavenmaster Hall as the majestic seventeen-colored sea of fire caused everyone who looked at it to be filled with shock. And yet, none of them were yet ready to believe that Bai Xiaochun really would become an earthly necromancer!

In fact, they couldn't afford to believe it!

However, what happened next caused many unsightly expressions to appear on the faces of those present, especially Zhao Xionglin and Liu Yong. Gasps and curses alike filled the air.

Such curses did little good. After all, Bai Xiaochun had already succeeded once at this. Perhaps it was because of that, or perhaps because he knew his life was on the line, but either way, his conjuring efforts were going much more smoothly than last time.

Rumbling sounds filled the air as the sea of fire was compressed to a size of 90 meters. And it kept shrinking.

84 meters. 78 meters. 72 meters!!

Even as everyone looked on with various suspicions and doubts, the sea of fire reached a size of 60 meters!!

Chapter 806: Shaking The Dukes And Marquises!

As the sea of fire was compressed, it writhed madly. But Bai Xiaochun's hands contained the power to seal and suppress anything in existence, so even had the fire reacted more violently, he would still have been able to control it.

The rumbling sounds continued as the sea of fire shrank down to 51 meters. Then it continued on... 45 meters. 39 meters.... Howling, Bai Xiaochun pushed it down smaller and smaller. The sea of fire continued to react with explosive violence, but at this moment, Bai Xiaochun was a sovereign of flame. Under his control, the power of the fire didn't erupt outward, but was re-focused inward to continue the compression.

In the shortest of moments, it shrank from 39 meters... to 24 meters!!

Within moments, it would surely be at 15 meters!!

As it shrank down... the flickering beginnings of an eighteenth color could be seen!

Everyone in Heavenmaster Hall waited with bated breath to see what would happen. Although the heavenly marquises couldn't necessarily see what was happening within the fire, the heavenly dukes and the Grand Heavenmaster absolutely could....

It was hard to say who did it first, but hisses of amazement could soon be heard.

When the heavenly marquises heard such sounds, they were taken aback and looked over at the heavenly dukes. Soon, they realized that the ten heavenly dukes all wore expressions of unprecedented solemnity. It was even true of Chen Haosong, whose hands were clenched so tightly into fists... that blue veins bulged out on the backs of his hands!

The heavenly marquises' eyes went wide, and yet, before they could even wrap their minds around what it all meant, Bai Xiaochun let out a shout at the top of his lungs.

“Compress!” His eyes were completely bloodshot as the power of his cultivation base erupted, sent out through both of his hands as he pushed the flame down again, compressing it to a size of... 15 meters!!

15 meters was a line of demarcation. After this point, as long as he found the new color and latched onto it with his divine sense, then the eighteenth color would appear in full, and an eighteen-colored flame would appear!

At the moment, it was possible to see that eighteenth color flickering within the 15-meter sea of fire. By now, everyone could see that unimaginable and indescribable new color....

Although it would only appear for the briefest of moments, it was enough for the heavenly marquises to realize what was happening, and it caused their minds to reel.

“This... this....”

“It's not going to work. He has to fail!”

“He absolutely must fail!!” The heavenly marquises were starting to get very nervous. Today was the first time they had all joined forces and worked together, and yet something was happening that surpassed anything they could have ever imagined. Although not all of them lost control, many of them couldn't hold back from shouting in alarm.

At some point, Hei Ming had come to stand nearby the Grand Heavenmaster. When he heard everyone talking, he waved his hand swiftly through the air, causing the babbling heavenly marquises to shiver and bite their tongues.

The Grand Heavenmaster looked over at Hei Ming, but didn't say anything. A moment later, his gaze was back on Bai Xiaochun, the

strange light in his eyes growing stronger by the moment. As for the ten heavenly dukes, they could hardly breathe as they waited to see how things would turn out.

As everyone looked on with rapt attention, Bai Xiaochun sweated profusely and stared deep into the 15-meter sea of fire. After a few breaths of time passed and he failed in his attempts to grab the eighteenth color, he decided that there was no need to waste time. Without any hesitation, he braced himself, and then shrank the sea of fire down again!

Without any stopping, it compressed to a size of... 9 meters!!

The 9-meter sea of fire struggled with violent force, causing intense and shocking rumbling sounds to echo out. The flickering of the flames was slowing down, making it possible for people to see it more clearly. As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes shone with joy as he sent his divine sense shooting into the fire!

In the blink of an eye, his divine sense was all the way inside the flame, where it latched onto... the eighteenth color!!

An ear-splitting noise rang out, causing everything to shake. The eighteenth color had seemed weak moments before, but as soon as Bai Xiaochun's divine sense entered it, it exploded with dazzling light. It was as if that color had desired to rise to prominence no matter what the other seventeen colors thought!!

It was almost like fireworks. Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and laughed uproariously as the eighteenth color grew strong and stable within the 9-meter sea of fire, shining with dazzling intensity alongside the other seventeen colors!!

Also in that same moment, in the sky above Heavenmaster Hall, the clouds began to swirl as numerous bolts of lightning began to slash back and forth.

Thunder boomed, shaking all of the imperial palace. Even the golden dragon high in the clouds was shocked, and flew some

distance away.

The booming thunder also reached Heavenmaster Hall. And yet, nobody paid any attention to it at all. They might as well have been deaf. Everyone was filled with waves of shock, completely ignoring everything in the outside world as they focused fully on Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling quite excited. Even he had never thought that everything would go so smoothly. And because he didn't use his mask to cover up the effects, everything turned out vastly more shocking than anyone could have imagined. And that was exactly what he wanted!

Struggling to control his breathing, he flashed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing the eighteen-colored sea of fire to slowly stabilize. Laughing heartily, he reached out toward the 9-meter sea of fire and made a grasping motion.

“Form!!” he said. The sea of fire rushed down into his hand, and the thunder outside Heavenmaster Hall grew more intense. As for everyone inside the hall, they had seemingly lost the ability to even think, and they stared wordlessly as Bai Xiaochun... collected up the sea of fire!

It started out at 9 meters, and swirled around and around until it was 6 meters. 3 meters. 2 meters. 1 meters. Half a meter....

Shouting at the top of his lungs, Bai Xiaochun then slowly closed his fingers around the sea of fire!

“Time for eighteen-colored flame!!” he shouted, his voice surpassing the heavenly thunder to shake the entire hall. At the same time, the fire disappeared within his fist!!

The moment that his fingers closed around the fire was one of profound anxiety for everyone inside Heavenmaster Hall. It was almost as if what he held in his hand was not fire, but rather... the hearts of the 89 heavenly marquises, the 10 heavenly dukes, and

even the Grand Heavenmaster!!

All eyes were fixed on his hand, and not a single voice could be heard. The grand hall was completely silent except for the rumble of the heavenly thunder. It was almost as if it existed outside of the passage of time....

Bai Xiaochun thrummed with excitement and nervousness, and his bloodshot eyes were alive with joy.

That was especially true when he noticed how everyone was staring at his right hand. He could see the serious look in the eyes of Chen Haosong and the dukes, and the nervousness of Zhao Xionglin and the other marquises. The pride Bai Xiaochun felt in this moment simply couldn't be described with words.

He took a deep breath, and under the watchful eyes of all of the surrounding aristocrats, he very, very slowly began to open his fingers.... However, even that tiny motion revealed some of the flame inside, and it provoked sharp gasps.

Bai Xiaochun could not have been more pleased with the sound. Heart swelling, he continued to move with utmost slowness as he opened his fingers, revealing more and more of the flame, and causing even more gasps to ring out.

Although he was hoping for more gasps, he could only move his fingers so slowly. Eventually... the full flame was revealed, floating above his palm!

Raising his voice, he said, "Would anyone like to tell me... how many colors you see in this flame?!?!"

The words were spoken in an overbearing and domineering tone, the type that brooked no disrespect, and was filled with incredible arrogance!

The flame in his hand was visible for everyone to see, clear and there for all to behold!!

Within his pupils, vivid and clear and beautiful, was the

reflection of an eighteen-colored flame!

Chapter 807: Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation

The entire hall was as silent as death.... Bai Xiaochun's words, plus the scintillating eighteen-colored flame, caused all hearts to pound with indescribable levels of shock. The heavenly dukes and marquises were so stunned that they felt like their minds were being struck by 100,000 bolts of lightning!

In fact, it was almost as if everyone present had been slapped in the face by a gigantic hand!!

It didn't take long for the silence to be broken by exclamations of shock.

"Impossible. This... this is impossible!!"

"Eighteen.... eighteen-colored flame...."

"He's an earthly necromancer!!"

"The heavens have no eyes! There's no way that this is really happening!!"

The first voice to ring out in the hall was like an ice cube thrown into a vat of boiling oil. Almost immediately, a cacophony of shouting filled the hall. The heavenly marquises' faces were all as ashen as death, their expressions those of utter disbelief!

"This isn't real!!"

"Dammit, dammit, DAMMIT! I can't believe he's actually an earthly necromancer!!"

"How could this be happening?! He was backed into a corner, faced with deadly calamity, and yet managed to come out on top!?!?!? Where hath gone the laws of the heavens? Where hath gone the truths of the great Dao!?!?"

The heavenly marquises felt as though their psyches had been

battered by entire mountain ranges, and some of them even collapsed mentally.

It wasn't that they lacked willpower, or that they were completely brainless. It was merely the fact that Bai Xiaochun had done something completely unexpected and heaven-defying. The decisive and dazzling way he had completely turned the situation around was something that they fundamentally couldn't accept!

A moment ago, they had all been absolutely, positively confident that Bai Xiaochun would end up dead. Then, a moment later, that supreme confidence had been crushed into absolutely nothing!

This was especially true of Zhao Xionglin, who was trembling and twitching, his eyes so bloodshot they were crimson. He looked crazed, possessed, as though the disbelief in his heart was so intense that he literally couldn't believe what Bai Xiaochun had just done.

Then, in a rare moment of intelligence, he shouted, "You were always an earthly necromancer, Bai Hao!! You did this on purpose!! You knew before you killed Zhou Wudao that you could conjure eighteen-colored flame. That's why you were so confident. You did it all on purpose! Dammit! You conned all of us!!"

Liu Yong was equally unwilling to accept the situation.

"Shameless! Despicable!!" he shouted. Of course, fear had already come to grip his heart. In his attempt to earn a bit of glory for himself, he had been the one to offend Bai Xiaochun more than anyone else.

Although not all of the heavenly marquises were completely bowled over, most were. As they shouted, Bai Xiaochun stood there, proud and aloof, looking around with pride as everyone experienced a mental breakdown. Then he thought about how much difficulty they had brought him, and how they had done everything possible to get him killed, and he felt more and more pleased.

“Now you people know what it really means to be slapped silly, don’t you?!” he said with a thunderous harrumph. “Think you can fight with me?!?! Think you can casually say that my eighteen-colored flame is a counterfeit?! All of you fools can just shut the hell up!” His voice echoed like thunder into the area, causing all of the heavenly marquises who had been shouting and yelling to suddenly close their mouths.

“With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun could reduce all of you to ashes!” Of course, that was what he said in his heart, although he emphasized the unspoken words with the flick of a sleeve.

He was feeling so pleased that it caused his skin to tingle. He was now free and uninhibited in a way that he had never been before, not even in the Heavenspan River region.

With such thoughts on his mind, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. It was laughter that acted like needles stabbing into the hearts of everyone present, leaving them feeling so mocked that they almost couldn’t handle it.

And yet, Bai Xiaochun didn’t care how maddened they felt. He wanted them to feel that way.... In fact, he felt like he should actually be even more pleased than he already was. Continuing to laugh, he suddenly pointed at Zhao Xionglin.

“Heavenly Marquis Zhao, what did you say you would do if I conjured an eighteen-colored flame?!?! Come come. Get over here, drop to your knees, and kowtow!”

By this point, Zhao Xionglin’s face was a dark reddish-purple, and he was gritting his teeth so hard they were about to shatter. At this point, he wished that there were cracks in the ground that he could simply squeeze down into and disappear.

The heavenly marquises weren’t the only ones to be driven into madness by the eighteen-colored flame. Chen Haosong and the other heavenly dukes were panting in shock. In fact, there were even some who were looking at Bai Xiaochun with expressions of

admiration!!

Although they had their differences with him, as of this moment, they simply couldn't help but feel some reverence for what he had done!

Even they had assumed that there was no way for Bai Xiaochun to get out of the situation alive, and yet he had, and in shocking fashion! Now he had earned the respect that they would only give to someone more powerful than themselves.

In fact, to them, it didn't matter if it was true that Bai Xiaochun could already conjure eighteen-colored flame before everything happened. In fact, that just went to show how terrifying he really was!

Not all of the heavenly dukes felt that way. Some had very grim expressions, especially the bearded duke and Chen Haosong, who could do nothing but grit his teeth and refrain from speaking.

The frustration he felt was driving him mad. He was a powerful expert in the great circle of the Deva Realm. He was a heavenly duke in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, one of the highest positions possible. And yet, he had been thwarted over and over again by Bai Xiaochun, and then in the moment in which he was sure he would end up dead, this happened. One could only imagine how defeated he felt.

“I can't believe that this kid beat me!!” he thought bitterly. By now, he knew that it would not be possible to make a move against Bai Xiaochun casually. All he had done was kill a heavenly marquis. Most people would have to pay a heavy price for such an act, but not an earthly necromancer..... Although he would face some type of punishment, he would definitely not lose his life!

To be an earthly necromancer meant that he had a dazzling level of protection that no one could do anything about!

In fact, not even the Grand Heavenmaster would be able to kill

Bai Xiaochun, not unless he did it secretly. If he did, the common people in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty would all revolt violently!!

After all, in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, earthly necromancers were like rare and valuable gems!

At the moment, there were only three other earthly necromancers in the Wildlands. They were divine dragons who could only occasionally be glimpsed from afar, wanderers who constantly strove to break through to the next level of necromancy. They were legends! They were all focused solely on doing that which had never been accomplished after Arch-Emperor City moved out into its current location: break through to the heavenly necromancer rank!!

When an earthly necromancer appeared, the heavenly dukes would treat that person with incredible respect and courtesy, and so would the Grand Heavenmaster. Anyone who dared to kill an earthly necromancer would be messing with the very foundation of the Wildlands!

Such thoughts were now running through the minds of the heavenly marquises and dukes, as well as the Grand Heavenmaster. The Grand Heavenmaster was looking at Bai Xiaochun, thinking about the two great services he had performed in the past, and feeling profoundly moved and grateful.

“Completely stunning!!” he murmured inwardly.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very, very pleased. This was his most glorious moment so far in the Wildlands, and in fact, he was just preparing to do some more things to aggravate the crowd, when suddenly, a deafening boom rang out!

It was so loud that it shook the entire imperial palace, and was so shocking that everyone inside Heavenmaster Hall looked up, their gazes piercing through the ceiling to observe the sky overhead.

What they saw caused everyone’s faces to fall!

As for Bai Xiaochun, he could immediately sense that something extremely dramatic was occurring in the sky over the imperial palace!!

“Lightning tribulation!” someone cried out.

“It’s... Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation!”

“Hey, wait a second. Bai Hao isn’t actually an earthly necromancer yet! You can only be an earthly necromancer after you transcend Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation!!”

“Hahaha! We still have a chance!!” Before long, Zhao Xionglin and many of the heavenly marquises were shouting aloud in joy.

Chapter 808: If Youve Got What It Takes, Bring It On!

When Bai Xiaochun heard what people were saying, he angrily yelled, “Like hell you have a chance!”

He made sure to memorize the faces of all of the heavenly marquises who looked excited, and then took a moment to glare angrily at Zhao Xionglin.

Considering how vile Zhao Xionglin was, he immediately decided that from now on, he would make him kowtow every time he saw him!

However, now was not the time to be overly worried about Zhao Xionglin. Up in the sky, the clouds had vanished, to be replaced by countless lightning bolts!

They looked like tens upon tens of thousands of angry serpents, filling the sky with deafening thunder.

The sky now looked like a sea of lightning, covering Arch-Emperor City in a fashion that attracted the attention of everyone in the city.

“What’s going on?!?!”

“Heavens! What is that!”

“How come... how come that looks like... like the legendary....”

An aged necromancer in the city suddenly began to tremble violently, and then cried out in disbelief and agitation: “Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation!!!!”

The city was instantly gripped by a huge uproar. The eyes of all necromancers began to burn with passion and excitement as they looked up at the forming soul flame tribulation.

“Heavens, that really is Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation!! The

only time soul flame tribulation will show up is when someone forms an eighteen-colored flame for the first time, and becomes an earthly necromancer!!”

“Whoever passes a tribulation like that will then be able to conjure eighteen-colored flames without ever provoking tribulation again!”

“Who is it...? Which grandmaster... is stepping into the earthly rank!?!”

“It’s going to happen! It has to happen! And then... our Arch-Emperor Dynasty will have a fourth earthly necromancer!”

The uproar created something like a sound wave that filled the entire city. And soon, word also began to spread to the rest of the Wildlands, leading to similar scenes elsewhere.

When Sun Yifan and Sima Tao heard about it, they both rushed outside and headed toward the nearest teleportation portals. They were actually more excited than anyone else.

“It’s definitely Grandmaster Bai!!”

“It must be him!!”

Throughout the Wildlands, all of the celestial necromancers were rushing crazily toward teleportation portals to go to Arch-Emperor City. It was almost as if some great pilgrimage were beginning.

Being able to personally witness Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation would be of great benefit to them!

As the Wildlands was being shaken, a serious look overtook Bai Xiaochun’s face. Although he had been aware that conjuring eighteen-colored flame would provoke lightning tribulation, he hadn’t ever guessed... that it would be so monumentally shocking.

“If I really fail at this tribulation... then I’m finished for sure!” That thought instantly caused his heart to tremble with anxiety.

As for everyone else in the hall who had just witnessed the

spectacular turn of events, they had now reverted from a state of despair to a state of hope.

Without the slightest hesitation, Bai Xiaochun pulled out a Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill and popped it into his mouth, pushing his cultivation base to its peak. “I refuse to believe that a trifling soul flame tribulation can hurt me now that I can conjure eighteen-colored flame!”

He was confident, the reason being, not himself, but... the fact that he was in Heavenmaster Hall!

The heavenly tribulation provoked by eighteen-colored flame was the type that could shake heaven and earth. A few rare celestial necromancers like the Miao Clan patriarch would have ancestral legacies that they could use to deal with such tribulation. But most other celestial necromancers would attempt to conjure their first eighteen-colored flame in a secluded meditation facility, with spell formations and trusted associates nearby to help them stay safe.

To a necromancer who planned to conjure eighteen-colored flame, it would be an easy matter to get trusted people to help. After all, many powerful experts would be willing to do so as a way to build up good will.

From the time the Arch-Emperor Dynasty had moved locations, down to the modern day, none of the various necromancers who had reached the earthly rank had faced tribulation in the way that Bai Xiaochun was doing!

He was actually using Heavenmaster Hall as his primary defense!

Even as he looked up at the sea of lightning which filled the sky above Arch-Emperor City, it began to pulse, and then slowly shrink.

As it shrank, the snake-like bolts of lightning formed together, gradually creating one enormous lightning bolt as thick as a

bucket! Then, that lightning bolt descended toward Heavenmaster Hall!

This... was the true Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation!

The massive lightning bolt thrummed with shocking power, and when it slammed into Heavenmaster Hall, the entire thing trembled, and then glowed with a spectacular, multi-colored light.

That light was a powerful defensive mechanism which fought back against the heavenly lightning!

Heavenmaster Hall wasn't damaged at all, and as for the heavenly lightning, it transformed into countless silver sparks, every single one of which faded away.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times and then looked over at the Grand Heavenmaster, who sat on his throne with a slight smile on his face. All of the surrounding heavenly marquises had looks of blank shock on their faces, especially Zhao Xionglin, who looked as pale as a sheet.... All of them were cursing, but only in their heads; none of them dared to say a single word.

“Morons!” Chen Haosong murmured to himself. It didn't take much thinking to realize the reality of the situation. The Grand Heavenmaster would obviously be delighted to have another earthly necromancer in the Wildlands, and would naturally support that person.

And such support would be of monumental importance in a moment of crisis like this!

Bai Xiaochun also understood that, and was deeply moved. Turning to the Grand Heavenmaster, he clasped hands and bowed. By now, the pride and joy he had felt earlier were gone. The things which had occurred with Bai Hao had caused him to grow up a bit. He also knew that he was now very important to the Grand Heavenmaster!

However, just when everyone assumed that the heavenly

tribulation was over, the lightning up above seethed and began to grow more intense.

Then it shrank down again, so much so that, instead of covering all of Arch-Emperor City, it only covered the imperial palace.

Everyone's breath stuck in their chest. It was already obvious that the newly forming lightning bolt would vastly surpass the original one. Intense rumbling sounds could be heard as countless lightning bolts merged together into something like a ball!

As the ball of lightning formed, and the various bolts merged together... they turned black!

A power similar to the early Deva Realm began to weigh down from the black heavenly lightning, growing stronger and stronger until it was equivalent to the great circle!

Everyone in Arch-Emperor City who could see it gasped in shock.

“This Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation seems different from the way it's described in the records....”

“Heavens, how did past earthly necromancers deal with tribulation like this!?!?”

Bai Xiaochun was stunned, but didn't worry about it too much. With Heavenmaster Hall to protect him, he assumed he would be fine. Of course, he didn't drop his guard, and in fact, rotated his cultivation base madly as the lightning bolt began to fall.

As the black lightning approached, the light surrounding Heavenmaster Hall didn't just act as a shield. It actually exploded out to attack the incoming heavenly lightning.

When the two met, a deafening explosion filled all of Arch-Emperor City!

Heavenmaster Hall's shield twisted and distorted, and was even shoved downward significantly. However, the heavenly lightning clearly suffered a massive backlash, and soon shattered into

countless sparks of electricity that showered down onto the imperial palace....

At this point, the sea of lightning began to show signs that it would soon disperse, so Bai Xiaochun decided that it was the perfect opportunity to show off a bit. Looking up with pride, he pointed at the sky and shouted, “Hey! If you’ve got what it takes, bring it on!”

Chapter 809: Were Both Fellow Masters

In the instant that Bai Xiaochun's words left his mouth, the sea of lightning up above suddenly emitted intense rumbling sounds, and then began to rotate at high speed.

At the same time, it started shrinking down. Furthermore, something like a black hole appeared right in the middle of it!

The black hole almost resembled an eye, which was staring down at Bai Xiaochun there in Heavenmaster Hall.

At that point, the fluctuations emanating out went beyond that of the great circle of the Deva Realm!

Clearly, the lightning really was going to bring it on!!

Even the Grand Heavenmaster had a very serious look on his face as he sat there on his throne, frowning slightly.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked up at the shrinking lightning, and the black hole, and his heart began to pound with fear.

“Me and my big mouth.... Oh God, I... I didn't do it on purpose. Please, don't bring it on. Don't bring anything on at all....”

He had no idea how previous earthly necromancers had successfully fought back against tribulation lightning like this. As of this moment, he realized that the first bolt was simple, and the second was the type that he could probably defend himself against if he held nothing back. However, the process would have left him very weakened, to the point where the third lightning bolt... would be impossible to fight back against. Even a deva would be struck chill in the heart by the sight of it.

“I screwed up... I really screwed up....” As of this moment, he realized that he really shouldn't have gone and taunted God. It was really too dangerous.... All of a sudden, he thought back to that time in the Spirit Stream Sect when he had been flying along on a sword and been struck by lightning.

Everyone else in the hall was gasping, and had strange expressions on their faces. As far as they were concerned, Bai Xiaochun really did have a big mouth. Just when the tribulation was about to vanish, he actually invited it to strike again.

Many of the heavenly marquises were feeling quite pleased. However, Chen Haosong and the heavenly dukes were shaken, even more so than when Bai Xiaochun had initially conjured the eighteen-colored flame.

“How is this even possible!?!?”

“He says one thing... and the heavenly tribulation came back for him? What... what kind of heavenly tribulation is this? It’s like it’s playing games!?!?”

“This Bai Hao... has some other secrets. Incredible, unfathomable secrets! Something strange is going on....”

Even as the heavenly dukes pondered the matter, the sea of lightning up above shrank down into the black hole area. Then, to Bai Xiaochun's shock and terror... a violet-gold lightning bolt appeared!

It wasn't as large as the other two lightning bolts, and looked ordinary in nature. And yet, as soon as the soul cultivators of Arch-Emperor City laid eyes on it, their minds began to spin.

The heavenly marquises all gasped, and even the heavenly dukes' faces flickered!

“Demigod-level lightning tribulation!!” The Grand Heavenmaster was the one to speak the words. Then he shot to his feet, vanishing to reappear outside of Heavenmaster Hall.

In that same moment, the golden dragon which had fled off into the distance let out a roar as it became a golden beam of light that shot toward the Grand Heavenmaster. As it neared, it shrank down, transforming into a golden trident which the Grand Heavenmaster grabbed.

Even as those things happened, the violet-gold lightning bolt from up above began to shoot toward Heavenmaster Hall!

As it did, deafening rumbling sounds echoed out, and the air around the lightning bolt was destroyed!

The Grand Heavenmaster's eyes narrowed. Hefting the golden trident, he blurred into motion, heading directly toward the lightning bolt!

BOOM!

A sonic boom rolled out in all directions. At the same time, the image of an enormous, illusory trident appeared behind the Grand Heavenmaster. Fully 30,000-meters tall, it seemed large enough to fill all creation as it slammed into the violet-gold lightning bolt.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Arch-Emperor City was shaken by intense rumbling sounds as the violet-gold lightning bolt began to shatter bit by bit. Before long, it was gone, and the Grand Heavenmaster remained there, not having been injured in the least bit!

However, as the lightning bolt dissipated, it created a massive tempest that blasted out in all directions.

At this point, the ten heavenly dukes, despite not wanting to help, realized that they had no choice. They all vanished, to reappear in various locations around Heavenmaster Hall. There, they performed double-handed incantation gestures, and then unleashed vicious attacks to neutralize the blast of wind!

As of this point, not a bit of lightning could be seen in the sky. Everything had gone back to normal....

Back in Heavenmaster Hall, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and didn't dare to again provoke God in any fashion. He simply watched as the Grand Heavenmaster and the ten heavenly dukes returned.

Bai Xiaochun rushed forward, clasped hands and bowed deeply. “Many thanks, Grand Heavenmaster. You are truly mighty and grand!”

At this point, he pondered whether or not he should go into a bit more flattery, but the Grand Heavenmaster waved his hand to stop him.

“Congratulations on reaching the earthly rank, Grandmaster Bai,” he said, a politeness in his tone that hadn’t been present before. “As of this point, the position of inspections commissioner doesn’t befit you anymore. It would be much better for you to go practice cultivation in one of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty’s five restricted areas, all of which would be ideal locations for you to seek further enlightenment.

“Grandmaster Bai, I think it would be wonderful for you to go the Underworld River Restricted Area. Don’t you agree?”

Bai Xiaochun was now an earthly necromancer, and although he would not be put to death because of what happened with Zhou Wudao, he would still have to provide some sort of compensation.

There was no death penalty for earthly necromancers, and it truly didn’t make sense for him to remain as the inspections commissioner. Sending him to the Underworld River Restricted Area would solve the problem of so many people being angry with him, and would also get him out of a major vortex of intrigue.

However, the Grand Heavenmaster was worried that Bai Xiaochun might not view this as an expression of goodwill. Leaving the aristocracy completely out of the loop, he transmitted a message directly to Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Hao, I have a personal division of troops in the Underworld River Restricted Area, 3,000 men in total. I’ll give you command of them. Lay low for a bit until I call on you. After all the arrangements are made, you can return.”

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times in displeasure. It didn't seem right that he should be made to leave right after becoming an earthly necromancer and achieving new heights of glory.

However, what the Grand Heavenmaster said made sense. Furthermore, he had already used up his secret weapon. And as the ancient saying went, it is easy to dodge the spear in the open, but hard to avoid a stab in the dark. He couldn't constantly be on guard against every possible conspiracy.

Although leaving Arch-Emperor City would cause him to lose out on a bit of glory, it was definitely the best option.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, clasped hands and bowed to the Grand Heavenmaster.

“I will follow any arrangement you wish, Grand Heavenmaster!”

The Grand Heavenmaster smiled and then looked over at the heavenly dukes and marquises.

“What do you think?” he asked them.

As for Chen Haosong and the heavenly dukes, although they were sighing inwardly, none of them hesitated for even a moment to clasp hands and say, “We will follow any arrangement you wish, Grand Heavenmaster!”

Considering that the heavenly dukes had already agreed, there was no way the heavenly marquises could dare to voice any displeasure. Bowing their heads, they agreed.

As of this point, the conspiracy to have Bai Xiaochun killed had been completely defeated. As everyone left Heavenmaster Hall, Bai Xiaochun looked up into the sky and felt freer than ever.

Not only had he won a victory, he had done so in spectacularly beautiful fashion!

He had entered Heavenmaster Hall as the inspections

commissioner, a person feared by countless individuals, and had left it as an earthly necromancer, someone that everyone in the Wildlands would support with wild enthusiasm!

“Hmmmphh! The Grand Heavenmaster called me a grandmaster.... Looks like we’re both fellow masters!” More pleased than ever, he began to walk away. However, it was at this point that he remembered something, and looked back to see Zhao Xionglin, still in Heavenmaster Hall, clearly trying to hide from him. Clearing his throat, Bai Xiaochun... decided to stay right where he was, blocking the doorway.

Chapter 810: I'm Going To Miss You All!

Zhao Xionglin was feeling so frustrated it was a torment. And when he realized that Bai Xiaochun was blocking the way out, his heart swelled with curses, and his face began to turn a reddish-purple color. Obviously, neither staying nor leaving was a viable option....

Eventually, the Grand Heavenmaster got tired of the situation. Waving his sleeve, he sent Zhao Xionglin flying out of Heavenmaster Hall, and the imperial palace in general.

Bai Xiaochun grumbled to himself about that, and then strutted out the door. However, he had already decided that he wouldn't let Zhao Xionglin off the hook so easily.

“And then there's that guy Liu Yong. Just wait till I catch up with him!” Snorting, he hurried away.

When Zhao Xionglin appeared outside of the imperial palace, he was very moved that he had been spared at the last moment. Employing the greatest speed he could, he hurried toward his clan, stewing in more frustration than he had ever felt in his entire life. The thought of how he had loudly declared in front of all of the aristocracy that he would kowtow to Bai Hao if he conjured an eighteen-colored flame was like a slap in his face.

By the time Zhao Xionglin got back to his clan, word of Bai Xiaochun becoming an earthly necromancer was already beginning to spread through Arch-Emperor City.

In the briefest of moments, everyone was talking about it!

“We finally have a fourth earthly necromancer in the Wildlands!!”

“A fourth! Even back in the golden age, we only had five!”

“Bai Hao. Grandmaster Bai. Even back when he conjured that faint tongue of eighteen-colored flame, it was obvious that he

would eventually reach the earthly rank!”

It wasn't just Arch-Emperor City that was shaken. All of the Wildlands was in a huge stir as the news spread. That was especially true of the necromancers. Virtually all of the necromancer clans began to do everything in their power to try to reach out to the new earthly necromancer and establish relations.

News even reached the Heavenspan River region, and left many people stunned. The four great riversource sects all placed the name Bai Hao onto their Execution List!

The reward for his head was incredible. After all... he was now one of only four earthly necromancers in existence. To the four riversource sects, the fact that someone so young had reached such heights ensured that they all felt the need to see him dead!

Unfortunately, he was too far away for any of them to do anything about it other than sigh regretfully.

If people in the Heavenspan River region got wind of the news, there was no need to even mention Zhou Yixing's clan. Although they were located far, far away from Arch-Emperor City, when they heard about the matter, and learned that Zhou Yixing was one of this Bai Hao's followers, they were ecstatic. In fact, the clan chief issued immediate orders promoting Zhou Yixing to the position of crown prince!

The clan elders agreed with his decision, and it didn't matter how disgruntled Zhou Yixing's clan siblings were. In the world of necromancers, being the subordinate of an earthly necromancer was a very important thing.

Furthermore, with Bai Xiaochun's help, Zhou Yixing's necromancy had advanced by leaps and bounds; he was now just a hair away from the celestial rank himself.

Of course, the Proclamation of Universal Grace had not been rescinded. However, Zhou Yixing had enough power to ensure that

there was no fighting or backlash from his relatives in the clan. After all... everyone in the Wildlands also knew that this Bai Hao was the one behind the Proclamation of Universal Grace.

Zhou Yixing didn't just rise to prominence in his clan. Wherever he went in Arch-Emperor City, people would clasp hands in greeting, leaving him feeling very pleased. By now, he was absolutely, positively convinced that his original decision to side with Bai Xiaochun had been the best one!

If Zhou Yixing was reveling in glory, then there was no need to even mention Bai Xiaochun. Although he was supposed to be heading to the Underworld River Restricted Area, he delayed and delayed, giving him plenty of time to stroll through the city and appreciate the worshipful gazes people cast in his direction. Furthermore, he would constantly be swamped by visiting necromancers, who showered him with congratulatory gifts. All in all, Bai Xiaochun felt wonderful about how everything was going.

He also went back to visit the street where his spirit enhancement shop had been located, where he received loads of adoration and worship. Eventually, when he had gone to just about all of the important places in Arch-Emperor City, he thought back to Zhao Xionglin and Liu Yong.

Unfortunately, Liu Yong was very crafty.... Aware that Bai Xiaochun would try to get revenge, he had long since left Arch-Emperor City and enlisted in the army at the Great Wall. Although Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised by that, he had to admit that it proved Liu Yong to be a very decisive person.

Zhao Xionglin was not as decisive. He merely went into secluded meditation, and assumed that Bai Xiaochun would forget about him. Unfortunately for him, he underestimated Bai Xiaochun's tenacity. Bai Xiaochun took daily trips to the Zhao Clan, causing problems for everyone, much to the delight of the bastard children.

Considering his new status, he was the center of attention wherever he went. All sorts of rogue cultivators sought to become his followers. Most importantly, news of the altercation between him and the aristocracy right before his rise to the earthly rank began to spread. From that point on, whenever bad things happened in Arch-Emperor City, everyone pointed their fingers accusingly at the nobility and aristocracy!

Also, because he was the subject of wild devotion by all Wildlander necromancers, even heavenly dukes who had problems with Bai Xiaochun were forced to simply endure the situation.

At the moment, he was safer in his position than he ever had been. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun refused to give up on Zhao Xionglin. Unfortunately, the man was like a turtle with his head hidden in his shell; he remained in his heavenly marquis pagoda and wouldn't come out no matter what Bai Xiaochun said.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun started to get angry.

“Alright, you coward. Do you really think that Lord Bai will just let you hide away from him?” Bai Xiaochun glared up angrily at the heavenly marquis pagoda, grumbling about how ridiculous Zhao Xionglin was acting. He had clearly lost, and yet continued to act shamelessly.

“If you were a real man you would do like Liu Yong and go hide on the front lines of the war at the Great Wall! That would at least earn you some of my respect. But instead you hide in a wimpy heavenly marquis pagoda! Well, you just wait and see how I get you to come out!” Flicking his sleeve, he went on to visit the other heavenly marquis clans. Whenever he ran into one of the heavenly marquises, he would bluster and brag to the point of inducing nausea. Furthermore, he made a point to hint that as long as Zhao Xionglin didn't come out and kowtow to him, he would stay in Arch-Emperor City. Gradually, the heavenly marquises began to get extremely frustrated and angry with Zhao Xionglin.

Eventually, after Bai Xiaochun had threatened virtually all of the heavenly marquises, Chen Haosong sighed and sent a message to Zhao Xionglin urging him to just give in. Zhao Xionglin wanted to cry, but no tears would come. Guts twisting with regret, he braced himself and went to find Bai Xiaochun, to whom he kowtowed in dramatic fashion.

Bai Xiaochun was very happy with what he saw. Afterward, he decided to let the other heavenly marquises off the hook. Swishing his sleeve, he took Zhou Yixing with him on his way out of the city. They didn't go to the teleportation portal, but rather, used Arch-Emperor City's heavenly airship, accompanied by a contingent of the Grand Heavenmaster's personal guard, as they headed toward... the Underworld River Restricted Area.

A huge group of necromancers came out to escort Bai Xiaochun away. As for all of the heavenly marquises, they breathed sighs of relief, and hoped that after he left, he would never come back.

Zhao Xionglin had to hold back from breaking out drums and gongs to express his excitement.

There were many varied reactions within Arch-Emperor City. As Bai Xiaochun left, he thought back to everything that had occurred there, looked back at the city, and sighed.

“I shall miss all of you....”

When he came to Arch-Emperor City, he was a nobody from Giant Ghost City. Upon leaving, it would have been difficult for it to be in a grander fashion. He was now the opposite of a nobody, one of the most important people in all the Wildlands.

Many other people in the city were thinking the same thing, and it caused them to sigh.

“He's the kind of person who you might hate, but simply have no choice but to admire!” Chen Haosong said with a sigh.

“He's the kind of person that only appears every so often in the

Arch-Emperor Dynasty. Someone who causes waves wherever he goes, someone who reaches the highest pinnacles, someone who no one dares to trifle with!” All of the heavenly marquises were sighing deeply.

He had kidnapped the heavenly king of Giant Ghost City, and subdued a crowd of chosen in the Necromancer Kettle. He had dueled celestial necromancers, and shaken down the most powerful clans in his time as the inspections commissioner!

He threw all creation into chaos during the ancestral sacrifices, incited the rage of heavenly marquises, made enemies of the entire aristocracy with the Proclamation of Universal Grace, and had become an amazing earthly necromancer!

The stories of those things did not fade away because Bai Xiaochun left Arch-Emperor City. In fact, they continued to be told with even more fervor. As he departed, the Grand Heavenmaster looked at him go and murmured to himself, “I really want to know... why the Hell-Emperor picked him!?”

Standing next to him, Hei Ming murmured, “I have no idea!”

Chapter 811: A Pet....

The Underworld River Restricted Area was one of a few restricted areas in the Wildlands.... The reason such areas came to be called 'restricted' was that ordinary soul cultivators would have a difficult time even getting into them, and if they succeeded in that effort, would most likely die as a result. The only way to safely traverse such areas was with special command medallions.

Not surprisingly, the Underworld River Restricted Area actually contained a river. During the day, it looked like nothing more than an ordinary, dried up riverbed. However, after midnight passed... the Underworld River would manifest, flowing through the area for some distance before disappearing off into the night.

Thus, the area came to be a restricted area. After all, the Underworld River was normally illusory, and would only appear in the world of men under special circumstances or using special techniques.

But in this area, the Underworld River would naturally appear every night after midnight!

Of course, all of the Wildlands' restricted areas had unique objects which would appear. Such objects were used in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty both for cultivation purposes, and also as a means of repairing the enormous magical device that was Arch-Emperor City.

For example, in the Underworld River Restricted Area, there were underworld rainbows which would appear over the river at night. They were illusory, and also temporary, but by using special techniques, it was possible to harvest them.

Because of this general state of affairs, the restricted areas were encamped by military forces from Arch-Emperor City year-round. As for the Underworld River Restricted Area, there was a brigade of 3,000 men garrisoned there.

The most powerful of the soldiers was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. He was not a heavenly marquis, but rather, one of the Grand Heavenmaster's private guards. Most of the other soul cultivators were in the Core Formation stage.

Although it might seem like a stretch to say that these 3,000 could protect Bai Xiaochun, the truth was that since they reported directly to the Grand Heavenmaster, they were more powerful than they appeared based on cultivation base alone. Although there were definitely members of the nobility and aristocracy who would secretly make a move against Bai Xiaochun, not even the four heavenly kings would casually cross the Grand Heavenmaster.

Wiping out that force would be equivalent to declaring war on the Grand Heavenmaster.

As for the brigade's general mission, it was simply to harvest underworld rainbows.

Bai Xiaochun and Zhou Yixing spent a few days traveling to the Underworld River Restricted Area. Bai Xiaochun wasn't in a hurry, and proceeded along at a steady pace in the heavenly airship. Although the landscape in the Wildlands was barren and bleak, that didn't dampen Bai Xiaochun's mood at all. In fact, he took time to visit many of the necromancer clans along the way, and they would always shower him with gifts. Overall, it was a lovely trip.

When they finally reached the Underworld River Restricted Area, it was evening. The 3,000 soldiers stationed there had been notified that he would be arriving, and were waiting in ranks to receive him.

There were five men standing out in front of the brigade, all of whom were Nascent Soul experts. One of them was a middle-aged man, who was none other than the colonel in command of the brigade. Standing a pace behind him were the four other Nascent Soul experts, two of whom were in the late stage, and two in the

mid stage.

They were already well-informed as to who Bai Xiaochun was. They knew that he was not only an earthly necromancer, but he was also the type of person who could shake all of the Wildlands with a single stamp of his foot.

Furthermore, because they were from the Grand Heavenmaster's private guard, and had received special orders from him to do anything that Bai Xiaochun said, none of them hesitated for even a moment to treat him with the utmost respect.

As the group waited, Bai Xiaochun's heavenly airship appeared off in the distance and then floated toward them through the air. When it came to a stop, Zhou Yixing flew out, landed on the ground, and then looked around vigilantly, the way that a loyal attendant would. When his gaze came to rest on the brigade of 3,000 men, he looked surprised.

After studying the situation more closely to ensure that there were no hidden dangers, he took a few steps backward, then turned to the heavenly airship and clasped hands.

“Grandmaster Bai, your presence is requested!” he said in a loud voice. The colonel of the brigade hesitated for only a moment before clasping hands and calling out in similar fashion. Afterward, the entire brigade gave voice to the same words.

“Grandmaster Bai, your presence is requested!”

At that point, Bai Xiaochun appeared up above on the deck of the heavenly airship, his hands clasped behind his back. After giving an approving glance at Zhou Yixing, he flew out and landed in front of the 3,000-man brigade.

“I am your humble servant Wu Dao,” the colonel said. “Greetings, Grandmaster Bai! If you have any requests, then your humble servant will do anything and everything possible to see them fulfilled!” With that, Colonel Wu Dao clasped hands and

bowed even more deeply than before.

Bai Xiaochun felt wonderful about how everything was playing out. Laughing heartily, he hurried forward to pull the colonel up from his bow.

“There’s no need for all that, Fellow Daoist Wu,” he said with a sincere smile. “I actually have a very weak cultivation base! The Grand Heavenmaster sent me here to work on my necromancy, and I’m sure that I’m going to need a lot of help from you in the days to come!” This was just how Bai Xiaochun was. When people treated him courteously, he would treat them even more courteously in return.

Of course, Wu Dao responded by looking even more respectful and awestruck than before. Inwardly, he was actually a bit impressed with this Grandmaster Bai. Despite being an earthly necromancer, he wasn’t arrogant at all. The colonel could immediately tell that there was more to him than met the eye. He had first mentioned his own weakness, then brought up the Grand Heavenmaster, and had then gone on to imply that he was only here to work on necromancy, and not stay long-term. That went to show that he wasn’t interested in usurping the colonel’s position or power.

Actually, even Wu Dao himself didn't feel that the force he commanded was worth much, therefore he was very pleased to be treated in such a way.

Bai Xiaochun had already succeeded at making a good impression. The soldiers quickly clustered around him and led him toward the military base in the Underworld River Restricted Area.

After all the formalities were taken care of, Wu Dao gave Bai Xiaochun the best residence, as well as a detailed explanation about everything to do with the Underworld River Restricted Area. Eventually, evening began to fall, whereupon he handed over two command medallions and then took his leave.

Bai Xiaochun's residence was not out in the open; it was enclosed by high walls. That, coupled with the fact that it was in the middle of a military base, made it seem particularly safe and secure.

Furthermore, it didn't consist of just a single room, but rather, a main room and two side rooms.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased. After Wu Dao left, Zhou Yixing set up some spell formations to secure the area. Then he reported in to Bai Xiaochun.

"Wu Dao was telling the truth, milord," he said, keeping his voice down. "Every night at midnight, the Underworld River manifests here. When that happens, you can only get close to the river itself if you have a special command medallion.

"Supposedly, this location isn't the source of the Underworld River, but it's still a powerful convergence between life and death. That's why the Underworld River appears here. In fact, it's the only place in all of the Wildlands where the river will manifest naturally.

"Because of its unique properties, this area is a perfect place for necromancers to seek enlightenment. Whenever the Underworld River manifests, countless souls will appear, which can be harvested using special methods. Of course, there is danger involved, as one might expect." All of these things had been told to Bai Xiaochun by Wu Dao. However, Zhou Yixing had used his own special ways of verifying the information to make sure it was true.

Bai Xiaochun nodded. He was already feeling a lot more relaxed now that he was away from the maelstrom that was Arch-Emperor City. No longer did he have to constantly worry about how to deal with the aristocracy, nor did he have to be on guard all the time. Although he didn't have his corpse trooper army to rely on, he was still in high spirits.

After a moment passed, Zhou Yixing lowered his voice even more and said, "Milord, um, what about Song Que...?"

Bai Xiaochun smacked himself on the forehead when he realized that he had once again forgotten about Song Que. Back when they had left the city, he had instructed Zhou Yixing to put Song Que in a bag of holding to take along, but in the months since then, he hadn't released him into the open even once.

“What a bad uncle I've been!” he thought guiltily. He immediately told Zhou Yixing to bring Song Que out of the bag of holding. When he appeared in the open, he looked a bit pale, and was even gasping for breath. Being stuck in a bag of holding for so many months had almost suffocated him. After getting his bearings, he glared resentfully at Bai Xiaochun.

In response, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat in embarrassment and then reached out to tousle Song Que's hair. Although this felt very strange to Song Que, he didn't dare to dodge out of the way.

Actually, he had come to realize that, from the moment he had arrived in the Inspections Manor, this Bai Hao had actually treated him quite well. Not only had he given him cultivation resources, as well as a measure of safety, but he had also allowed him quite a bit of freedom.

After all the time that had passed, he had mostly recovered from his previous ordeals. In fact, his cultivation base had even progressed some. He was even convinced that, although he had not yet surpassed Bai Xiaochun, as long as he continued to follow this Bai Hao and benefit from the cultivation resources he provided, it was entirely likely that he soon would.

“Hmph! Even if I can't surpass Bai Xiaochun right away, I'm definitely in a much better position than he is. He might be well-known, but he's obviously scurrying around like a mouse, running from everybody and scared to even show his face! In fact, if he does show his face, he'll definitely be killed within the blink of an eye!” All of a sudden, Song Que came to the conclusion that meeting this Bai Hao had been a stroke of good luck. Even if he was being treated somewhat like a pet, it was worth it, and he would do

everything he could to stick with Bai Hao.

“A pet? So be it. This is the Wildlands, and nobody knows who I am anyway.... Hmph! Maybe I'm a pet, but at least I'm the pet of an earthly necromancer! Bai Xiaochun doesn't even qualify to be a pet right now!” Comforting himself in this way, he pushed his head up a bit farther so that Bai Xiaochun could tousle his hair a bit more deeply....

Chapter 812: Theres... Someone There!

Of course, Bai Xiaochun could immediately tell what he was thinking.

“Is this guy really thinking about stomping me beneath his feet...?” Blinking a few times at how amusing the situation was, he contemplated what would happen if Song Que ever found out who he really was.... What kind of expression would appear on his face?

However, even Bai Xiaochun felt that such a thing would be too evil.

“Ah, whatever. I'm his uncle after all, and the type of person who is very pure at heart. I can't tell him the brutal truth right now.” Sighing, he mused about how wonderful of a person he was, and also about how loyal and devoted he was to Song Junwan. In the end, it was just like the old saying: if you love me, you have to love my dog too.

“Very well then. You'll be living here now. Focus well on your cultivation.” After offering a few more words of advice, he had Zhou Yixing arrange for Song Que to act as a spirit servant.

Song Que took a deep breath, clasped hands and bowed deeply. Sighing, he reminded himself that as long as he stuck close to Bai Hao, then Bai Xiaochun didn't count for anything!

Although he couldn't consider himself to truly be on Bai Hao's side, he knew that right now, he had to do anything he could to stay alive.

After sending Song Que away, Bai Xiaochun looked around the main courtyard. As the darkness of night deepened, the Underworld River Restricted Area grew increasingly quiet.

Back in Arch-Emperor City, the city would be bustling at this time of night. Although the Inspections Manor itself would be quiet, even the areas around it would be alive.

But here, everything was dead quiet. Considering how unused Bai Xiaochun was to such a thing, he quickly patted his bag of holding and produced a soulhoarding pagoda, from which Bai Hao flew out.

Bai Hao could tell that this area was very unique. After looking around, he lowered his voice and said, “Master, this Underworld River Restricted Area seems very similar to the Necromancer Kettle.... The aura... is like that of life and death at the same time. It's very strange, and also, very nourishing to souls.”

“Nourishing?” Bai Xiaochun said, looking over at Bai Hao and noticing how he looked a lot more corporeal than normal.

Surprised himself, Bai Hao nodded, then sat down cross-legged and began to breathe deeply. Almost immediately, he could sense some sort of energy in the area that Bai Xiaochun was oblivious to, which quickly began to pour into his soul body.

Bai Xiaochun was very happy about this. Although this whole Underworld River Restricted Area seemed like a boring place so far, if it was helpful to Hao'er, then that would make things a bit more bearable.

As Bai Hao continued with his cultivation, Bai Xiaochun sent his divine sense out into the Underworld River Restricted Area. It actually wasn't a very large area. It consisted of an expansive bluff, at the top of which was the military base. From the military base, the ground sloped down gradually, until a dry riverbed was visible off in the distance.

After midnight, that riverbed was where the Underworld River would appear. Retracting his divine sense, Bai Xiaochun sat down cross-legged next to his apprentice to stand guard. As he did, he reviewed the steps necessary to conjure eighteen-colored flame, and mentally rehearsed them to attempt to get more familiar with the process.

Time passed. Before long, midnight was approaching. Zhou

Yixing had gone out earlier to confer with Wu Dao about a few matters pertaining to the defenses of the military base. Upon returning, he saw Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao both sitting there cross-legged, with Bai Xiaochun clearly standing watch.

The night deepened, until the only light visible was that of the stars and the moon. It was at that point that a knocking sound could be heard on the door of the residence. Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes and watched as Zhou Yixing stepped over and opened the door. After he did, Wu Dao entered, then clasped hands in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

“Grandmaster Bai, the Underworld River will become visible soon. Considering it happens every day, we soldiers are used to it. But since this is your first time, Grandmaster Bai... I suggest you not miss it.”

“You're absolutely right, Fellow Daoist Wu,” Bai Xiaochun replied. “Considering I've never seen it before, I should definitely take a look. How about you stay here, and we can observe it together?” In response to Bai Xiaochun's friendly invitation, Wu Dao sat down next to him and offered some further explanations.

“The first time I saw the Underworld River, I was completely shaken,” he said, an entranced gleam appearing in his eyes. “It was almost as if heaven and earth were being opened up in front of my very eyes. It was really shocking.” Just when he was about to say more, rumbling sounds could be heard from the sky.

It sounded like heavenly thunder, and immediately caused Bai Xiaochun and Zhou Yixing to both look up into the sky. Wu Dao was the only one whose expression didn't change.

“Ah, it's midnight. The Underworld River is about to appear!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, another intense rumbling sound filled the air. The sky distorted, sending ripples out for tens of thousands of meters in all directions, filling nearly half the sky.

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle....

Something like the sound of water could be heard, which rapidly grew louder and clearer. At the same time, a mist began to fill the Underworld River Restricted Area.... It was a mist that seemed to be filled with an aura of death, the type which could cause frost to appear wherever it went.

In fact, it quickly became so cold that the impure vital energy which everyone breathed out transformed into white clouds that floated up into the air....

Bai Xiaochun could immediately tell that the aura of death in the area was unprecedentedly strong. In any other location, such a strong aura of death would indicate that a huge number of vengeful souls was present.

But at the moment, Bai Hao was the only soul body visible anywhere.

As Bai Xiaochun looked around curiously, the sound of rushing water grew stronger, and the rippling in the sky more intense, as if both space and time were being distorted. The ripples reached the dry riverbed, and then suddenly, river water exploded out from nowhere....

Incredible rumbling echoed out as a majestic river came into being right in the middle of that dry riverbed. Surging and seething, it flowed off into the distance.

The river wasn't clear, but instead, black. As it surged, the restricted area was filled with an even more intense aura of death, and the mists grew denser. The military base on the bluff wasn't affected, though, allowing Bai Xiaochun and everyone else present to have a very clear view of what was happening.

Shockingly, masses of vengeful souls were now visible in the water. Some screamed, some slept, some struggled viciously, some laughed. However, all of them moved with the flow of the river to

disappear off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked, and even Bai Hao had opened his eyes in surprise.

Zhou Yixing's response was a sharp gasp. However, Wu Dao was clearly used to the scene. Expression the same as ever, he smiled and said, "We traced the river to its end, a few dozen kilometers away. There's an ordinary mountain there that the river simply disappears into. This is what happens every night, and it lasts all the way until dawn...."

Focusing his attention on the river, Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet. He was already very curious about the matter. He had heard many things about the Underworld River since he'd come to the Wildlands, but this was his first time hearing about anything like this.

"According to the legends," Zhou Yixing muttered, "at the true end of the Underworld River... is the Hell-Emperor Palace, within which is that figure which everyone in the Wildlands worships.... The Hell-Emperor!" Bai Xiaochun also thought about the legends of the Hell-Emperor, and couldn't help but peer through the mists at the Underworld River.

As soon as he did, a tremor passed through him, and his eyes widened in disbelief. Pointing down at the river, he gasped and said, "There's... someone there!!"

Zhou Yixing and Wu Dao were both shocked, and looked down at both banks of the river. However, neither of them could see anyone.

"I don't see anybody...." Zhou Yixing said.

"You guys don't see him? Look, right there! It's an old man.... He's wearing a black robe... and just sitting there...." Bai Xiaochun closed his eyes for a moment, and then reopened them. Sure enough, sitting right there on the bank of the river was an old man

in a black robe, with his back to them. It looked like he was...
fishing!

Chapter 813: Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper....

Zhou Yixing was convinced that Bai Xiaochun was not simply trying to frighten them, and was thus deeply shaken. And yet, no matter how he looked, he couldn't see anything along the bank of the river.

Wu Dao's expression flickered, and after a moment of hesitation and further examination, a strange expression appeared on his face.

“Grandmaster Bai, um... there really isn't anyone there.”

Stunned, Bai Xiaochun looked at Zhou Yixing for confirmation, who simply smiled and nodded. Heart pounding, Bai Xiaochun looked back. The black-robed old man was still sitting there just like before. By this point, Bai Xiaochun realized that there was something familiar about him, although he couldn't quite put his finger on what it was.

“Am I the only one who can see him?” he said, face turning pale and scalp tingling. However, it was at this point that Bai Hao's nervous voice was transmitted into his mind.

“Master, I... I can see him too.... There's an old man there, fishing....”

After a moment, Wu Dao took his leave, still a bit suspicious about everything. He even took some subordinates over to the Underworld River bank to search around, but none of them found anything.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he could clearly see an old man sitting next to where Wu Dao was now standing by the riverbank, and yet, Wu Dao didn't seem to be able to see the old man at all.

Feeling very nervous, Bai Xiaochun watched the old man the entire night. He simply sat there, fishing until dawn came, whereupon he faded away along with the Underworld River.

The next day, Bai Xiaochun was completely jumpy, and even plastered himself with some paper talismans he had in his bag of holding. And yet, that didn't make him feel much better.

When Bai Hao saw how nervous his Master was, he hesitated for a moment before saying, "Master, why don't we go over tonight to take a closer look? It almost seems like he's calling me...."

"You really have the guts to go for a closer look?" Bai Xiaochun said nervously. "Hao'er, you listen to me! That guy's not a soul, he's a ghost! Souls aren't very scary. After all, I've used a lot of souls in my necromancy. No, that's a ghost!! Don't let him hypnotize you! In fact, considering that old ghost has shown up, we need to get out of here. This place is dangerous.

"Hao'er, back when your Master was in the Fallen Sword Abyss, I saw a girl ghost.... Even thinking about that causes chills to go up my spine."

Whenever Bai Xiaochun thought about it, he realized that one of the main reasons he was so afraid of ghosts was because of that little girl back in the Fallen Sword Abyss.

Then he thought about how that girl had possessed Gongsun Wan'er, and then done all those strange things in the labyrinth, and his heart trembled with even more fear than before.

Bai Hao hesitated for a moment, and then said, "But I'm a ghost too!"

"You're different. That's... an old ghost! Old ghosts like that who have existed for many years are always very vicious!" Even as he spoke, he smacked a few more paper talismans down onto himself.

Bai Hao blinked a few times, but didn't say anything more to try to convince Bai Xiaochun. And thus the day passed in relative agony for Bai Xiaochun. Eventually, midnight came again... and the rumbling sounds filled the sky. The sky rippled, and the Underworld River began to rush through the riverbed. And then...

once again, Bai Xiaochun saw that black-robed old man sitting on the river bank.

“There he is again!!” he gasped, his face falling. Turning, he called out to Zhou Yixing, absolutely convinced that this evil place was haunted and that they shouldn’t stay there. “I’m an earthly necromancer! Any ghost that would dare to appear in front of me must be incredibly powerful....”

With that, he immediately sent Zhou Yixing and Song Que to work packing bags to get ready to leave. However, moments later, he realized that their small party was missing someone.

“Where’s Hao’er!?” he blurted. Spinning, and eyes widening, he noticed that Bai Hao was floating down toward the Underworld River, seemingly in a trance!

He was almost halfway to the bank, and was only a few hundred meters away from the black-robed old man.

“This is ridiculous bullying, you old ghost!!” Bai Xiaochun growled angrily. Although he was afraid, his anger over the fact that this old ghost was hypnotizing his apprentice caused him to start shaking physically. Letting out a shout, he began to speed toward the Underworld River.

As he moved, he smacked his bag of holding, producing numerous paper talismans, which he smacked down all over himself.

“Let go of my disciple, you old ghost!”

Although he was moving quickly, it was to his surprise that he found he couldn’t perform any teleportations. Even still, he was like a beam of light that shot toward Bai Hao, who was now only about 300 meters away from the old man. After closing in, he reached out and grabbed him.

Bai Hao shivered as he came to his senses. Then his face fell. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was relieved to see Bai Hao regain his senses,

and yet, it was only a moment later that his terror spiked as he realized that the old man had noticed him. Oh so slowly, the man began to turn around. As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun felt a sensation of terror that was impossible to even comprehend. Gripping Bai Hao tight, he screamed and prepared to flee.

However, that was when the old man's face became visible, and although his expression was cold and sinister, as soon as Bai Xiaochun caught sight of his features, his scream died, and he stood there with an incredulous look on his face.

“Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper....” he blurted.

This old man was none other than the mysterious black-robed figure who had saved him back in his Spirit Stream Sect days! During the fighting in those nameless mountains, he had been mortally wounded by a chosen of the Luo Chen Clan, and had then encountered this very black-robed old man!

This old man had not only save his life, he had also give him... the complete Undying Codex!

Never could Bai Xiaochun have imagined that after all the years that had passed, he would encounter this benefactor right here on the banks of the Underworld River!

Instantly, his fear vanished, and was replaced with joy. Meanwhile, the gravekeeper looked at Bai Xiaochun coolly for a moment, then looked back toward the river and started fishing again.

“Master, you... you know him?” Bai Hao had been struck with fear merely by looking at this old man; were it not for his master, he would probably have fallen right into the Underworld River because of the daze he had entered.

“Of course I know him! This is the benefactor that I've told you about so many times!” Bai Xiaochun's eyes were already shining. He could tell that this gravekeeper was an incredible individual;

after all he had been able to pull Bai Xiaochun back from the very brink of death.

Despite how his own cultivation base had climbed far beyond the level it had been that year, even now he couldn't ascertain the gravekeeper's level.

That was saying a lot, considering that Bai Xiaochun had encountered demigods before. And yet, the feeling he got from the gravekeeper... was that he was beyond the demigod level.

“More powerful than a demigod... Heavens! What level of cultivation base does Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper have?!” Enthused, he hurried over to the gravekeeper's side.

“Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper,” he said, “it's me, Bai Xiaochun! Um... I'm wearing a mask, so you can't see my real face. Sir, do you remember what happened back in those mountains...?”

It seemed like the gravekeeper hadn't even heard him; he simply went on fishing.

Bai Xiaochun was nervous, but also knew that he had to seize this rare opportunity. After a moment of hesitation, he said, “Um... Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper, can you help me out here? Send me back to the Heavenspan River? Whaddya say...?”

However, the gravekeeper didn't seem to be listening. No matter what Bai Xiaochun said, he didn't respond at all. Bai Xiaochun kept talking until his mouth turned dry and dawn was approaching. And yet, the entire time, the gravekeeper never even looked at him. Eventually, he faded away along with the Underworld River.

“What do we do now, Master?!” Bai Hao said. He had been standing there the entire time while his Master uttered countless words.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and waved his hand dismissively.

“Master is going to teach you a lesson today, my apprentice. It's called if you set your mind to it, you can crush rocks and tear apart

metal!”

During the course of the following half month, Bai Hao came to fully understand exactly how focused his Master could be. Every single night at midnight, Bai Xiaochun would go find the gravekeeper and go through another round of entreaties just like he had the first night.

Zhou Yixing and Wu Dao were completely taken aback by what was happening. Of course, all they could see was Bai Xiaochun acting like a maniac, standing by the bank of the river talking to himself. And since they couldn't hear what he was saying, it made the whole scene even stranger.

On one occasion, an underworld rainbow appeared near Bai Xiaochun, and when Wu Dao and the others went to harvest it, they could see up close what it looked like when he muttered to himself. It was really shocking, and they left as soon as they could.

Chapter 814: If You Have Any Questions....

Bai Xiaochun ignored all of the stares. After all, he knew that the remarkable powers of the gravekeeper made him vastly more powerful than even the Grand Heavenmaster.

However, not even half a month of fawning prompted the gravekeeper to pay him even an iota of attention. By this point, Bai Xiaochun felt like a ball of fire that was starting to sputter out.

It was also obvious that only he and Bai Hao were able to see the gravekeeper, who simply sat there the entire time fishing. Of course, what he was fishing for was vengeful souls, not fish.

The vengeful souls would always struggle mightily to take the bait, and yet, the gravekeeper only took away one vengeful soul per day.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and looked at the gravekeeper, then turned with a frown to glance at the Underworld River. Next to him was Bai Hao, who had witnessed his Master working hard for an entire month, with no results to show for it.

Lowering his voice, he said, “Master, this member of the senior generation is anything but ordinary. Don’t feel discouraged....”

“I know,” Bai Xiaochun replied through gritted teeth. “This guy is definitely anything but ordinary. However, you don’t need to worry. Master has a lot of experience dealing with old guys like this!” Bai Xiaochun was mostly convinced that he had just taken the wrong angle. Therefore, the next night, he found a fishing pole, sat down next to the gravekeeper, and started fishing with him.

“Becoming kindred spirits with someone can work wonders!” Fully convinced, he sat there fishing with the gravekeeper for another half a month while Bai Hao looked on, not sure what to make of the situation.

By this point, an entire month had gone by, and yet no matter what Bai Xiaochun did, the gravekeeper didn't pay him any attention. Finally, Bai Xiaochun sighed and decided to just give up.

Scowling, he said, "Hao'er, in this instance I've chosen to teach you an important lesson via my own actions. It's true that if you set your mind to it, you can crush rocks and tear apart metal! However, sometimes the wrong person comes along, and you'll end up wasting your time."

Bai Hao blinked a few times, but ended up holding his tongue and nodding in response.

And yet, despite Bai Xiaochun claiming that it was time to give up, he simply couldn't bring himself to actually do it. Not wanting to waste time, though, he decided to practice working with nineteen-colored flame.

"Well, sometimes when you want to get something done, you have to do it yourself. If this old codger is going to be too stubborn to help, then my only other option is to improve my flame conjuring ability, and achieve a cultivation base breakthrough. Once I step into the Deva Realm... then I can easily cross the Wildlands on my own." He sighed inwardly. Despite the fact that nineteen-colored flame could only be conjured by earthly necromancers, the fact was that Bai Hao's formula still wasn't complete.

Over the following few days, Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao discussed flame conjuring and nineteen-colored flame, right there next to the Underworld River and the gravekeeper. Although, as far as they were concerned, the gravekeeper might as well have not been there.

Bai Hao had his theories, and Bai Xiaochun had his experience. Working together, they began to make progress. Not quickly, but not slowly either.

Unfortunately, there were certain areas that left them stymied

and at an impasse, no matter what new angles they came up with.

“This isn’t going to work,” Bai Xiaochun said. “When conjuring eighteen-colored flame, I can only get it to work in the 9-meter state. However, if I do things the same with nineteen-colored flame, then it seems to me that it would only work in a 3-meter state. That’s the only way I would be able to spot the new color. And that would be so difficult it would basically be impossible.”

Bai Xiaochun was getting frustrated, and Bai Hao was lost in thought.

“If only there were a way to get those colors to stop flickering so quickly....” Bai Hao muttered. “Unfortunately, it would probably require a lot of outside force.” His eyes flickered with the light of augury, but even after a protracted period of time, he didn’t come up with any new ideas. Bai Xiaochun also wracked his brains, and yet, it was to no avail.

Another seven days went by, during which time they continued to remain stuck in the same place. That night, Bai Xiaochun finally began to consider giving up on his work with nineteen-colored flame, and just let the ideas come naturally over time. However, it was in that exact moment that the gravekeeper, who hadn’t said a single word during all of these weeks, suddenly spoke in a gravelly voice.

“Why are you trying to get the flames to flicker more slowly? Why don’t you try to split the new color into multiple parts? That way, you’ll have more chances of spotting it.”

His words struck both Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao like a bolt of lightning. Master and apprentice both stared at each other, their eyes shining brightly!

It all made complete sense! In Bai Xiaochun’s attempts to conjure eighteen-colored flame, he had always worked with a single portion of that new color. However, if there were a hundred such portions of color, or even ten, then even if the flickering occurred

more quickly, he would still have plenty of chances to get lucky and latch onto the new color!

“That’s right! It makes perfect sense! Master, let’s rework everything from fifteen-colored flame upward. Then, by the time we get to nineteen-colored flame, there will be plenty more of the new color to work with!!” Delighted, Bai Hao’s eyes began to flicker with even more augury light. Clearly, he was very moved.

Bai Xiaochun was equally excited. It seemed like a simple idea, the type that anyone would be able to understand upon first hearing it. But considering how much of a rut they had been stuck in, without someone to point it out to them, they might have wasted a huge amount of time coming up with it on their own.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, stood, and then clasped hands to the gravekeeper, as did Bai Hao. However, the gravekeeper didn't have anything more to say, and simply continued fishing.

At the moment, Bai Xiaochun didn’t have the time to ponder the gravekeeper. He continued to contemplate the matter as Bai Hao performed auguries. Several days later, they resolved the issue. That didn’t mean that Bai Xiaochun was completely ready to work with nineteen-colored flame, but it did provide immense help to his ability with eighteen-colored flame!

In fact, it immediately improved his success rate. Now, the only main limitation he faced was getting all of the seventeen-colored flame he needed to create an eighteen-colored flame. From now on, he wouldn't be able to use any type of seventeen-colored flame other than tongues conjured by himself.

Generally speaking, the whole method needed to be started from fifteen-colored flame. However, that wasn’t necessarily a huge problem for Bai Xiaochun. Although he had only come up with this new idea recently, the boost it gave him when working with eighteen-colored flame was worth it.

After all, each failure with eighteen-colored flame meant a

massive loss of resources.

A few words from the gravekeeper had resolved a major issue for this Master and apprentice team. Therefore, after exchanging a glance, they began to continue their discussion about various issues regarding nineteen-colored flame, all right there in front of the gravekeeper.

“When you take ten tongues of eighteen-colored flame and combine them, the fluctuations and instabilities make it difficult for them to merge together....”

“The pressure created after merging them, and the way they contract, are both big problems. What are we supposed to do? It would be difficult considering my current cultivation base level....”

“Also, I wonder if nineteen-colored flame comes with lightning tribulation....”

All sorts of questions poured out of their mouths, and after each one, they would cast sidelong glances at the gravekeeper. As long as he didn't say anything, they could continue the discussion along related subjects.

Eventually, it was with a bit of a begrudging expression that the gravekeeper offered some more advice. Every time he did, Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao were thrilled. Slowly but surely, all of their issues were being resolved.

With the help of the gravekeeper, Bai Xiaochun's skill in flame conjuring slowly improved, and Bai Hao's understanding of the theories involved grew more profound. In fact, Bai Hao seemed to benefit even more than Bai Xiaochun. Everything the gravekeeper said seemed to strike him like lightning, leaving him more confident, and his formulas more complete.

Eventually, he realized that what he was doing was very specific and unique. The formulas he was creating were all based on Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base, divine sense, and strong suits.

In all of the Wildlands, Bai Xiaochun would be the only person who would actually be able to use this formula to concoct flame.

Another few months sped by. Bai Xiaochun was completely immersed in his flame conjuring research, as was Bai Hao. Although they still took time to rest when necessary, they worked so hard that Bai Xiaochun's skill grew significantly on a daily basis!

Master and apprentice both advanced by leaps and bounds in a very short period of time. It was almost impossible to describe how much they were benefiting. And although no expression could be seen on the gravekeeper's face, deep within his eyes was a gleam of a smile. He appeared to be ignoring Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao, but the truth was that he was actually paying more attention to them than to his fishing.

As Master and apprentice discussed various matters, it was impossible for Bai Hao to hide the reverence and love in his eyes. At the same time, it was also impossible for Bai Xiaochun to disguise how much he cared for his apprentice. When the gravekeeper saw that, the smile deep within his eyes grew wider.

Chapter 815: Advancing By Leaps And Bounds

Time became a blur as several months passed. The better part of a year had now passed since Bai Xiaochun came to the Underworld River Restricted Area, and most of that time, he and his apprentice had been completely immersed in their flame conjuring research. In fact, neither of them really had any idea how much time had passed.

During the day, they would discuss nineteen-colored flame, and during the evening, they would hurry over to the bank of the Underworld River to continue their discussion in the presence of the gravekeeper, making sure to emphasize all of the difficult areas they had been unable to resolve earlier.

Sometimes the gravekeeper wouldn't help them with a certain issue. But when that happened, they would continue to chatter about the matter until he gave in and offered some advice.

Both Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao experienced an increase in their flame conjuring skill, and also grew more confident when it came to nineteen-colored flame. That was especially true of Bai Hao, who knew that he was just on the verge of producing the formula.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was so immersed in the process that... he knew that as soon as the formula appeared, he would be able to conjure a nineteen-colored flame immediately!

In the past, Bai Xiaochun could never have imagined that he would reach the point of being able to conjure nineteen-colored flame so quickly after mastering eighteen-colored flame. Despite his strong faith in Bai Hao, he had assumed the process would take years.

Nineteen-colored flame was even more rare than eighteen-colored flame. In fact, it was possible to say that while eighteen-

colored flame might occasionally be seen at huge auctions in the Wildlands, as for nineteen-colored flame... it only came around once in a hundred years!

For all intents and purposes, nineteen-colored flame was a thing of the past. Any such flames which currently existed would have been conjured by previous generations of earthly necromancers and then hidden away like buried treasure.

Currently, there were only three people in the Wildlands who could conjure eighteen-colored flame. Of those three, two were actually stuck at that level, with only one of them ever having succeed with nineteen-colored flame!

From this it was possible to see how incredibly rare nineteen-colored flames were!

If Bai Xiaochun succeeded, and word spread out into the Wildlands, it would cause a major stir. In fact, it might even cause a greater stir than when he had reached the earthly rank. That mere thought got him even more excited than before.

After all, never before in history had an earthly necromancer made progress as quickly as Bai Xiaochun right now!

However, he wasn't really thinking about such things at the moment, nor did he have time to feel pleased with himself. He was completely focused on nineteen-colored flame, to the exclusion of almost everything else.

By now, Zhou Yixing, Wu Dao, and the others present were used to seeing Bai Xiaochun muttering to himself on the banks of the Underworld River. Occasionally, people would go eavesdrop, but all they would hear was talk of nineteen-colored flame, most of which was unintelligible even to necromancers such as Zhou Yixing.

Thanks to Bai Xiaochun's mask, Wu Dao didn't even notice Bai Hao. The better part of a year passed, and talk of Bai Xiaochun's

escapades within Arch-Emperor City was finally starting to die down.

Of course, all it took was for someone to mention necromancers, or heavenly marquises and dukes, or for someone to say the name of Bai Hao, and it would be easy to see how much he had shaken the city.

During the time which passed, there were certain people in Arch-Emperor City who continued to scheme against him. After all, their hatred for him was not something that would easily dissipate because of a bit of time passing.

That was especially true because... the Grand Heavenmaster continued to enforce the Proclamation of Universal Grace throughout the Wildlands. Slowly but surely, things were stabilizing. Unless something very drastic happened... it would only take a few more years for the very structure of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty to completely change!

No one could say for sure whether that change would be a good thing for the dynasty, or a bad thing. Although the influential clans had seemingly been dismembered, the truth was that the constant struggles of the bastard children and the common people showed... that the Wildlands' overall battle prowess was as formidable as ever.

There were some people, for example those from the direct bloodlines of important clans, who were becoming more desperate than ever to do something to Bai Xiaochun. However... whenever they tried to send people into the Underworld River Restricted Area, those people went missing!

Not even Wu Dao and his men were aware of that fact. They didn't even know people had infiltrated the area. If they didn't know, there was even less need to mention Zhou Yixing or even Bai Xiaochun. No one had any idea how many people had come to the Underworld River Restricted Area to harm Bai Xiaochun, only to

vanish.

That was quite a shock to the people who had been plotting against him, and soon none of them dared to do anything further.

No one disturbed Bai Xiaochun as he worked on his flame conjuring. Several more months went by. One night, a look of excitement lit up Bai Hao's face.

Bai Xiaochun was also so excited he was trembling.

“It worked!! Master, we did it!! We created the formula for nineteen-colored flame!! This formula belongs to you and you alone, Master. Even with the formula, no one else would be able to conjure this type of nineteen-colored flame. It's yours, Master!”

Not only was Bai Xiaochun excited, he also knew that the past year had been one of drastic progress in flame conjuring skill. And of course, the main reason for it all was the help of the gravekeeper.

“Many thanks, Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper!” he said, bowing deeply. Bai Hao also excitedly clasped hands and bowed to the gravekeeper.

The gravekeeper sat there, face expressionless as he continued to fish.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao were used to that. Bursting with excitement, they continued to discuss the finer details of nineteen-colored flame for a bit. Then Bai Xiaochun calmed himself and prepared... to actually conjure a nineteen-colored flame, right there next to the Underworld River!!

There was no tribulation that came with nineteen-colored flame!

That was something that the gravekeeper had explained recently, and which Bai Xiaochun didn't doubt at all. Besides, even if some sort of tribulation came, he was sure that it wouldn't count for crap with the gravekeeper there....

It was with complete and utter confidence that Bai Xiaochun went on to begin conjuring nineteen-colored flame. Eyes glittering, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture to produce a vast quantity of fifteen-colored flame.

These flames had been conjured during his research and study during the past year or so with Bai Hao. As for other necessary ingredients... although he had ceased to be the inspections commissioner after rising to the earthly rank, and had thus been incapable of performing shakedowns, he had still been showered with gifts by well-wishers.

Everyone from Sima Tao to Sun Yifan had come, as well as many other outstanding individuals. Therefore, when the time had come to leave Arch-Emperor City, he did so with no less wealth than he had accumulated after all the shakedowns.

Beyond that was everything he had been given by the clans he had visited when taking the heavenly airship trip. It was really impossible to count how much he had built up before actually arriving at the Underworld River Restricted Area.

And that was what he would rely on to build up to a nineteen-colored flame. He settled his qi and cleared his mind, then began to slowly work with the fifteen-colored flames....

His process was completely innovative. He was taking an entirely new path to get to nineteen-colored flame, to the point where he even used new methods to conjure the sixteen-and seventeen-colored flames. Before long, he actually had ten tongues of seventeen-colored flame hovering around him, which he then began to compress.

When he merged the flames together, creating a huge sea of fire, immense pressure began to weigh down on him. However, he clearly knew exactly what he was doing. He casually compressed the sea of fire down to a size of 15 meters. The flames began to flicker, and yet, that was exactly what he had been expecting.

Furthermore... eighty percent of them were made up of the eighteenth color!

It almost wasn't even necessary to look at them. Bai Xiaochun sent some divine sense out, and the flickering of the flames didn't bother him at all. Almost instantly, he found the eighteenth color, and then reached out and grabbed it.

The sea of fire began to shrink down into his palm, after which he opened his fingers, revealing a full eighteen-colored flame.

After breathing a sigh of relief, he marveled at how smoothly it had gone, then threw his head back and laughed heartily. He now felt more confident than ever about conjuring nineteen-colored flame!

Chapter 816: Nineteen-Colored Flame

Things didn't stop here. Bai Xiaochun immediately began working on a second tongue of eighteen-colored flame. Time passed. Throughout the course of the night, he conjured a total of ten eighteen-colored flames!!

Every single one succeeded. He didn't even come close to a failure!!

If word of this got out, the entire Wildlands would be shaken, and countless necromancers would be thrown into a frenzy. No one had ever seen anything like it!

And yet, here, on the banks of the Underworld River, it was happening!!

It would have been impossible for Bai Xiaochun to do this all on his own. And although some of it had to do with the formula, most of it was because of the advice given by the gravekeeper!!

When coupled with Bai Xiaochun's ability to focus, and his familiarity with medicine formulas, it made things go even more smoothly. In the end, he did something that could shake all of heaven and earth!

He conjured ten high-level flames in a row, without making a mistake!

Perhaps it was because of Bai Xiaochun's mask, or perhaps because of the gravekeeper, but when those eighteen-colored flames appeared, the only other person who could see them was Bai Hao.

And of course, Bai Hao was overwhelmed with joy. Although he knew that his Master had already succeeded twice in the past, he hadn't been present the first time, and the second time, he hadn't dared to come out to observe.

But this time, he could see clearly, and it led him to the

realization that nobody in all of the Wildlands could possibly stand on equal footing as his Master. Not even the other three secretive and elusive earthly necromancers could hold a candle to him!

To be able to casually conjure such flame ten times in a row was a completely and utterly shocking matter!!

Bai Xiaochun now had full and unshakable control over eighteen-colored flame!

He was very excited, and yet, he knew that this was only the first step. The ten tongues of eighteen-colored flame that he had just conjured... were the building blocks with which he would conjure a nineteen-colored flame. Unfortunately, those ten tongues of flame represented a massive amount of resources.

Furthermore, he had lost his source of income. Right now, he only had enough to try one time. Although he would still have some resources left over in the end, they would only be about ten percent of what he needed to make another attempt.

“No wonder earthly ranked flames are so rare. It’s not just because of the number of earthly necromancers, it’s because of the vast amount of resources required to make them....” Although he wasn’t sure how other earthly necromancers conjured flame, based on his current skill and experience, he knew that, regardless of what technique was used... the cost would be roughly the same.

Bai Xiaochun sat there quietly for a moment, looking at the ten tongues of eighteen-colored flame. Suppressing his excitement, he closed his eyes for a moment to settle his thoughts. He knew... that the moment of truth had arrived!

“Nineteen-colored flame.... I’ve done months upon months of research, and had help from Bai Hao and Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper. I... have to make it work!!” A moment later, his eyes snapped open. Spreading his hands wide, he pulled the ten tongues of flame together.

Although it didn't seem difficult to merge them into one, Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao had spent a huge amount of time working on the various details and steps required. The entire process had been mapped out via augury, with numerous critical issues resolved with advice from the gravekeeper.

Only with hard work and a bit of luck did Bai Xiaochun reach the point where he could so smoothly conjure flame. And thus it was that the ten tongues of eighteen-colored flame slowly merged together in front of Bai Xiaochun, right above the surface of the Underworld River.

His hands flashed constantly with various incantation gestures. Occasionally he would pull out a special soul to add into the mix according to the method that he and Bai Hao had devised. As he made these constant adjustments, the sea of flames gradually became more and more perfect.

Time marched on, and everything went according to plan. However, conjuring a nineteen-colored flame was still no easy task. It required utter concentration on Bai Xiaochun's part, to the point where his eyes were completely bloodshot. Not daring to make the slightest slipup, he proceeded along carefully for about two hours until all ten tongues of eighteen-colored flame had been perfectly combined.

Although the heat of this sea of fire vastly surpassed that of an eighteen-colored flame, Bai Xiaochun's ability to control the heat had also increased.

The beads of sweat which popped out on his forehead quickly evaporated. Taking a breath, he drew upon the power of his cultivation base to crush the sea of fire down!

“Compress!”

Rumbling sounds filled the air, and yet, neither Zhou Yixing nor anyone else in the area noticed. As far as they were concerned, the scene on the banks of the Underworld River was the same as ever!

Bai Xiaochun wasn't aware of that, though. He was fully concentrating on the process of compressing the sea of fire. Meanwhile, Bai Hao remained off to the side, watching nervously.

“Considering all of the auguries we performed, there shouldn't be any problems....” Although Bai Hao was constantly worrying about what would happen, he didn't let that show on his face, for fear of it affecting his Master.

His eyes remained fixed on the sea of fire, which writhed defiantly like some primordial beast. However, no matter how it struggled, it couldn't break free from Bai Xiaochun, and was forced to be tamed.

It took time for the sea of fire to compress, although Bai Xiaochun actually had no idea how much time had passed. All he knew was that his exhaustion was rapidly mounting. Before long, the sea of fire was only 300 meters across!!

That was his limit! His cultivation base had been almost completely sucked dry, and he was so tired that his mind was about to shut down.

“Hao'er!” he cried out.

In almost immediate response, Bai Hao flicked his sleeve, sending a medicinal pill flying out into Bai Xiaochun's mouth, which he consumed in one gulp!

Warmth immediately began to flow through him, returning his cultivation base to its peak, and settling his mind.

Enthused, and eyes shining brightly, he sent out more cultivation base power, and also shoved his hands closer together. As a result, the beast-like sea of fire struggled as it shrank.

270 meters. 240 meters. 210 meters.... Bai Xiaochun didn't hold anything back from his cultivation base. The sea of fire struggled mightily, and yet nothing changed. It continued to shrink all the way until it was only 120 meters across!

After that, it shrunk to 90 meters. 60 meters... 30 meters!!

By this point, his cultivation base was again almost completely drained. And yet, that was exactly what his apprentice's auguries had predicted would happen.

“When it gets down to 24 meters,” Bai Xiaochun thought, “I’ll consume another Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill. That should be enough! It’s too bad that I can only consume a total of nine Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pills. After that, they won't work....”

Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do about the matter now. He had to take advantage of this opportunity. If he could enhance his nascent soul and thus increase his cultivation base, then eventually he wouldn't need any Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pills! He could just directly conjure nineteen-colored flames!

“Compress!” he growled, his eyes blood red. Rumbling sounds echoed out as the sea of fire shrank down until it was 24 meters across!!

“Hao'er!” Bai Hao knew exactly what to do, and sent a second Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pill over to Bai Xiaochun. After consuming it, Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone, and he continued to work on shrinking the fire.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

21 meters. 18 meters. Finally... 15 meters!!

It was at 15 meters when the sea of fire began to struggle most viciously. Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base was being drained rapidly, and his exhaustion was again mounting. However, it was at that point that... another color appeared within the 15-meter sea of fire!!

The fact that he had begun his endeavor with fifteen-colored flames was no waste! As of this moment, there wasn't a single

portion of the nineteenth color, but rather, ten!

That ensured that the chances of success were increased significantly. Although Bai Xiaochun was panting nervously as he stared at the new color, he used the method devised by Bai Hao's augury to analyze it.

After studying it for about ten breaths of time, his eyes began to shine, and it was without the slightest hesitation that he sent some divine sense power into the fire.... He didn't make the slightest mistake! His divine sense immediately locked onto the nineteenth color.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

The nineteenth color began to shine with blinding brightness, like a dragon flying up into the heavens. That nineteenth color... soon completely distinguished itself from the other eighteen colors!

“It worked!!” Bai Hao shouted excitedly.

Bai Xiaochun laughed hoarsely, but with passion as he reached out to grab the flame.

“Come to me, nineteen-colored flame!” he shouted. Rumbling sounds echoed out loudly as his hands closed around the fire.

The flame sank down into his hand until it couldn't even be seen. His fingers trembled slightly, and Bai Hao looked on, completely nervous. Although Bai Hao was convinced that his Master couldn't fail, he was still worried about what would happen.

Master and apprentice exchanged a glance, and then Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and... slowly opened his fingers!

As he did, a tongue of nineteen-colored flame was clearly visible above his palm!

Nineteen-colored flame... success!

Chapter 817: Bai Xiaochun?!

No one knew that he had conjured a nineteen-colored flame. After coming to realize this, Bai Xiaochun came to the conclusion that it wasn't his mask which had concealed the fact, but rather, the gravekeeper.

Furthermore, after the nineteen-colored flame appeared, the gravekeeper himself was nowhere to be seen. The Underworld River also vanished.

It was almost as if his presence during the past year had only been in order to give advice to Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao. Now that Bai Xiaochun had succeeded in conjuring nineteen-colored flame, there was no further need for the gravekeeper to stay.

However, the night before disappearing, he had broken from his usual practice of being tight-lipped to give extensive advice about flame conjuring. Therefore, although Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao felt a bit strange to be alone, they were moved by all of the information he had imparted.

“Master, all of the advice from Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper was incredible. Twenty-colored flame is the peak of the earthly rank, and although it will be very difficult, I feel quite confident that I can create the formula for you! In fact, I'm going to go into secluded meditation to work on it.” Clasp hands, he bowed and said, “Master, take care of yourself while I'm away, sir!”

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, patted him on the shoulder, and nodded. Then, Bai Hao became a beam of glowing soul light that vanished into his soulhoarding pagoda.

A few more months went by, but the gravekeeper never returned, and Bai Hao remained in seclusion.

Bai Xiaochun didn't have enough ingredients to practice with any multi-colored flame, but he was able to perform auguries, and

spent a lot of time doing research in that fashion.

“The only reason I succeeded in one shot was because of the Heavencleaving Good Fortune Pills.... If I try again, it won't work as smoothly.” Patting his bag of holding, he contemplated the fact that although he was running very low on resources, he at least had everything from thirteen-to nineteen-colored flame on hand.

Some flames he only had one of, whereas he had multiple tongues of others. It was a collection that, if it were to be placed on public auction in the Wildlands, would cause a massive commotion. In fact, even earthly necromancers would likely scramble to get their hands on it. After some thought, Bai Xiaochun decided that trying to auction his flames off wasn't a good idea. He could really only sell them directly.

On another note, Bai Xiaochun had not forgotten his earlier promise to Zhou Yixing. In recent months, Bai Xiaochun had given him enough help and advice that he was now able to conjure his own fifteen-colored flame!!

That indicated that Zhou Yixing was now a celestial necromancer, which put him in a very excited and happy mood.

In Zhou Yixing's clan, the only other celestial necromancer was one of the patriarchs. In fact, before meeting Bai Xiaochun, he wouldn't even have been able to dream of reaching that rank.

But here he was, only a handful of years later, at that very level. Zhou Yixing knew that all of it... was because of Bai Xiaochun's kindness. That filled his heart with gratitude, and further reinforced his conviction that he had made the right decision!

As for Song Que, he had spent the year or so of time resting and continuing to use soul medicine to advance his cultivation, something he was able to do because of how the Chen Clan had forced his earlier breakthrough. Although he was still in the early Nascent Soul stage, his foundation was actually much stronger than before.

Although he didn't have much hope of becoming a deva, with his foundation back to normal, there was still a possibility. Therefore, he felt extremely grateful for the chances he had been given, and felt more closely tied to the Wildlands than ever.

A few more months went by. Bai Xiaochun had been in the Underworld River Restricted Area for far more than a year now, and was starting to get bored. He had avoided opportunities to make a scene, and was starting to wonder if he should send a message to the Grand Heavenmaster and ask to return to Arch-Emperor City.

Even if he couldn't, he at least hoped he could get back to Giant Ghost City.

However, even as Bai Xiaochun contemplated the subject, something happened in the Wildlands... which nobody could ever have anticipated!!

It all happened because of a single person, a young man who appeared first in the northern part of the Wildlands. He wore a white robe, and had flowing black hair and fair skin. He was always expressionless, and seemed profoundly arrogant. Bitter coldness surrounded him wherever he went, and his mere presence would cause gusts of wind and other heavenly phenomena.

His cultivation base was very strange. Sometimes it seemed to be in the Nascent Soul stage, and other times... not!

Wherever he went, slaughter ensued. In a short three-day period, he exterminated seven mid-sized tribes, and even one large tribe. On top of that, he wiped out a whole necromancer clan.

He had already killed tens of thousands!!

It was a brutal type of slaughter. Everyone who died ended up as desiccated corpses, as though all of their life force had been completely drained away. Even their souls were completely gone.

The northern Wildlands were immediately thrown into chaos. However, most shocking of all was that on the fourth day, the culprit vanished without a trace, only to appear in the eastern Wildlands, where more slaughter ensued.

Days passed, and the death toll rose close to 100,000. The entire Arch-Emperor Dynasty was enraged; this was clearly a bald-faced provocation!!

Most shocking of all was that the person carrying out these acts looked exactly like one of the most wanted people in the Wildlands. Bai Xiaochun!

It didn't take long before just about everyone came to the conclusion that this person really was Bai Xiaochun, who occupied 1st place on the Hell-Emperor Stele, who had enhanced his own nascent soul to crush all other chosen beneath his feet!

“Bai Xiaochun has appeared again!!”

“He's been holed up for years. Finally, he shows his face again!!”

“Dammit. This is so brutal! He slaughtered 100,000 people! Bai Xiaochun has to die!!”

“Kill Bai Xiaochun!!”

The news spread like storm winds, and it didn't take long before everyone in the Wildlands had heard. It quickly became the main subject of discussion in both Arch-Emperor City and the cities of the four heavenly kings.

However, despite the slaughters which were being carried out, none of the four heavenly kings, nor the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, felt inclined to muster troops to do something about it. Considering the level of cultivation base of the most powerful experts, they felt it wouldn't be difficult at all to take care of the issue.

“Now that he's out in the open, it's time to just kill him!”

“If he had remained in hiding, it would have been difficult to find him. But now he has the impertinence to do this? Does he really think the Wildlands couldn’t handle a measly Nascent Soul cultivator like him!?”

Such word spread quickly among the nobility and aristocracy. As for Mistress Red-Dust, she was particularly agitated by the news, and immediately requested of the Grand Heavenmaster that she be allowed to take action to put an end to Bai Xiaochun!

The Grand Heavenmaster was busy with the Proclamation of Universal Grace. However, he knew about the bad blood between Mistress Red-Dust and Bai Xiaochun, so after only a short hesitation, he agreed to her request.

Shortly thereafter, Mistress Red-Dust took to action. She didn’t go after Bai Xiaochun alone. After all, her fight with him in the past made her realize that he was very crafty and had many trump cards at his disposal.

Therefore, she mustered nearly half of the Giant Ghost Legion that was garrisoned at Arch-Emperor City to go track Bai Xiaochun down and kill him.

“This time you’re definitely going to die by my hands, Bai Xiaochun!” she said through gritted teeth as she left Arch-Emperor City.

Eventually, Zhou Yixing caught wind of the situation. He had been close to Bai Xiaochun for more than a year, but had many subordinates on the outside constantly feeding him information. Therefore, he was actually one of the first people to hear the news. At first, he was shocked, but managed to get himself under control. Although he wasn’t sure about all the details, he knew that this was a very important matter, and immediately went to Bai Xiaochun to break the news.

“Bai Xiaochun?!?!?!” Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes widening with disbelief. Then he simply stared mutely at Zhou Yixing.

Zhou Yixing was equally stunned, and was also well aware that the news spreading about Bai Xiaochun must be false.... There was no way that the person in front of him could have just killed 100,000 people.

“Yeah,” he said. “After appearing in public, he killed more than 100,000 people. Zhou... Zhou Zimo took nearly half of the Giant Ghost Legion to go kill him....” With that, he went on to explain everything he knew.

The more Bai Xiaochun listened, the more surprised he became. It seemed completely unbelievable.

“Who’s impersonating me?!” he thought. Something definitely seemed fishy. This was clearly an imposter who was intentionally causing problems for him! The fact that someone was killing tens of thousands of people in his name instantly made Bai Xiaochun furious.

“You’re trying to screw me up one side and down the other!! No. No way. I have to go see what bastard is doing this!”

Anger burning, he made his decision about what to do.

Chapter 818: Its Her!

One of the reasons he wanted to go see who was impersonating him was because he was angry. The other was because he was worried. As far as he was concerned, there could only be two types of people who might impersonate him: either a friend, or an enemy!

If it was a friend, he might still be angry, but would still need to determine who it was, and why they were doing something so stupid. If that person was still alive, and deserved saving, then he would save them.

If this person was an enemy... then he still wanted to know who exactly it was!

Furthermore, he was confident that after all the spirit enhancements his mask had received, it was definitely powerful enough that a demigod wouldn't be able to see through it. As long as he didn't slip up accidentally, no one would be able to determine his true identity.

At the moment, he was a very important person in the Wildlands. He was the former inspections commissioner of Arch-Emperor City, as well as an earthly necromancer. Either one of those positions was one that would put him in a position to trample the Wildlands beneath his feet.

"I can't just go off by myself. The best thing would be to go with Mistress Red-Dust and the Giant Ghost Legion. Going with them... will make my cover impossible to break." Having made his decision, he calmed himself down, and then left with Song Que and Zhou Yixing, borrowing the Underworld River Restricted Area brigade's heavenly airship.

He didn't pause for even a moment along the way. The Underworld River Restricted Area was located in the central Wildlands, not very far from the eastern regions. In the very

moments in which Mistress Red-Dust was making her final preparations for departure, he transmitted a polite message to her indicating that he wished to escort her along her way.

At first, she was inclined to ignore him. However, she was still angry about what had gone on between her and Bai Hao in the Inspections Manor, and decided that this would be the perfect opportunity to teach him a lesson or two.

Smiling coldly, she agreed to meet up. And thus, only a few days later, Bai Xiaochun arrived at the appointed meeting location with Mistress Red-Dust.

It was one of the many ordinary teleportation portals scattered throughout the Wildlands, a place guarded year-round by powerful soul cultivators. As soon as Bai Xiaochun arrived, everyone recognized him, and offered respectful greetings.

Bai Xiaochun was completely wrapped up in thoughts about who was impersonating him, and was in no mood for chatting. He simply waited outside of the teleportation portal for some time until it began to shine with bright, flickering light. Moments later, numerous figures began to pour out of it, who were none other than the soldiers of the Giant Ghost Legion.

They all nodded in greeting upon seeing him, after which they fanned out to seal down the area. After everything was secured, the teleportation portal flickered again, and more forces poured out to reinforce the perimeter. Soon, there were more than 10,000 people present.

Last to emerge were Mistress Red-Dust and her private guard. As soon as Bai Xiaochun laid eyes on Mistress Red-Dust, he thought back to what had occurred back in the Inspections Manor, and cleared his throat. Of course, he was a different person than he was back then. He was now an earthly necromancer, and therefore, he looked over at Mistress Red-Dust and gave her a friendly smile and nod.

She looked at him coldly and let out a snort. She knew that if she wanted to teach him a lesson, she needed to be patient. Furthermore, her main priority was to find Bai Xiaochun. Therefore, she sent some divine sense out into the area to inspect it, and after confirming everything was in order, flew up into the air.

The more than 10,000 members of the Giant Ghost Legion followed her. Under normal circumstances, the fact that she was ignoring him would have prompted Bai Xiaochun to cast a glare back at her. But right now, he was in a precarious political situation. Furthermore, he was very anxious about the matter of the Bai Xiaochun imposter. Therefore, he simply endured the situation and followed the soldiers.

Nobody spoke as they sped along behind Mistress Red-Dust. Anger burned in her beautiful eyes as she proceeded along, a jade slip in hand which constantly gave her updates and news. After a few hours passed, she suddenly pointed off into the distance.

“All clues point to the fact that Bai Xiaochun is still in the east Wildlands. He was last seen in a location roughly 5,000 kilometers from Mount Amity.... Clearly, his next target is none other than that very mountain!” With that, she picked up speed, as did the grim soldiers she led. They became thousands of beams of bright light which streaked through the air at top speed.

“This Zhou Zimo is no good at all at leading soldiers!” Bai Xiaochun thought. “Unless the imposter Bai Xiaochun is a complete idiot, there’s no way he would just stick around waiting for people to come after him....”

He was just about to offer his opinion on the matter when Mistress Red-Dust looked at him with cold eyes.

“The villain Bai Xiaochun has already been in this area for about half a month,” she said. “Every time he shows up, he sticks around in the same area for a certain period of time before leaving. So

whatever it was that you were about to say, just stow it!”

Bai Xiaochun felt a bit awkward. It was obvious that Mistress Red-Dust was still brooding over the events in the Inspections Manor. However, he couldn't help but be shocked by what she had just told him, and, feeling that he had no other choice, he hurried over to speak with her more privately.

“Something's off here!” he said. “Why would he stay in one place? What if he's waiting for us? Zimo, this sounds like a trap!” The more he thought about it, the stranger it seemed. Based on what he had been told before, he assumed that the imposter Bai Xiaochun was randomly going around committing crimes. Therefore, this new information seemed very disconcerting.

Mistress Red-Dust snorted coldly. “Of course it's a trap! That's why I didn't come alone. I brought an army with me!”

Now that Bai Xiaochun was getting a better idea of the details of the situation, he was feeling more and more nervous. Taking a deep breath, he decided to offer some more advice, “Hold on. No, something is really off. Zimo, I recommend you hold back. Send in the army to scout around first. Or maybe ask his highness the king to come!”

“Shut up!” Mistress Red-Dust said with an impatient wave of her hand. “Nobody asked you to come along. You came on your own! Besides... who knows Bai Xiaochun better, me or you?”

Inwardly, Bai Xiaochun rolled his eyes about a hundred thousand times. He really wished he could point out to this Zhou Zimo that of course she didn't understand Bai Xiaochun better than Bai Xiaochun himself!

However, there was no way he could say such a thing, and he merely had to let the fires of frustration burn in his heart as Mistress Red-Dust flew off into the distance.

Of course, it wasn't as if Mistress Red-Dust hadn't made any

advance preparations. In fact, she felt herself to be completely and utterly prepared. Furthermore, she hated Bai Xiaochun deep in her bones, and wanted nothing more than to kill him. At the moment, she was completely confident that, even if he did have some unknown superhuman abilities, considering she herself was a deva, she should definitely be able to crush him!

“Maybe if he were somewhere else I could ignore it. But this is the east Wildlands! My father the king is right around the corner in Giant Ghost City. If anything unexpected happens... father will come immediately to help me!” Laughing coldly inside, she felt more confident than ever about what was going to happen. Ignoring Bai Xiaochun’s words of warning, she continued on toward Mount Amity.

Bai Xiaochun was already starting to regret how things were turning out. The intelligence reports he had read earlier had been very vague, leaving him mostly in the dark. But now that he knew more, he was in a very tough position. Finally, he stamped his foot in frustration and followed after Mistress Red-Dust, his vigilance growing by the moment.

“If anything weird happens, I’m out of here....” he thought nervously. As he proceeded along, he surveyed the area constantly, both with eyesight and divine sense. To him, everything in the area seemed cold and sinister, which caused a sensation of imminent crisis to rise up in his heart.

“It’s so cold.... It’s a frigid qi that seems... familiar....” Even as he pondered the matter, Mount Amity appeared up ahead!

Mount Amity featured five mountain peaks that looked almost like a hand. It rose up out of the dense jungle into the evening sky, creating a stark silhouette that immediately filled one with a sense of foreboding.

The jungle was extremely quiet, even after the Giant Ghost Legion arrived. As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked around, scalp

tingling at the realization that all of the trees in the jungle... were withered up and dead!!

It was almost as if all of their life force had been completely sucked away!

Mistress Red-Dust and the Giant Ghost Legion also noticed this fact, and their expressions turned even more serious than before. However, they didn't slow down. Instead, they shot out over the jungle toward Mount Amity!

Before they could reach the mountain, however, sinister laughter suddenly erupted from the third of Mount Amity's looming peaks!!

“Hehehe.... You people certainly took your time.... So few of you.... I'm actually still a bit hungry....” It was impossible to tell whether the voice belonged to a man or a woman. It was piercing, and almost sounded like a man, woman, and child all talking at the same time. Even as the voice erupted out into the open, a figure appeared on the third mountain peak.

It was a young man in a long white robe, with flowing black hair. Shockingly, he had two pupils in each eye, and his mouth was twisted in a bizarre smile. Then, he stuck his tongue out and licked his lips.

As for his facial features, he looked exactly like... Bai Xiaochun!!

However, as soon as Bai Xiaochun saw this person, his mind was battered by tsunamis of shock! He even shivered, and his pupils constricted as he breathed, “Gongsun Wan'er!!”

Chapter 819: Fishing!

This person was none other than... Gongsun Wan'er! She looked different, as she was impersonating Bai Xiaochun. But as soon as he laid eyes on her, he recognized her!

It was mostly because of her smile, the way she licked her lips, and the way she talked about being hungry. The enormity of it all struck him like a lightning bolt.

He suddenly thought back to the labyrinth, and all of the indescribably terrifying things he had seen there....

“A ghost....” he thought, shivering uncontrollably. In fact, he almost screamed. Back in the labyrinth, Gongsun Wan'er had revealed everything to him, confirming that she was the very same young girl from the Fallen Sword Abyss, the one with the little teddy bear!

“Where's Lei Shan...?” he thought.

In almost that exact moment, a figure appeared behind Gongsun Wan'er, a tall, burly man!

However, he was bright red, because of the fact that he had no skin on his body. His face was expressionless, as if he couldn't even feel pain. As he stood there next to Gongsun Wan'er, he emanated the most terrifying of auras.

He was none other than... Lei Shan, whom the girl had captured and skinned alive in the Fallen Sword Abyss!!

Bai Xiaochun's heart was beginning to pound even harder. He knew how terrifying Gongsun Wan'er was, and was sure that Mistress Red-Dust was not a match for her. Without any hesitation, he pulled out a jade slip to send a message, only to find that the jade slip wouldn't work.

His breath stuck in his throat, and he considered whether or not to just flee. From what he could tell, Gongsun Wan'er hadn't

recognized him, and therefore, getting away and sending word to the Giant Ghost King seemed like the best plan at this point.

However, before he could even begin to flee, Mistress Red-Dust narrowed her eyes and made a grasping motion to summon a red lotus.

“So, you finally show your face, Bai Xiaochun. Prepare to die!” Although Mistress Red-Dust could tell that there was something different about this Bai Xiaochun than before, she didn’t have time to think about the matter. She quickly performed an incantation gesture, causing deva fluctuations to roll out. Then she waved her finger, and the air rippled as the enormous illusory image of a finger appeared and shot toward Mount Amity.

In the instant that the finger appeared, Lei Shan looked up, and a brutal gleam could be seen in his eyes. Throwing his head back, he howled, a heaven-rending, earth-crushing sound which rolled out in a wave-like attack. Then he stamped his foot down, causing the third peak of Mount Amity to collapse as he shot upward into the air!

Intense rumbling sounds echoed out as the sky went dim. Amidst the rushing wind, Mistress Red-Dust’s pupils constricted, and she performed another incantation gesture.

“Deploy formation!” she shouted.

Instantly, the more than 10,000 soldiers of the Giant Ghost Legion fanned out around Mount Amity, creating a massive spell formation.

In order to avoid attracting attention, Bai Xiaochun tried to stick close to one of the soul cultivator soldiers. However, it was in that moment, when the third peak was still crumbling to the ground, that Gongsun Wan’er vanished. When she reappeared, she wasn’t near Mistress Red-Dust, but rather, next to a Core Formation soldier who was powering the spell formation.

She moved with such incredible speed that the Core Formation soul cultivator couldn't even react. Gongsun Wan'er breathed in, and the soul cultivator shivered. In the briefest of moments, his body withered up, and soul light emerged from his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. At that point, he was nothing more than a desiccated corpse....

His life force, his soul, and everything else about him had been absorbed by Gongsun Wan'er. At that point, eerie laughter rang out over the battlefield, causing all hearts to shudder.

Bai Xiaochun already felt like he was going crazy from fear, and was wailing inwardly. As for Mistress Red-Dust, her face fell as she performed another incantation gesture, unleashing deva power in a deadly attack on Gongsun Wan'er.

However, before she could move very far, the burly Lei Shan blurred into motion, striking at her with a meaty fist.

Booms rang out as Lei Shan and Mistress Red-Dust began fighting. As for Lei Shan, he seemed almost indestructible; although Mistress Red-Dust's magical techniques slammed into him, his expression didn't change at all, and he continued to attack without letup.

“Dammit!!” Mistress Red-Dust said, her expression flickering. Gongsun Wan'er's laughter continued to float out across the battlefield as she flitted back and forth between the soul cultivators, transforming each and every one into a withered corpse.

As she did, her aura grew stronger and stronger!

At this point, Gongsun Wan'er's voice began to float out. “Your people have just the qi and blood I was looking for, and cultivation base too. The tribal savages have incomplete spiritual and physical souls. Even a hundred of them don't match up to a single one of you!”

The Giant Ghost Legion soldiers' expressions flickered with shock as they realized that their spell formation was completely useless. Furthermore, when their divine abilities landed on Gongsun Wan'er, they didn't affect her or slow her down at all.

No one could fight back against her! The soldiers could only watch helplessly as their comrades were shriveled up into corpses and absorbed!

It was a terrifying sight. Within a very short period of time, hundreds of people had been transformed into dried-up corpses. Even more horrifying was that after absorbing so many soul cultivators, Gongsun Wan'er was transforming. Chuckling bizarrely, she no longer had to teleport back and forth, but instead, sent her hair flying out in all directions, simultaneously attacking nearly a thousand people at once.

In the blink of an eye, numerous strands of hair had stabbed into the foreheads of the soul cultivators, and began to suck them dry. Screams rang out, but were quickly silenced as everyone became a withered corpse!!

Gongsun Wan'er's face glowed more healthily than ever, and her eyes shone with a bizarre light.

“Still a bit hungry....”

The remaining Giant Ghost Legion soldiers were visibly shocked, and began to fall back, not willing at all to face this creature in battle. Bai Xiaochun was among them, his heart pounding with vigilance. However, as of this moment, Gongsun Wan'er still didn't seem to have noticed him.

Gongsun Wan'er retracted her hair from the nearly one thousand corpses, and then took a breath. Meanwhile, Mistress Red-Dust, her eyes shining with red light, performed a double-handed incantation gesture, summoning an enormous figure behind her, a Dharma Idol that bore her visage.

“Get the hell out of here!” she shouted. The Dharma Idol radiated a murderous air as it performed an incantation gesture, causing it to shine with boundless light and then transform into an enormous red spear which was launched toward Lei Shan.

Not even Lei Shan could defend against that spear, which stabbed directly into his chest, then carried him flying toward Mount Amity.

A moment later, he and the spear slammed into the mountain, whereupon a bright red light exploded out, along with heaven-shaking, earth-shattering rumbling sounds. All four of the remaining peaks of the mountain shattered, sending out a shockwave that turned the surrounding jungle into nothing more than ash....

A moment later, the dust cleared, revealing an enormous crater, at the bottom of which lay Lei Shan, completely motionless, a head-sized hole in his chest!!

Mistress Red-Dust was left ashen-faced and gasping for breath after unleashing this particular divine ability. However, her phoenix-like eyes shone with murder as she unhesitatingly shot toward Gongsun Wan'er.

The surrounding soldiers were enlivened at the sight, but not Bai Xiaochun. He knew that Lei Shan was nothing more than a puppet, and that if it took a divine ability the likes of which Mistress Red-Dust had just unleashed to kill him, then that only went to show how difficult it would be to take out Gongsun Wan'er.

“Well, let's see what happens,” he thought nervously. “If Mistress Red-Dust can seize the advantage, maybe I'll jump in and help her.... If not, then I'll try to get her to escape!” Bai Xiaochun had long since begun to think about making his own escape. However, he had the feeling that unless he did it with the entire group, it would attract unwanted attention from Gongsun Wan'er.

It was very worrisome that not only had she been following him

for such a long time, but she had also begun impersonating him. If Bai Xiaochun didn't grasp the implications of that, then he didn't deserve to have practiced cultivation for so long.

“She's fishing. Fishing for me!!” The mere thought caused his scalp to tingle violently, and his heart to pound with regret.

Chapter 820: Intense Fighting

Bai Xiaochun was trembling in fear. It was obvious that Lei Shan was vastly more powerful than he had been in the past, although it had clearly come at incredible cost. However, whether or not he had been killed in the interchange just now, one thing was clear; he had already died in battle in the past.

“Can dead people... die again?” he thought, terrified as he looked over at Lei Shan’s corpse. However, Lei Shan wasn’t moving at all, whereas Mistress Red-Dust and Gongsun Wan’er were fighting more fiercely than ever.

By this point, Mistress Red-Dust realized that she was up against a formidable opponent, and was performing constant double-handed incantation gestures to send out beams of red light that seemed capable of slashing the air into bits.

The red lotus that was her magical item swirled around her, occasionally sending out bursts of flower petals. As a result, she was constantly surrounded by deva power that could exterminate anything it touched.

And yet, that was only secondary. Most important was her own deva cultivation base, which sent out pressure that could crush onto Nascent Soul cultivators like a mountain. Whether physically or mentally, that pressure would be difficult to bear. Most opponents who faced it would likely be destroyed in body and soul without even being able to fight back.

However, Gongsun Wan’er was no ordinary opponent. The magical technique she currently employed was bizarre; she launched rings of black light out into the air, each and every one of which was filled with destructive power that sucked away at Mistress Red-Dust’s life force.

One of the most shocking things was Gongsun Wan’er’s speed. She moved so indescribably quickly that she was little more than a

blur that left a string of afterimages behind. As the battle progressed, more and more black rings began to build up around Mistress Red-Dust.

Rumbling sounds echoed out without cease. Clearly, Gongsun Wan'er's cultivation base was not at the level of a deva's, and yet, she didn't seem to feel any pressure at all when fighting Mistress Red-Dust. Even more strange was that Bai Xiaochun could just barely make out a Dharma Idol behind the afterimages of Gongsun Wan'er. The Dharma Idol depicted a woman in a black robe, spectacularly beautiful, with a look of incredibly arrogant contempt in her eyes.

The fight was actually getting closer to Bai Xiaochun, and the magical techniques they were using made the area very dangerous. Shockwaves blasted out constantly, making it impossible for him or any of the other soldiers to even get close.

Bai Xiaochun actually had it better off than many of the other soldiers. Some of them were being affected by some sort of gravitational force that sucked away at their life force, turning their hair white.

If people nearby were having trouble, then there was little need to mention how badly things were going for Mistress Red-Dust. She had a very unsightly expression on her face, and yet, had no time to even speak. Every bit of her concentration was focused on the fighting.

This Bai Xiaochun that she was fighting was far more difficult to deal with than she had anticipated. He almost didn't seem like the same person she had fought in the past. In fact, although he looked physically like Bai Xiaochun, when it came to his aura, he seemed like a different person.

He was definitely very different from anything she remembered.

Mistress Red-Dust's divine abilities didn't seem capable of harming him at all. Furthermore, the black rings of light being

sent against her actually affected her mentally.

“He’s definitely not in the Nascent Soul stage!!” she thought, shocked. The entire time, a strange smile could be seen on Gongsun Wan’er’s face, and her eyes flickered with a strange light. She continuously licked her lips, as though she were thinking about how delicious Mistress Red-Dust was, and how wonderful it would be to consume her.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked by what he was seeing, and began to back up as quickly as possible. As he watched the women fight, he noticed that the Dharma Idol from before was now nowhere to be seen. He even wondered if he had actually been seeing things. By now, he had come to the realization that Mistress Red-Dust was not going to be able to keep the fight going for very long. Heart pounding, he began to consider how to convince her to flee.

However, it was at that point that the situation suddenly changed. Mistress Red-Dust’s eyes erupted with a murderous light, and she suddenly lurched backward. In response, Gongsun Wan’er smiled, and was about to charge after her, when her expression suddenly flickered, and she backed up.

As she did, Mistress Red-Dust’s chest heaved, and her eyes shone with a light of madness. Suddenly, deva fluctuations rolled out of her with explosive force and speed, merging with creation around her, making her seem like she was the overlord of all heaven and earth.

“You will be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt, Bai Xiaochun!” she shouted, seemingly filled with a sudden burst of determination. With that, she performed an incantation gesture, causing her face to turn pale as a drop of blood flew out from her index finger.

The blood glittered as brightly as a precious treasure, and as it appeared, all light in the area went dim. It was clearly no ordinary blood. In fact, this was a magical technique of Mistress Red-Dust’s,

something that combined the power of her cultivation base and her life essence to create a drop of... magical blood!

It wasn't soul blood. However, this magical blood contained elements of Mistress Red-Dust's enlightenment regarding the great Daos of heaven and earth. As soon as it appeared in the open, it transformed into a blood-red spear!

At first glance, it was far more shocking that the spear she had just used to cut down Lei Shan. In fact, it even caused Gongsun Wan'er's expression to flicker, which caused a bit of hope to rise in Bai Xiaochun's heart. Without any hesitation, Mistress Red-Dust hefted the spear and then launched it at Gongsun Wan'er.

Sonic booms echoed out as the spear pierced through the air, appearing almost instantly right in front of Gongsun Wan'er. And yet, Gongsun Wan'er then erupted into a blur of speed, dodging out to the side so that the spear stabbed halfway into the ground behind her.

Bai Xiaochun gasped. The mere sight of the spear filled him with a sensation of danger, and he almost couldn't believe it had failed to hit its mark.

Even as Gongsun Wan'er backed up from the spear, Mistress Red-Dust hovered in midair, her eyes shining with red light as another drop of blood appeared at the tip of her middle finger.

It was... a second drop of magical blood!

It immediately turned into a second spear, which shot forth in attack. Then blood emerged from her ring finger, pinky finger, and thumb. In the end, four more spears were flung out, and although Gongsun Wan'er managed to evade all of them, they ended up stabbing into the ground in a rough semi-circle!

They were like a barricade that caused Gongsun Wan'er's expression to flicker. Just when she seemed inclined to flee, a sixth spear appeared, and then a seventh.... More spears of magical

blood flew out, stabbing into the ground around Gongsun Wan'er until... they formed a complete circle!

By the time this was accomplished, Mistress Red-Dust was breathing heavily, and her face was virtually devoid of any color. Using magical blood to power such techniques was very draining, and wasn't something she could use in a protracted fight.

However, the results were shocking. Gongsun Wan'er was clearly in trouble, and wanted to flee, but as soon as she got near any of the spears, black mist would begin to rise up from her, almost as if she were beginning to melt, and she would be forced to back up.

The surrounding Giant Ghost Legion soldiers were enlivened, and began to edge forward to offer assistance, Bai Xiaochun among them.

However, that was when the trapped Gongsun Wan'er glared over at Mistress Red-Dust and let out a shrill scream that pierced into the minds of everyone present, filling them with pain.

As for the ten spears, they suddenly began to crack and splinter.

Mistress Red-Dust's expression flickered, and yet, she didn't seem alarmed. Phoenix-like eyes shining with murderous intent, she performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then waved her fingers toward the spears!

"Shatter and destroy!" she said. Blood-red light erupted from the ten spears as they ripped out of the ground and shot toward Gongsun Wan'er. Before she could do anything, they stabbed through her, and then circled back around for another attack!

From Bai Xiaochun's perspective, it was like countless beams of red light forming a blood-colored net around and through Gongsun Wan'er! Obviously, she would soon be killed in body and soul!

At the same time, Gongsun Wan'er's screams echoed across the battlefield.

It was a frightening sight to Bai Xiaochun, and suddenly he was

struck by how powerful Mistress Red-Dust was. Clearly, she was about to win this fight, and it caused both her and everyone else present to sigh with relief....

And yet, for some reason, Bai Xiaochun felt like it was all a bit too ruthless.

“After all, Gongsun Wan’er never did anything to hurt me....”

Chapter 821: Cant See Me....

As Bai Xiaochun stood there hesitating, the ten spears stabbed through Gongsun Wan'er over and over again. Blood sprayed everywhere, and she seemed to be hovering on the brink of exploding completely. Her screams grew more intense, and powerful fluctuations began to roll off of her.

Everyone in the crowd seemed very worked up by what was happening.

“Die, Bai Xiaochun!” Mistress Red-Dust growled through gritted teeth. Then she bit her tongue and spit out a mouthful of blood. Performing an incantation gesture, she waved her finger and sent the ten spears whizzing forward with increased speed, to the point where they burst into flames.

The blood-colored spears shot toward Gongsun Wan'er, who was teetering on the verge of collapse, and then suddenly exploded, releasing a terrifyingly destructive force right onto her.

As everyone watched, Gongsun Wan'er's body collapsed into pieces!!

The force of the explosion was so intense that not even Mistress Red-Dust was able to control it fully. Everything in the area was destroyed, and all of the Giant Ghost Legion soul cultivators were sent tumbling away.

Many of them were even coughing up blood. Bai Xiaochun wasn't affected very much, but he didn't want to stand out, so he screamed miserably and sent himself tumbling backward before staggering to a stop.

However, deep in his eyes, a complicated expression could be seen that was a mixture of pleasure and concern. Looking over at the area where Gongsun Wan'er had fallen to pieces, he murmured, “Is she really dead? It couldn't have been that

simple....”

His heart pounded with suspicion as exclamations of joy rose up around him.

As for Mistress Red-Dust, her face was pale white, but she forced a smile onto it. Then she took a breath, and was about to go inspect the dead Bai Xiaochun, when suddenly her face fell, and she backed up.

“You....”

Without any warning, an intense beam of blood-red light erupted up into the air from the spot where Gongsun Wan'er had collapsed. It was a vicious, abominable light, accompanied by a terrifying aura that seemed to pulse with rage!!

The sky was stained red, making the entire world seem like a vile ocean of blood!

Mistress Red-Dust had reacted a moment too late, and was affected by the beam of light, causing her to tremble as blood sprayed out of her mouth.

As shouts of alarm filled the air, Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened to the point where they seemed like they might pop out of his head. Earlier, he had been pretending to be staggering around, but now he really could hardly stand up. Screaming, he fell backward, his heart pounding as he tried to get his mask to make it seem like he was dead....

As Bai Xiaochun tried to fake his death, the blood-red beam of light began to contract. In the blink of an eye, it became a shadowy, blood-colored figure standing right on the spot where Gongsun Wan'er had fallen to pieces. Then, that figure pounced on a nearby Giant Ghost Legion cultivator with speed that vastly surpassed anything which had been on display before.

As the light stabbed through the soul cultivator, he shivered, and his hair turned white. Then his teeth began to fall out, wrinkles

filled his skin, and a moment later, he was nothing but a desiccated corpse.

His soul, life force, cultivation base, and everything else that made him up had been absorbed by the blood-colored figure.... And yet, that was only the beginning. The figure became a red streak of light that began to stab through one soul cultivator after another....

Every cultivator it touched screamed before shriveling up into a corpse....

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it actually happened within the blink of an eye. In the shortest of moments... the blood-colored figure that was Gongsun Wan'er stabbed through numerous soul cultivators.

1,000. 2,000. 3,000....

5,000. 6,000. 7,000....

Little more than a red streak was visible, which was almost like an embroidery thread that stabbed through countless soul cultivators, seemingly linking them together.

Bai Xiaochun lay on the ground pretending to be dead, but he could see everything clearly, and his scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. Any mixed emotions he had felt because of the possible death of Gongsun Wan'er earlier had now completely vanished.

“She can't see me. She can't see me.... I'm already dead....” That was what he kept muttering to himself as he tried to get the mask to keep up his facade of death. By now, it was very obvious that Gongsun Wan'er... was not someone that Mistress Red-Dust could fight!

“Dead! Only a few people are left of nearly 10,000.... The rest... were killed in an instant!! I told you people! You should have listened to me!” Bai Xiaochun was so nervous he almost couldn't

take it. The sight of Gongsun Wan'er killing so many people had him trembling inwardly, filled with a sensation of deadly crisis to the point where he simply lay there trying not to move, hoping that Gongsun Wan'er wouldn't notice him.

Perhaps it was because of the mask, or perhaps it was his excellent acting skills, but either way, the red streak that was Gongsun Wan'er didn't pay any attention to him. Nor did she pay any attention to the handful of people who had been injured earlier and were lying motionless on the ground.

Eventually, the red streak of light shot back up into the air, where it formed back into the image of Bai Xiaochun.

However, by this point, the fluctuations emanating out were no longer that of the Nascent Soul stage, but rather, those of a deva!!

The sky went dim, and winds screamed. Half of the sky was now magenta, and was trying to consume the other half of the sky, which was blood-red.

Of course, the entire sky had once been in the control of Mistress Red-Dust's will, but now, that control was being wrested away!

"Bai Xiaochun!!" Mistress Red-Dust cried, trembling visibly. The fact that her mind was being driven out of heaven and earth caused a backlash that sent blood spraying out of her mouth. Her eyes shone with murderous light; it wasn't that she didn't want to save the men under her command, she was just too slow. Furthermore, the attack she had just sustained from the red beam of light had completely destabilized her own qi and blood. She barely had time to wrest herself under control, let alone go save anyone else.

When Bai Xiaochun heard Mistress Red-Dust yelling his own name, he sighed bitterly inside at how unfair it was that he was being made the scapegoat....

"I have to get out of here," he thought, his heart pounding. "Fudge! I'm gonna enhance my nascent soul immediately and get

into the late Nascent Soul stage.... That way I can keep my poor little life out of danger....” Although the fact that Gongsun Wan’er had shown up wasn’t necessarily a good thing for him, there were at least some benefits to be had.

For example, if he enhanced his nascent soul, then few people would suspect his true identity. After all, they already had their sights set on someone they believed to be him....

“Well there’s no use fantasizing about what will happen. First things first: I have to figure out a way to escape.” Unfortunately, he was currently surrounded by corpses, which meant that if he moved, he would stick out more than ever.

He could only try to keep up his act of being dead, and hope that things ended soon. Once Gongsun Wan’er left, he would probably be able to flee. Or perhaps some other circumstances would arise that would give him a chance to make an escape.

Even as Bai Xiaochun stewed in his anxiety, Gongsun Wan’er looked up and smiled broadly at the shivering Mistress Red-Dust.

“My profound thanks! I’m finally feeling a bit sated. If I eat a few more of you... then I’ll finally be full.” With that, she blurred into motion toward Mistress Red-Dust.

She didn’t move quite as quickly as she had when she was a red streak of light, but she still moved with lightning-like speed. As she closed in, Mistress Red-Dust performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing her red lotus to swirl around her. However, the mere wave of Gongsun Wan’er’s hand caused blood to spray out of Mistress Red-Dust’s mouth, and she was shoved backward several dozen meters.

“You’ve lost a lot of blood,” Gongsun Wan’er said. “That’s not good. If I eat you now, you won’t taste very good.” As Gongsun Wan’er’s voice drifted eerily across the battlefield, Bai Xiaochun lay there looking at her out of the corner of his eye, his heart gripped with coldness.

Mistress Red-Dust wasn't a match for Gongsun Wan'er at all. Booms rang out one after another as she was shoved backward again and again, blood spraying out of her mouth constantly until she was in very bad shape.

The magical item that was her red lotus was shattered by Gongsun Wan'er, and eventually turned into ash. Mistress Red-Dust was now pale-faced and teetering back and forth. By now, it looked like she wanted to flee, and yet it was obvious that Gongsun Wan'er was so fast that escape was impossible!

Chapter 822: Xiaochun Makes A Move!

It was clearly a moment of grave crisis, and yet Bai Xiaochun understood that if he revealed himself now, it wouldn't do any good. Not only would he fail to save Mistress Red-Dust, but he would also most likely end up perishing.

However, it was very troubling to see Mistress Red-Dust continuously shoved backward by Gongsun Wan'er's attacks. Mistress Red-Dust was clearly getting weaker and weaker, and was hovering on the brink of death.

As Bai Xiaochun struggled over what to do, Gongsun Wan'er continued to get closer to Mistress Red-Dust, and was just about to launch another attack when she suddenly stopped in place. Then, her eyes glittered as she shot backward.

Even as she did, the weakened and suppressed Mistress Red-Dust suddenly looked up. Her beautiful features were ashen, but her eyes glittered with something dark, sinister, and icy cold!

"You finally got close enough...." Mistress Red-Dust said. Then, her arms shot out to either side as two images appeared, one in each pupil! They were images that depicted, not a person, but a city!!

It was a city that was every bit a match for Giant Ghost City in terms of size and splendor. It was perfectly constructed, with four towering walls and, if one looked close enough, countless bustling residents.

"Red Dust...." Mistress Red-Dust said. As soon as the words left her lips, rumbling filled the sky, and a shocking energy erupted from her eyes.

At the same time, the air beneath Gongsun Wan'er's feet suddenly began to transform. An illusory, hand-sized city appeared which was an exact copy of the cities within Mistress Red-Dust's

eyes. Out of the city shot numerous illusory iron chains, which instantly wrapped around Gongsun Wan'er....

Gongsun Wan'er's face fell as she realized that she was locked in place and couldn't even struggle. Then, the city began to drop down to the ground, dragging her and the chains with it.

As she descended, she... began to shrink!!

From the look of it, she would soon become so small that she would actually fit inside the city, and then be eternally sealed inside of it! This magical technique was Mistress Red-Dust's trump card!

However, what had been unleashed so far was only half of the trump card; there was still more to come before its true power would be fully manifest.

This trump card was vastly more terrifying than the magical blood from earlier, and also came at great cost to Mistress Red-Dust. She had to waste a significant amount of longevity to power it, plus, she was using it after having been significantly injured. Blood sprayed out of her mouth as she seemed to weaken further. She almost couldn't breathe, and even staggered backward. Biting down on her tongue to try to remain conscious, her hands flashed with a double-handed incantation gesture as she prepared to complete the technique!

As for Bai Xiaochun, he lay there, transfixed by the sudden shift in the tide of battle.

In that moment, though, Gongsun Wan'er, who was continuing to shrink as she dropped toward the city, suddenly smiled.

“A giant ghost secret magic. Nice. Red Dust Violet Road.... Going all out, I see.... Well that's good. Let's see if you have enough life left in you to finish unleashing it!” Even as she spoke, she raised her hand into the air. As she did, her index finger turned pitch black, and she pointed it at [Mistress Red-Dust](#).

The lands quaked and the sky seethed as a huge black ring of light suddenly materialized around Mistress Red-Dust. Instantly, Mistress Red-Dust began to tremble, and life force began to pour out of her eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. It even came out of her pores, a white mist which began to surge toward the black ring!! She could hardly breathe properly, and her face was as pale as death. She quickly performed an incantation gesture, sending a blast of red light out against the black ring, weakening it but not destroying it.

Its gravitational force continued to tug at Mistress Red-Dust, no matter how she struggled or attacked it. Apparently, she couldn't destroy it!

The fact was that she was too heavily injured, and had reached her limit. It had been a huge drain to begin to use her trump card, dropping her longevity to the point where she was like a candle flickering in the wind.

At this point, Mistress Red-Dust smiled bitterly. She knew that she had been careless, and had believed that, despite heading directly into a trap, the addition of over 10,000 soldiers from the Giant Ghost Legion would give her the advantage. Never could she have imagined that the deaths of those soldiers would actually give her opponent even more deadly power!

Before consuming all of the Giant Ghost Legion soldiers, Gongsun Wan'er had possessed a Nascent Soul cultivation base. Afterward, though, she rose to the deva level, making her strong enough to not only defeat Mistress Red-Dust, but prevent her from even fleeing!

Upon coming to this place, there was no way Mistress Red-Dust could have ever predicted that it would be where she died!

She had hoped to rely on her Red Dust Violet Road technique to at least seal her opponent, even if she herself died in the process. And yet, so far, she had only been able to use part of it.

The gravitational force exerted by the black ring of light was too strong, and was sucking away her life force without any signs of slowing down. In fact, her hair was already white, and her skin covered with wrinkles. Right now, she actually looked like an old woman.

Her life force, her soul, her cultivation base, everything about her was now being taken away. Her vision began to grow dim, and she began to gasp for breath. She couldn't bear to give in, and yet, had no options at her disposal; she had only been able to unleash half of her trump card.

“Am I really going to die like this...?” she murmured to herself. Her eyelids began to grow heavy, and she knew that it would only be moments before she couldn't keep them open.

Gongsun Wan'er was continuing to shrink down, and yet, her bizarre chuckling still filled the air.

Other than that, silence filled the air. There were only a few dozen people still left alive, and all of them were sinking into despair. However, from Bai Xiaochun's unsteady breathing, it was possible to tell how conflicted he was. As his eyes remained fixed on the image of Mistress Red-Dust turning old and decrepit, he made his decision. Whether it was for her, or for himself, he knew that he couldn't just lay there faking death any longer.

Even if it ended up exposing his true identity, he had to do something. If he didn't, Mistress Red-Dust would die, and Gongsun Wan'er would be released, after which she would surely slaughter any remaining survivors.

“Dammit, dammit, DAMMIT!!” he thought, his eyes turning bloodshot. Suddenly, he leaped to his feet, shouting at the top of his lungs, blue veins bulging out on his face and neck as he shot toward the shrinking Gongsun Wan'er with all the speed he could muster.

His hand clenched into a fist, around which appeared a black

vortex. He drew upon all of his fleshly body power and all of his life force, causing a figure to appear behind him, a figure wearing imperial robes and an imperial crown, a figure that seemed like a paragon entity in all heaven and earth!

A domineering aura erupted around him as he howled, accelerating madly until he was right on top of the black ring of light that had Mistress Red-Dust trapped. There... he unleashed his fist strike!!

This was none other than... the Undying Emperor's Fist!!

It contained double his normal amount of fleshly body power, a mad level of strength that caused the entire area to tremble, and send the clouds above churning. Dirt and pebbles began to rise into the air off the ground as a huge vortex formed.

The shadowy emperor behind Bai Xiaochun, and the fist strike that was being unleashed, caused a domineering will to fill the area. As of this moment... there was now a third will present!

“Be destroyed!!”

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!

Gongsun Wan'er's face fell as an enormous booming sound exploded out. The black ring of light surrounding Mistress Red-Dust had already been weakened, so when Bai Xiaochun unleashed a deva-level fist strike against it, it immediately crumbled into pieces and collapsed!!

All of the life force it had absorbed from Mistress Red-Dust was released. In the blink of an eye, much of it returned to her, with another large portion entering Bai Xiaochun. Because of that, Bai Xiaochun's Undying Bones immediately broke through all the way to the third stratum of the Powered Bones!

Mistress Red-Dust's hair returned to its previous black color, and the wrinkles vanished from her skin. She was beautiful again, and her eyes flickered with the excitement of having passed through a

life-or-death struggle. Without any hesitation, she threw her arms out and performed incantation gestures, then pointed at the tiny city down on the ground.

“Violet Road!!”

A quick reminder that Mistress Red-Dust’s name comes from a line of poetry that literally reads “Violet Road Red Dust” and refers to the scenery along the road leading to the capital city of China. In this case, the order of the characters is reversed to read Red Dust Violet Road. Also, her given name Zimo uses those two characters for Violet Road.

Chapter 823: Sweetie

Blood sprayed out of Mistress Red-Dust's mouth as her finger dropped. Then, unable to maintain control of her mind and body, she lapsed into unconsciousness.

Red Dust Violet Road!

Even Mistress Red-Dust could only utilize this technique by overdrawing on her deva cultivation base and also draining her longevity. As the final words left her mouth, and she was beginning to collapse, red light shot out from her finger, becoming a red smoke that instantly enveloped Gongsun Wan'er.

Gongsun Wan'er shrank down and down, dragged by the chains until she was inside of the tiny city!

To any observer, that city would be the size of a hand, but to Gongsun Wan'er, it now looked like any ordinary city. In fact, as she looked, a horse cart sped by, sending dust roiling up to cover everything in sight.

This was none other than... Red Dust Violet Road!

It was a city that was both illusory and corporeal, and was in reality... a shocking sealing magic!

Anyone sealed in that city would be locked inside of an illusion from which they could not escape. In fact, even if they managed to break free from the city, they wouldn't find themselves free, but rather, outside of the city in another world!

As the dust from the passing horse cart filled Gongsun Wan'er's vision, she calmly looked up into the sky at the gigantic forms of Bai Xiaochun and Mistress Red-Dust. Then she smiled.

Despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun had been protected by his mask, when he had attacked just now, she... had sensed his true aura!

“Sweetie....” she said with an odd smile. Then she began to chuckle, the sound of which floated out of the city to fill the area.

The sound of the chuckling filled Bai Xiaochun’s heart with dread. Obviously, even the powerful sealing magic at work could not contain Gongsun Wan’er for very long. Furthermore, with his own current battle prowess, he was obviously nowhere near a match for her.

Therefore, it was without the slightest hesitation that he picked Mistress Red-Dust up into his arms and shot away with blinding speed.

As he disappeared, Gongsun Wan’er was back in the tiny city, about to be covered over by dust. And yet, she was still chuckling. As she did, she extended her right hand, performed an incantation gesture, and waved her finger.

In response, the burly Lei Shan, who had remained unmoving at the bottom of the nearby crater this entire time, suddenly opened his eyes, which were expressionless and dark. Then, he rose to his feet!

Rumbling sounds could be heard as he flew up into the air, the massive wound in his chest rapidly healing. Then, he looked in the direction of the fleeing Bai Xiaochun, his face expressionless

“Bring him back to me!” Gongsun Wan’er said from within the city, even as the dust settled down onto her. At that point, with her voice still echoing out into the world, it was for the first time that her eyes turned blank.

She was now completely immersed within the sealing of the Red Dust Violet Road technique!

Outside of the city, Lei Shan’s eyes flickered with dark light as he unhesitatingly drew upon all the power he could muster to shoot after Bai Xiaochun with lightning-like speed!

A piercing whistling sound filled the air as he flew along, and the

air around him even distorted! Several thousand kilometers ahead of him, Bai Xiaochun gasped for breath as he sped along, carrying the unconscious Mistress Red-Dust on his back.

Afterimages spread out behind him as he pierced through the air.

At one point, he pulled out a transmission jade slip and tried to send a message to the Giant Ghost King. However, the entire area was still locked down by some unknown technique employed by Gongsun Wan'er.

Even as he huffed and puffed, he could feel Mistress Red-Dust's lithe, supple body suddenly turn stiff. At that point, he realized that she had regained consciousness.

When Mistress Red-Dust awoke to find herself laying on Bai Xiaochun's back, it felt very strange. Struggling a bit to speak, she said, "Put me down. I don't need your help!"

"Shut up!" he said angrily. "This is all your fault. I told you I had a bad feeling. Don't waste my time, woman! You don't need my help? Can you even stand on your own?!?!" With that, he reached back and spanked her on the rear end....

In his dismay and anxiety, the feeling of his hand bouncing off of her caused a strange heat to rise up inside of him.

"You!!" Zhou Zimo spat. Considering how weak and anxious she was, the fact that Bai Xiaochun had berated her and then struck her rear end caused anger to burn in her heart. However, she was so weak that she could barely breathe, so the spike of emotion actually caused her to pass out again, whereupon she lay motionless on his back.

"Hmph. If it weren't for the sake of big bro Giant Ghost, do you really think I would have saved you? You're always looking at me like you want to kill me, you know. What, do I owe you money or something?!" With another cold snort, he ignored Mistress Red-Dust and focused on speeding along as quickly as possible.

By this point, he had already detected Lei Shan following him a few thousand kilometers back. Bai Xiaochun had mixed feelings about Lei Shan. He knew that he was obviously dead, and had been transformed into something like his own corpse troopers.

And corpse troopers were virtually impossible to kill!!

Unless one was vastly more powerful than a corpse trooper, and could literally rip it to pieces and transform it to ash, it would be impossible to wipe out.

“Ah, Lei Shan. We tangled once when you were alive. Now, even after you’re dead, you still want to keep at it.... I guess my only option is to pick up some extra speed!” Sighing, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a heavenly airship, and then began to head in the direction of Giant Ghost City!

As soon as he leaped onto the deck, he tossed Mistress Red-Dust off to the side and then poured all his cultivation base power into the airship. It immediately began to glow with bright light, and then shot forward with speed that vastly surpassed the speed he himself was capable of.

However, even as Bai Xiaochun accelerated, Lei Shan threw his head back and let out a shocking howl. Suddenly, he burst into flames, and then picked up speed at an alarming rate. In the blink of an eye, he was moving far faster than the heavenly airship, a bright beam of light that bore down right onto Bai Xiaochun!

With every moment that passed, he got closer! 1,000 kilometers. 750 kilometers. 500 kilometers. 250 kilometers. In a flash, he was only about 50 kilometers away!

The sight caused Bai Xiaochun’s eyes to turn as wide as saucers. Gulping, he muttered, “What kind of medicine did this guy take!? I can’t believe he’s so fast!!”

Even as Bai Xiaochun’s nervousness mounted, Mistress Red-Dust woke up again and looked over at him with mixed emotions in her

eyes. Then she noticed Lei Shan closing in on them, whereupon her eyes shone with decisive light.

“Get this heavenly airship going faster, Bai Hao! With enough speed, you won't have to worry at all about that puppet!”

“Shut the hell up, would you!?” Bai Xiaochun shouted back in frustration. Mistress Red-Dust's bossy tone was really getting on his nerves. At this point, he was the one who had saved her, and yet she still dared to toss around orders like she was in charge.

It left him feeling far from pleased.

“You!!” she said, glaring daggers. By this point, she had actually realized that her tone of voice wasn't completely appropriate, and yet considering how proud she was, there was no way she would admit it openly.

Before she could say anything else, Lei Shan burst forward with another flash of speed, putting him... right above the airship!!

There, he shoved his right hand down!

Instantly, a massive force erupted out from him, becoming a blast of wind that descended onto the airship.

“Screw the hell off!!” Bai Xiaochun shouted. By now, his veins of steel were pulsing, and his murderous aura seethed. Clenching his right hand into a fist, he leapt up into the air and punched!

Rumbling sounds spread out that could shake heaven and earth. The wind attack collapsed, and Bai Xiaochun, who hadn't even slowed down a bit, continued onward toward Lei Shan!

As for Lei Shan, his eyes flickered with black light as he shot downward, slicing his hand in a deadly attack toward Bai Xiaochun!

Chapter 824: Full Scale Retreat!

When they made contact, a massive boom rippled out that almost tore the sky open. Then, Bai Xiaochun's face fell as the force of the blow sent him plummeting back down onto the deck of the heavenly airship, which shuddered violently.

Aura flickering unstably, Bai Xiaochun looked up to find that he had only shoved Lei Shan back upward a few paces.

Not pausing for a second, he shot back toward Lei Shan, whereupon the two began to fight back and forth fiercely. As they did, the heavenly airship continued to shoot along at top speed until it was a good distance away.

At that point, Mistress Red-Dust struggled up to take the helm, whereupon she slowed the airship to a stop. The way she gasped from the effort made it obvious how weak she was. Turning, she looked back nervously at Bai Xiaochun and Lei Shan fighting in midair.

Rumbling booms echoed out constantly through the sky as Lei Shan relied, not on magical techniques, but only on his fleshly body. However, that alone made him an opponent the likes of which Bai Xiaochun had never faced!

“Deva-level fleshly body, huh?!?!” Bai Xiaochun's murderous aura grew stronger as he was shoved backward by attack after attack. None of the blows he landed on Lei Shan seemed to have any effect, and yet every blow he sustained was shockingly damaging.

“This Lei Shan has some really uncanny power.... I can't keep this up. I have to end things quickly! Even if I can't kill him, I at least need to slow him down!” He was mostly worried that if things went on too long, Gongsun Wan'er would break free, and that any advantage he had built up would disintegrate. At that point... he would almost surely die!

His eyes were completely bloodshot as he contemplated whether or not to reveal who he was. After all, it wouldn't make any sense to lose his poor little life just to keep his identity secret!

Furthermore, Gongsun Wan'er still looked like him. Therefore, anything he did to reveal his true identity wouldn't cause any problems immediately.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he threw his head back and roared, performing a double-handed incantation gesture that was unlike anything he usually did. Immediately, the splendor of his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul sent spiritual power coursing through his body, nearly an ocean of it that then spilled out into the open.

That spiritual power immediately transformed into frigid coldness. Cracking sounds rang out in all directions as the area around Bai Xiaochun froze over! The entire area instantly became like a frozen lake!

This was none other than... the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation!

Bai Xiaochun had never dared to use this divine ability, not even with the power of his mask to disguise what it was. But now, madness flickered in his eyes as frigid qi poured out around him. Then, he extended his right hand and pointed at Lei Shan, who was already being slowed down because of the frigid coldness!

“Seal!” Bai Xiaochun shouted. All of the frigid qi in the area exploded into motion toward Lei Shan. It took only a moment to completely inundate him, covering him with frost so rapidly that, a moment later, he was completely covered with a layer of sealing ice.

More cracking sounds rang out over the course of the following few breaths of time. Soon, Lei Shan was covered with multiple layers of ice. Although he struggled, with each layer that he damaged, more layers piled on top, until he was like an enormous

ice statue!!

He was a huge chunk of ice hovering in midair, hundreds of meters tall, completely unmoving. Of course, closer inspection would reveal many cracks filling the ice; clearly, the sealing would only last for a short time.

Although Mistress Red-Dust was shocked by what she was seeing, the technique didn't actually make her think of Bai Xiaochun.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he threw his head back and roared in shocking fashion as his fleshly body power spiked dramatically. Intense fluctuations rolled out in all directions, along with shocking energy.

Everything in the area shook violently, and small pebbles began to rise up into the air. Even some enormous rocks began to float up into the air. Fissures appeared on some nearby low-lying mountains, and they began to collapse into rubble, which also floated up into the air.

Moments later, large boulders began to rise up, almost as if Bai Xiaochun's body had become a black hole dragging everything toward him.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

In the blink of an eye, the rocks began to form up around Bai Xiaochun, layer upon layer. A 300-meter tall giant appeared... right there in the middle of the Wildlands!

This was none other than... the Living Mountain Incantation!!

Bai Xiaochun hadn't dared to use this technique in the Wildlands up to this point. But now was not the time to worry about such things. Fueling it with the power of his cultivation base, he grew larger and larger until he was not 300 meters tall, but rather, more than 2,100 meters tall!!

Although he currently wasn't powerful enough to literally shake all of heaven and earth, he certainly came close to that level. His

fleshly body power combined with the Living Mountain Incantation put him at his very peak!

Since he was currently incapable of unleashing the Undying Emperor's Fist, he needed to close some of the gap between his own level and Lei Shan's, and this was the only way!

“Get ready to die!” he shouted through the mouth of the gigantic stone golem. With that, he lunged forward to bash at the sealed Lei Shan!

This was none other than... the Mountain Shaking Bash!!

Bai Xiaochun couldn't bother to conceal the effects of the Mountain Shaking Bash. He unleashed all of the explosive power he was capable of, becoming something like a stone beast that lunged forward with astonishing madness.

Meanwhile, the cracks in the ice had grown more plentiful. Even as Bai Xiaochun closed in, the ice suddenly exploded!!

Lei Shan burst out into the open right as Bai Xiaochun arrived, incarnated as the stone golem giant from the Living Mountain Incantation.

The moment of collision caused a boom that shook everything in the area. The heavenly bodies went dim, and doughty Lei Shan was flung backward violently, leaving loud cracking sounds echoing behind him. However, things weren't over yet. Relying on the power of the Living Mountain Incantation and the divine ability of the Mountain Shaking Bash, Bai Xiaochun continued forward, reaching out with his thumb and index finger. As he did, black light appeared, and he pinched his fingers together in the direction of Lei Shan's throat!

This was none other than... the Throat Crushing Grasp!!

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it actually happened in the briefest of moments. Starting with the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, he had quickly and smoothly

unleashed a whole series of techniques. And now, as the Throat Crushing Grasp bore down onto Lei Shan, he howled and threw his hands out in front of him to block the thumb and index finger of the stone golem that was Bai Xiaochun!!

Cracking sounds rang out from inside of Lei Shan, and the black light in his eyes grew stronger. Even as he fought back, Bai Xiaochun went all out to unleash the power of the Throat Crushing Grasp.

Then, he unhesitatingly jerked his hand to the side, sending Lei Shan flying down toward the ground, where he slammed into the dirt and opened up a huge crater. Before Lei Shan could react, Bai Xiaochun dropped down and delivered ten fist strikes in quick succession!

The ground quaked as fissures and crevices snaked out from within the crater.

At that point, another shocking howl erupted out from within the crater as Lei Shan blocked Bai Xiaochun's final fist strike. The backlash sent Bai Xiaochun's fist swinging backward, and yet, Lei Shan was now covered in wounds, his hair in disarray and black blood seeping out all over his body. However, the black light in his eyes caused his fleshly body power to rocket once again to new heights.

Even as he prepared to leap up into the air, a mark suddenly appeared on the forehead of Bai Xiaochun's stone golem form. Meanwhile, inside the golem, Bai Xiaochun's true self likewise had a mark on his forehead, which opened up... into a third eye!

The Heavenspan Dharma Eye!!

Instantly, the power of that third eye erupted out from the stone golem's forehead, and latched onto Lei Shan!!

Lei Shan shivered as an indescribable force enveloped him, taking control of his entire body! His pupils quivered as he was

suddenly stuck in place in midair, unable to move!

In that exact moment, Bai Xiaochun sent his stone golem form leaping up. A roar could be heard as he then reached out and slapped Lei Shan, sending him hurtling back toward the ground!!

As the blow landed, Bai Xiaochun unleashed his... Undying Hex!!

The Undying Hex became countless black threads that flowed out from his palm and into Lei Shan. As Lei Shan slammed down into the crater below, Bai Xiaochun's stone golem form collapsed, sending numerous rocks and boulders falling down. Within the space of a few breaths of time, those rocks covered Lei Shan as surely as a mountain!!

Inside of the mountain, black threads swirled, completely locking Lei Shan in place!!

Having accomplished these things, Bai Xiaochun staggered backward a few paces before retreating to the heavenly airship. There, Mistress Red-Dust stood, her mouth agape as Bai Xiaochun took control of the ship and sent it screaming through the air like some wild beast!

Chapter 825: Risking It All!

As the heavenly airship sped through the air, Mistress Red-Dust continued to glance over at Bai Xiaochun, her mood fluctuating unstably. Conflicting emotions appeared in her eyes as she thought back to the battle prowess and techniques he had just put on display.

In the end, she decided not to say anything. Instead, she closed her eyes and focused on trying to recover as quickly as possible. She had received serious injuries, and wouldn't be back to normal any time soon. Although she could temporarily suppress the effects, that would only work for a short time before she experienced an intense backlash.

As she sighed bitterly in her heart, Bai Xiaochun focused on piloting the heavenly airship. At one point, he suddenly looked over his shoulder in the direction of Lei Shan.

That was when the sound of a shocking explosion could be heard. Everything behind the heavenly airship shook violently as a massive shockwave rolled out.

Several thousand kilometers back, the mountain of boulders exploded out in all directions as the Undying Hex collapsed... and a tall, burly figure appeared!

It was none other than Lei Shan!

No expression could be seen on his face, but he was visibly injured, and seriously at that. Gaping holes could be seen all over him, some of which passed through his entire body. This time, although the wounds continuously healed themselves, it caused the black light in his eyes to begin to fade. And yet, that didn't stop him from flying up into the air to give chase.

“Impossible!” Mistress Red-Dust blurted in shock. “All those divine abilities you used just now injured that corpse trooper even

more than I did! How could he still be chasing us!?!?”

Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything in response, but his expression turned grimmer. Inwardly, he already knew the answer to the question: it had everything to do with Gongsun Wan'er herself. Although he wasn't sure of the exact details, he was convinced that it was the case.

“Gongsun Wan'er probably isn't free yet... hopefully...” However, he couldn't be sure. Eyes bloodshot from mounting anxiety, he released the helm of the heavenly airship, allowing it to slowly come to a stop. Then he turned and went to stand at the stern, where he looked out at Lei Shan, who was closing in on them from a distance of several hundred kilometers away.

“If I don't kill him,” he thought, “it's going to be hard to get away. The longer he continues to hound us like this, the more danger we'll be in.”

Calming his aura, he reached out with both hands. Eyes glowing, he drew on the power of his cultivation base and simultaneously said in his heart, “Waterswamp!”

Instantly, mist began to roil out in all directions, covering the airship and spreading out to fill a 500-kilometer area!

At the same time, because of how the airship had stopped moving, Lei Shan entered that very 500-kilometer area, and was within the world of mist!

As he entered, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered with killing intent. Dropping his hands, he uttered the next word in his heart.

“Kingdom!!”

Waterswamp Kingdom!

As soon as the full technique was called upon, the entire 500-kilometer area became an enormous, watery swamp. At the same time, the howl of some beast could be heard, seemingly echoing from the distant past, filling the area with power that would be

shocking to anyone who could hear it!

Lei Shan's eyes flickered with black light as he suddenly stopped in place and prepared to back up. However, before he could, the howling of the beast grew more intense, and spikes like enormous mountain peaks began to rise up in the entire 500-kilometer area!

Each and every spike contained mountain-toppling, sea-draining power which filled the air with rumbling sounds as they sped madly toward Lei Shan.

Lei Shan shivered violently, and all of the wounds which had been in the middle of recovery split open, causing black blood to spray out everywhere. He tried to fall back, but before he could, five curved spikes encircled him!

Those five spikes looked like mountain peaks, and they were not arranged in a neat row, but rather, were staggered! Furthermore, as soon as the spikes shot up in to the air, they were followed by what appeared to be an entire continent!

If one looked carefully, it would be possible to see... that it was the clawed hand of some enormous beast!!

The spikes that were the mountain peaks grew off of the clawed hand, and considering how big they were, one could only imagine how huge the hand was!

Those so-called mountain peaks were actually the talons!

As for the 'continent', it was actually... the palm of the hand! Although it was clearly visible, it was only a portion of it. And despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun had already glimpsed his life essence spirit on numerous occasions, he was just as shaken this time as he always had been in the past.

As of this moment, that enormous clawed hand seemed to surpass heaven and earth as it closed around Lei Shan!!

The events playing out virtually defied description! No matter how Lei Shan struggled, no matter how he tried to flee, he couldn't

escape. He howled in defiance, and the black light in his eyes grew more intense. Black smoke even began to rise up off of him, which formed into the shape of a young girl's head, hovering above his own.

That head let out a miserable shriek as the enormous beast hand slammed into Lei Shan!

A deafening boom echoed out. The ground quaked violently, and then shattered into countless pieces. As for Bai Xiaochun, he coughed up a mouthful of blood and staggered backward. He had already used his Undying Emperor's Fist to save Mistress Red-Dust, and now he was using this divine ability. This combination had him completely and utterly drained and exhausted.

The clawed hand faded away, leaving behind... nothing but an enormous crater!

It was hundreds of meters wide, and was devoid of mountains, of plants, of vegetation, of anything! It was completely shattered and empty, except for... the corpse of Lei Shan!

He was completely shattered. He lay there unmoving, his legs crushed, his head twisted oddly to the side, his body hardly recognizable as human. And yet, that black glow still flickered in his eyes. It was almost as if the blow Lei Shan had just received was stimulating to him, and actually caused him to recover faster. In the blink of an eye... he yet again flew up into the air!!

The black glow had clearly been reduced by almost half. Furthermore, his aura was greatly weakened compared to before. And yet, the fact that he was still in the fight caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to fill with despair.

“What kind of recovery power does he have?!?!” he thought, his eyes flickering with madness. Lei Shan could be beaten down relatively easily, but could not be killed. It was enough to leave anyone bristling with anger. Anyone, even a deva, who sustained such injuries would be teetering on the verge of being wiped out

for good. And yet here Lei Shan was, rapidly recovering.

Mistress Red-Dust remained silently off to the side, looking at the rapidly recovering Lei Shan as he flew out of the crater. As of this point, she knew that he could not be killed, and that it would be difficult to escape him. Time was of the essence, and she wasn't sure how long the sealing effect of her Red Dust Violet Road would last.

As soon as that person who bore the visage of Bai Xiaochun emerged, then Mistress Red-Dust knew that she and Bai Hao... would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt.

With such thoughts on her mind, she looked over at Bai Xiaochun. The divine abilities and magical techniques he had used, including the Waterswamp Kingdom, had caused the gears in her head to begin to turn. But now was not the time to ponder the issue deeply. As of this moment, both of their lives were on the line! She closed her eyes for a brief moment, then forced them to open again. When they did, they shone with the desire to do battle. Without any hesitation, she forcibly suppressed all of her injuries and leaped up into the air.

Instantly, her deva cultivation base roared to life. All of a sudden, she seemed back to normal, like she was once again the sergeant major of the Giant Ghost Legion. Flicking her sleeve, she coolly said, "Get out of here, Bai Hao. The sealing effect limiting communications can only stretch for so far. You absolutely must report this matter to my father the Giant Ghost King. And notify the Grand Heavenmaster too. The person controlling this puppet... has consumed vast amounts of life force, and is clearly intent on bringing disaster to the Wildlands!!"

Not bothering to wait for a response from Bai Xiaochun, she flew off of the heavenly airship toward Lei Shan!

A tremor passed through Bai Xiaochun. All of a sudden, a familiar feeling filled him. Watching Mistress Red-Dust flying off made him

feel like he was back in the Luochen Mountains, nothing more than a trifling Qi Condensation cultivator!

A moment later, he spoke, his veins of steel audible in his voice as he said, “Give me the time it takes an incense stick to burn, Zhou Zimo! After that... I’ll take care of everything!”

Instead of piloting the heavenly airship away, he quickly entered a private chamber below the main deck, set up a spell formation, and sat down cross-legged. Then... he took out his turtle wok!

Chapter 826: Late Nascent Soul Stage

It had been some time since Bai Xiaochun performed a fifteenfold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul, breaking through to the mid Nascent Soul stage. Fearful of pushing things too far, he hadn't dared to go any further than that. Considering that his name was listed on the Hell-Emperor Stele, everyone in the world would have known if he performed even a single more enhancement.

Later on, as he came to acquire everything from sixteen-to-nineteen-colored flame, he had been forced to do nothing more than look at the product of his hand. He hadn't dared to enhance his nascent soul, at least not until he found the right opportunity.

His original plan had been to wait until he could advance directly into becoming a deva. But now... it was a moment of deadly crisis, and there was no time for lengthy consideration about the consequences.

When it came to keeping his poor little life safe, revealing his identity was of secondary importance. Even more importantly... Gongsun Wan'er was impersonating him. Considering that everyone was paying attention to her, Bai Xiaochun hoped that further enhancing his nascent soul wouldn't attract as much attention and suspicion.

"I don't have time to think about all that stuff!" he thought, his eyes bloodshot. As for how Mistress Red-Dust would react, at the moment, they were both in the same predicament. There would be time to worry about her later. He simply felt too much pressure because of Gongsun Wan'er. She could free herself at any moment, and if she chased them down... the consequences were too grim to contemplate.

Right now, Bai Xiaochun knew that he had to become as powerful as he possibly could. He needed to cut down the seemingly

unkillable Lei Shan, which would give them the opportunity to truly escape.

Time was extremely limited, and Mistress Red-Dust was severely injured. In fact, every moment that she fought with Lei Shan was one of extreme danger to her. A grim look could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face because of the booming sounds of combat from outside. Gritting his teeth, he patted his bag of holding to produce a sixteen-, seventeen-, eighteen-and nineteen-colored flame.

The appearance of so many multi-colored flames caused the private chamber to instantly turn bright red from the heat. Bai Xiaochun quickly performed an incantation gesture and then touched his head, causing his nascent soul to fly out into the open!

After reaching the mid Nascent Soul stage, and especially after the fifteenfold spirit enhancement, his nascent soul was much stronger and solid. No longer was it so easily shaken by being outside of his body, nor was it affected by the cold.

In fact, there was little difference between it and his fleshly body. However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't really paying attention to that. As soon as he was out in nascent soul form, he sat down cross-legged in his turtle-wok, and then waved his hand in very practiced fashion toward the sixteen-colored flame.

When the sixteen-colored flame touched the turtle-wok, countless complex designs sprang up on the surface of the wok, and golden light rose up to cover Bai Xiaochun's nascent soul.

Intense, ear-splitting rumbling sounds filled his ears. However, it didn't spill out into the open, where Mistress Red-Dust and Lei Shan were continuing to fight.

Back in Arch-Emperor City, there weren't very many cultivators gathered around the Hell-Emperor Stele. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had performed a fifteenfold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul and taken 1st place left everyone in a state of despair. Afterward, few people had the spirit to try to compete....

As far as most people were concerned, it was a complete miracle that anyone could survive fifteen spirit enhancements.... Virtually no one alive would have the gumption to risk their lives for a competition.

Although there weren't as many people around the Hell-Emperor Stele as there had been in the past, there were still a few present. Four or five soul cultivators were in the area, and although they initially weren't paying attention to the stele, when it suddenly began to shine with black light, all of them looked over with odd expressions in their faces. When they did, their eyes nearly popped out of their skulls.

“Bai Xiaochun...? He... he did another spirit enhancement on his nascent soul!?!?”

“This... this....”

“Sixteenfold. After all this time, he's actually doing another spirit enhancement? Is he crazy!?!?” None of them could understand why Bai Xiaochun, who already was in 1st place, and who had vastly surpassed the sevenfold spirit enhancement of the 2nd place holder, would continue to risk his life!

Although they were puzzled, it didn't stop them from sending messages to people they knew, and before long, word was spreading. It took only a short time for everyone in Arch-Emperor City to be talking about it.

“Sixteenfold??”

“Didn't Goddess Red-Dust go after Bai Xiaochun just recently? How could he be performing spirit enhancements right now!?!?”

However, even as Arch-Emperor City was rocked by surprise, Bai Xiaochun's name once again began to glow with black light. When the light faded away, the number next to his name had changed. Instead of sixteen, it read seventeen!!

“Heavens! He's doing more enhancements?!”

“Maybe Goddess Red-Dust has him pushed into a corner so badly that he decided to risk death to perform more spirit enhancements!!”

Meanwhile, back in the private chamber on the airship, Bai Xiaochun’s nascent soul had seven golden designs on it! Clearly, his aura was more powerful than before, and he was rising up to the peak of the mid Nascent Soul stage!!

As of this point, he was only a short step away from breaking through to the late Nascent Soul stage. Without the slightest hesitation, he waved his finger, causing the eighteen-colored flame to fly over. As soon as it touched the turtle-wok, a brilliant golden design appeared that surpassed anything up to this point, and filled Bai Xiaochun’s ears with deafening rumbling sounds.

When the light faded away, Bai Xiaochun’s nascent soul radiated heaven-shaking, earth-shattering energy that caused a whirlwind to pick up in the room. At that point, Bai Xiaochun in nascent soul form opened his eyes. He had achieved a cultivation base breakthrough!

He was no longer in the mid Nascent Soul stage; he had risen to the late stage!!

Of course, he could have achieved this breakthrough long ago, even before he left Arch-Emperor City. However, he had been holding back. Now that he had achieved this drastic transformation, his eyes shone with brilliant light, and his aura surged as mightily as the sea. As for his battle prowess, it was far, far higher than before.

However, things weren’t over yet. Since he had decided to perform spirit enhancements on his nascent soul, he figured he might as well... perform as many as he could. Waving his finger, he pulled the nineteen-colored flame over, which, as soon as it touched his turtle-wok, caused golden light to spill out that was even more dazzling than that from the eighteen-colored flame!

In fact, the private chamber he was in almost seemed like it had become gold!

Outside, Mistress Red-Dust's eyes widened in surprise, and even Lei Shan looked over. Neither of them could sense the fluctuations of spirit enhancement. However, both could tell that a drastically powerful force was brewing in the heavenly airship, something that would likely explode out at any moment.

Lei Shan's eyes flickered with black light, and he was just about to fly past Mistress Red-Dust in an attempt to stop whatever was about to begin. However, Mistress Red-Dust seemed enlivened by the newfound hope, and immediately did everything she could to block his way.

As the rumble of battle grew more intense, countless individuals back in Arch-Emperor City were expressing their shock. A massive uproar was sweeping through the city as people found out that Bai Xiaochun had gone from a fifteenfold enhancement all the way to an eighteenfold one. It was a commotion no less intense than that caused by Bai Xiaochun using Bai Hao's identity to become an earthly necromancer.

Countless soul cultivators were flying over to the Hell-Emperor Stele, where they gasped at the sight of Bai Xiaochun's name at the top of the list, glowing with black light.

Soon, the light faded away, and yet again, the number next to his name was different. As it became clear, people could see that it read... nineteen!!

Silence prevailed for only a moment before a massive uproar began!

“Nineteenfold... that's impossible!!”

“Forget about nascent souls, even ordinary magical items are hard to perform nineteenfold spirit enhancements on. In all the Wildlands, there are probably only two or three!! Any one of them

would be considered a precious treasure of antiquity in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty!!”

“Where did this Bai Xiaochun get an eighteen-colored flame, let alone nineteen-colored flame?!?! The only person in the Wildlands who can conjure nineteen-colored flame is Earthmaster Wan Pin!!”

No greater commotion could have occurred. The Grand Heavenmaster was affected, as was the Arch-Emperor. There was little need to even mention the four heavenly kings. Perhaps such people could overlook the fact that Bai Xiaochun had performed a fifteenfold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul, but a nineteenfold enhancement was something completely awe-inspiring.

Furthermore, the Giant Ghost King and the Grand Heavenmaster were both aware that the situation involved Mistress Red-Dust, and began to make inquiries.

However, as they tried to make contact, the Grand Heavenmaster frowned, and the Giant Ghost King’s expression flickered. Then both of them rose to their feet in shock.

They... couldn’t reach Mistress Red-Dust!!

“Something’s gone wrong!!” The Giant Ghost King’s eyes flickered with a dangerous light as he flew out of Giant Ghost City and sent his divine sense streaming out in all directions. Then, he shot off into the distance, heart gripped with fear and anxiety as he tried to locate his only daughter!

Chapter 827: You Broke My Teddy Bear

Normally speaking, Bai Xiaochun would have realized that performing spirit enhancements on his nascent soul would automatically alert people about the danger he and Mistress Red-Dust were in.

However, because of drastic circumstances he was in, the main thing on his mind was figuring out how to get away. Therefore, that plan never even entered his head. As he sat there in the turtle-wok in nascent soul form, his eyes snapped open, and they shone with explosively brilliant light!

They looked like suns shining there within the private chamber, which echoed with sounds like rumbling thunder.

Intensely powerful fluctuations filled the area as his power rose from that of the mid Nascent Soul stage to the late stage!

Furthermore, because he had gone all the way to a nineteenfold spirit enhancement, he was actually very, very close to the great circle.

If he performed a twentyfold spirit enhancement, then he would break through into the great circle. After that... was the legendary twenty-onefold spirit enhancement, which would make him a deva!

Of course, that was only a legend. To date in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, no one had ever done it. Whether it was because people lacked the information about how to do it, or whether there were other obstacles, it was impossible to say.

In fact, throughout the history of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, it would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find another person who had done the same thing Bai Xiaochun had by performing a nineteenfold spirit enhancement on their nascent soul.

Already, Bai Xiaochun could tell that enhancing his nascent soul to this level had somehow caused him to be linked to heaven and earth.

“Twenty-onefold.... Well, maybe it’s not like the legends say, where you automatically break through. Maybe it just dramatically increases your chances of becoming a deva!” However, now was not the time to ponder the issue. His nascent soul rose to its feet, leaped out of the wok, and returned to his fleshly body.

He took three breaths, and then slowly opened his eyes, whereupon intensely powerful cultivation base fluctuations rolled out of him in all directions!

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

Not only did the power of his cultivation base cause everything around him to tremble, his battle prowess also rose dramatically. Before, he had been in the mid Nascent Soul stage, and had been capable of fighting with devas. Although he might not have been assured of victory, he could at least survive to make an escape. But now... he had broken through, and was half a step into the great circle. As of this moment, he... could definitely crush anyone in the early Deva Realm!!

That was because of the power of his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, and also the boundless strength provided him by the Undying Codex!

“Lei Shan!” he growled. Taking a deep breath, he put his turtle-wok away and burst out of the private chamber like a bolt of lightning, leaving the chamber in ruins behind him.

In the moment that he dashed out into the open, Lei Shan was glittering with black light as he unleashed a fist strike onto Mistress Red-Dust.

Blood sprayed out of Mistress Red-Dust’s mouth as she finally lost control of her injuries. Immediately, her vision began to grow

dim, and she groaned. Exerting all effort possible, she once again tried to suppress her injuries. However, it was in that moment that Bai Xiaochun shot out into the open, scooped her up into his right arm, and then shoved his left hand in Lei Shan's direction.

“Screw off!!” The movement of his hand seemed like an ordinary motion, but it caused all the light in the area to go dim, and a huge wind to kick up as a powerful attack swept toward Lei Shan.

Lei Shan's eyes flickered with black light, and he tried to back up, but was just a bit too slow. Before he could move, the wind slammed into him.

Intense rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as Lei Shan coughed up a massive mouthful of black gore. Cracking sounds echoed out from inside of him as fissures opened up all over his body. Simultaneously, he was sent spinning backward by several hundred meters before landing hard onto the ground.

Mistress Red-Dust was already in a bit of a daze as she looked up at Bai Xiaochun holding her. She seemed like she wanted to say something, but before she could, blood oozed out of her mouth and she lapsed into unconsciousness.

Bai Xiaochun descended to the ground and gently put Mistress Red-Dust off to the side. Then he looked up, his expression grim, his murderous aura raging in such a way that the sky distorted, and black clouds roiled above him.

A terrifying aura pulsed out of him as he began to walk slowly toward Lei Shan.

The black light in Lei Shan's eyes flickered with increasing rapidity. Only enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, and yet Bai Xiaochun was completely different. Despite the fact that Lei Shan couldn't die, he suddenly felt an instinctual reverence inside of him.

“Undying body?” Bai Xiaochun said slowly. Then he suddenly

launched himself forward with incredible speed, leaving only a string of afterimages behind him. It was almost like a teleportation! In the blink of an eye, he was right in front of Lei Shan, his right hand rocketing forward in a fist strike!

Lei Shan raised both hands in front of himself in defense, and for the first time, let out a growling shout like that of a cornered animal.

A huge boom filled the area when Bai Xiaochun's fist strike made contact with Lei Shan's crossed arms. Instantly, Lei Shan realized that he couldn't defend against this blow, and before he could even react, began to shatter!

Within the blink of an eye, his arms were shredded to pieces, and he was shoved backward across the ground. Then, before he could do anything else, Bai Xiaochun stepped forward again, placing himself right in front of Lei Shan.

“Undying body?” Bai Xiaochun repeated. Then he smashed his right foot into Lei Shan's left leg. To Lei Shan, it felt like the weight of the heavens, and it was so powerful that his leg immediately exploded into a cloud of blood and gore. And that was when Bai Xiaochun headbutted him!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Black gore exploded out of Lei Shan as more than half of his torso was destroyed. By now, the black light in his eyes was on the verge of flickering out.

“I refuse to believe that you have a truly undying body!” Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes as cold as the winter wind. With that, he clenched his right hand into a fist, stepped forward, and struck the bedraggled Lei Shan yet again!

Heaven and earth filled with a sound like booming thunder. The clouds above churned violently, and rain even began to fall down to the ground. As for Lei Shan, he stood there trembling, the black

light in his eyes fading away. As it did, he looked at Bai Xiaochun and said, “My owner will come looking for you....”

With that, more rumbling sounds could be heard, and then Lei Shan exploded into bits. Blood, flesh, and bones scattered about in all directions to land on the ground.

The black blood soon began to be washed away by the rain. Meanwhile, the thunder above grew more intense, and the rain... fell harder.

Bai Xiaochun’s aura slowly grew steadier as he looked off in the direction where Gongsun Wan’er was still sealed. A moment later, he went back to pick up the unconscious Mistress Red-Dust, then flew back to the heavenly airship. Beneath the falling rain, the airship rumbled to life, and became a bright beam of light that shot off into the distance.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of kilometers in a different direction, a muffled boom could be heard in the location where Mistress Red-Dust had sealed Gongsun Wan’er with her Red Dust Violet Road technique.

A shockwave spread out in all directions, razing the ground as it went along. At the same time, the hand-sized city suddenly shattered!

Black smoke rose up from the remnants of city, which quickly formed together into the shape of a young girl. A moment later, the girl was gone, replaced by Gongsun Wan’er. And then, she yet again became Bai Xiaochun.

“Why did you run away, sweetie? All I needed for my plan to be complete was for you to show up.” Covering a smile with her mouth, she blurred into motion. A short while later, she appeared in the location where Lei Shan had been killed!

As she hovered in the air, looking down at the ground, a frown grew on her face.

“So, you went and broke my teddy bear.... Well, I guess I’ll have to get a new one.”

When she looked up, her eyes shone with mysterious killing intent. Looking in the direction Bai Xiaochun had fled in, she began to move!

Chapter 828: Save Me, Father-In-Law!

The moment that Gongsun Wan'er looked in Bai Xiaochun's direction, he was tens of thousands of kilometers away, fleeing in the heavenly airship. Suddenly, he shivered and looked over his shoulder. Although he couldn't see anything, from the cold chill that ran up his spine, he was convinced that Gongsun Wan'er was looking at him.

“She's coming!!” Expression flickering, he looked over at the unconscious Mistress Red-Dust. Then he pulled out a transmission jade slip, only to find that it still didn't work.

At this point, he was getting truly flustered and anxious. Whether because of the events in the Fallen Sword Abyss or in the labyrinth, he was completely terrified by the grim specter that was Gongsun Wan'er.

Worst of all was that he couldn't tell the true level of her cultivation base. At first, she hadn't seemed very strong, but the more cultivators she consumed, the more powerful she got, until she reached an unbelievable level.

She had soundly defeated Mistress Red-Dust, and had even escaped her trump card sealing technique. Bai Xiaochun could only imagine how terrifying she would get as she got stronger.

“Just where did she come from? Back when she showed up in the Fallen Sword Abyss, she seemed just like all the other banesouls. All she did was eat one of my medicinal pills....” By this point, his heart was filled with regret because of it all. Drawing deeply on his cultivation base, he sent the heavenly airship accelerating forward with greater speed.

However, despite that great speed, he was fairly certain that he could hear the sound of chuckling behind him. It started very faintly, but then grew more and more clear.

Heart trembling, he looked over his shoulder and saw a black stream of smoke far off in the distance. As the smoke roiled and churned, it gradually turned into a face... that of Bai Xiaochun!

However, there was something bizarre and even sinister about it as it closed in with incredible speed. It almost looked like an evil ghost.

“Ah, so you’re hiding over here, sweetie.” More bizarre chuckling echoed out.

“I’m not your sweetie!” Bai Xiaochun said, his voice quavering. “Um... you’re just seeing things!” Despite having battle prowess that could crush the early Deva Realm, he was still convinced that he wasn’t a match at all for the bizarre Gongsun Wan’er.

“What do you mean, seeing things? I’ve worked hard trying to track you down, sweetie. But then you went and broke my teddy bear! You need to pay me back.” The face of black smoke continued to chuckle, accelerating until it was only a few hundred meters behind the heavenly airship!

To see it close up had Bai Xiaochun scared out of his mind. His scalp was tingling so violently his hair nearly stood on end, and he was actually shaking down to his toes.

“No, you’re really seeing things!” Suddenly, he pointed off in a certain direction. “Oh, hey. Arch-Emperor City is right over there! There’s a guy there named Chen Haosong! I bet that’s who you’re looking for.... Oh, there’s also someone named Zhao Xionglin. He’s really tough-looking. One glance, and you’ll be convinced he’s the perfect teddy bear. If you hurry, you’ll be able to find him!”

Gongsun Wan’er smiled, a sinister smile that caused waves of terror to batter Bai Xiaochun’s mind. At this point, the enormous face’s mouth opened, and the smoke seethed, making the face rapidly grow larger. In the blink of an eye, it was thousands of meters tall, surging forward as if to consume the entire heavenly airship!

The face seemed to supersede heaven and earth as it lunged forward. Shrieking, Bai Xiaochun grabbed up Mistress Red-Dust and shot away as the mouth closed around the airship.

From a distance, the heavenly airship was so small that it looked like a scrumptious pastry entering the huge mouth. Then, crunching sounds could be heard as the heavenly airship... was crushed to pieces!

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was a blur that sped away in the opposite direction, Mistress Red-Dust in his arms.

“Why are you always so naughty, sweetie? You always have to play hide-and-seek, don’t you...?” More chuckling from Gongsun Wan’er reached Bai Xiaochun’s ears, causing goosebumps to spread out across his skin. He tried to accelerate, but after the enormous face destroyed the heavenly airship, it grew larger, until it was fully 30,000 meters tall!!

30,000 meters is a size easy to describe with words. But to depict it visually is a different matter. The face was shocking to the extreme as it surpassed all heaven and earth, its ghastly mouth opening wide as it moved toward Bai Xiaochun.

At the same time, an astonishing gravitational force appeared, causing everything in the area to tremble and shake. Even hills and mountains were ripped up out of the ground!

Bai Xiaochun shuddered as he tried to push forward, but no amount of speed on his part could fight the gravitational force, and he began to inch inexorably back toward the mouth.

He wanted to scream and cry, especially considering that the face resembled him in every aspect. The idea of being eaten up by himself was terrifying, to say the least.

“Complete and utter bullying!!” he shouted, his eyes bloodshot as he held Mistress Red-Dust tight in his arms. As of this moment, a profound sensation of deadly crisis gripped his heart; he knew that

he couldn't rely on luck to save him, and that he couldn't hesitate. If he didn't put everything on the line right now, his poor little life would definitely be lost.

“Do you really think Lord Bai is scared of you, Gongsun Wan'er!?!?” he roared. Although he was still trembling, his veins of steel were now pulsing. The energy in his Powered Bones began to thrum as he called upon his fleshly body power and his late Nascent Soul stage cultivation base. The sky dimmed, and a screaming wind kicked up, sending rocks and dirt flying around everywhere. Although he was not truly a deva, as of this moment, his energy was powerful enough to interfere with the will of the heavens in this area!

His right hand clenched into a fist, and a black vortex appeared, which immediately sucked away all of his aura. Then, the image of a shadowy emperor appeared behind him.

Intense rumbling sounds filled the area because of that shadowy figure, which seemed to possess a power of will like that of a deva! It could fuse with the heavens and alter the natural laws of all creation.

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it took place in the short amount of time it took Bai Xiaochun to turn in place.

Roaring, Bai Xiaochun suddenly leaped toward the incoming 30,000-meter-tall face... upon which he unleashed a fist strike of mountain-toppling, sea-draining force!!

The Undying Emperor's Fist!!

With double his normal fleshly body power!!

The shadowy emperor also punched out, and the domineering energy which began to surge was so incredible that the emperor himself began to fade away. Everything was focused on that fist, which Bai Xiaochun directed to land directly onto the huge face.

A deafening boom erupted out, along with a massive blast of

wind. It was almost like earth dragons were spasming under the surface of the ground, which quaked violently as far as the eye could see.

Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he tumbled backward several hundred meters. Even as he did, he righted himself, and then sped away as fast as he could.

As for the face, cracks and fissures appeared on its surface, and then... it collapsed into pieces!

Those pieces became black smoke, which rapidly formed back together.... to reveal Gongsun Wan'er, disguised as Bai Xiaochun!

A mysterious light could be seen in her eyes, and a strange smile covered her face.

"I knew I recognized that smell. You... definitely have traces of that old codger on you...." Chuckling, she prepared to give chase.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was speeding along, anxious and ashen-faced.

It was at this point... that Gongsun Wan'er's face fell. Turning her head in a certain direction, she saw an enraged figure piercing through the air in her direction.

"Who is it that dares to lay a finger on my beloved daughter and honorable son-in-law!?!?"

It was none other than the Giant Ghost King!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide with joy, and he immediately shouted, "Father-in-law, save me!"

Chapter 829: Ghostform Lifedrain

An enormous, invisible hand ripped the sky open. Then, an enraged shout echoed out as the Giant Ghost King himself appeared!

He wasn't alone. Flanking him were Duke Deathcrier and the patriarchs from the Bai and Chen Clans. Clearly, those two patriarchs had been thoroughly brought under control by the Giant Ghost King after the rebellion.

Further back were six half-devas, and beyond them, tens of thousands of ordinary soul cultivator troops. For all intents and purposes, this was the full reserve power of Giant Ghost City! The Giant Ghost King had come out in full force!

He had begun trying to track down his daughter earlier, but despite being a demigod, was still a single person. Therefore, he had also ordered some of his subordinates to join him.

The stir Bai Xiaochun had caused in Arch-Emperor City had attracted the Giant Ghost King's attention, and had caused him to hasten his search. Worried that he might not be able to handle the situation on his own, he had brought all of these subordinates with him, hoping to use their divine abilities and magical techniques to bolster his own power.

As soon as the Giant Ghost King arrived, the might of a demigod weighed down in the area, causing all heaven and earth to shake. Furthermore, a sound like a shattering mirror could be heard as a semi-transparent shield of light suddenly appeared, fracturing and cracking. Then the shield exploded!!

That shield was the sealing method Gongsun Wan'er had used to prevent any outside communication or interference. When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he suddenly felt like a great weight had been lifted off of his shoulders.

As Bai Xiaochun's spirits lifted, Gongsun Wan'er's face became very serious. However, that greedy gleam in her eyes didn't go away, and she even licked her lips as if she were looking at a delicious snack.

"Ah, finally..." she said, her voice vibrating in bizarre fashion, "at long last, I've hooked a really big fish...." Then she began to speed in the Giant Ghost King's direction!!

Bai Xiaochun gasped at the realization that Gongsun Wan'er was going so far as to directly attack a demigod! Mind reeling, his newfound hope suddenly faded away.

"Father-in-law, be careful!" he shouted. "This creature is bizarre, and really powerful!!"

The Giant Ghost King's eyes narrowed as his heart burned with fury. He could see his daughter lying there unconscious, and could see Bai Xiaochun standing over her protectively, and it only made his rage grow.

However he couldn't afford any distractions at the moment. As soon as he had arrived, he could sense powerful fluctuations coming from Gongsun Wan'er, as well as an aura that struck even him with fear!

"You must be the soulclone of some almighty being. Am I right? Well, whether you come from this heaven and earth, or from the beyond... it doesn't give you the right to run amok here!" As the Giant Ghost King spoke, his words transformed into a magical symbol which rushed toward Gongsun Wan'er, accompanied by intense rumbling sounds.

At the same time, the Giant Ghost King strode forward, extending his right hand in a way that caused all heaven and earth to grow dark. An enormous ghost hand appeared, stretching down from the sky with all-destructive power, heading toward Gongsun Wan'er and simultaneously locking down the entire area.

This was power that surpassed that of a deva, and caused all creation to tremble violently. Devas could insert their will into heaven and earth, and supplant the will of the heavens. But demigods could surpass the will of the heavens, and bend it to their own desires. They could replace the sun and moon, and create their own version of creation!

Intense rumbling sounds assaulted the ears of all present as dozens of lightning bolts appeared, all of them filled with power that could destroy devas. Before anything else could happen, the lightning bolts all began to shoot toward Gongsun Wan'er.

Strangely, Gongsun Wan'er didn't do anything to dodge. She allowed the heavenly lightning to strike her, and let the gigantic ghost hand crush down onto her!

A boom could be heard as her body shattered into countless pieces!

The sight of it caused Bai Xiaochun's eyes to go wide. Although this wasn't his first time seeing a demigod in action, it definitely surpassed anything he had experienced so far.

Demigods... were people whose single attack, an attack that wasn't even on the level of a trump card... could cut down a deva!!

And yet, Bai Xiaochun had the feeling that things couldn't be that simple. It didn't make sense that Gongsun Wan'er would be taken out so easily....

Even as he wondered about that, the Giant Ghost King's expression flickered, and his eyes began to shine. At that point, it was possible to see something like strands of red muscle growing within the giant ghost hand!!

The muscles seemed to be building up from inside of the hand itself, and yet, even as it squirmed... the entire ghost hand began to wither!

“What gall!” the Giant Ghost King roared. With that, he

performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, causing the ghost hand to explode. As the resulting shockwave spread out, giggling laughter joined it as Gongsun Wan'er yet again appeared in her guise as Bai Xiaochun, completely unharmed!

In fact, not only was she unharmed, she seemed remarkably healthy. On top of that, the greedy gleam in her eyes remained. Licking her lips, she murmured, "Finally... I feel a bit full...."

The Giant Ghost King's heart was beginning to pound, and a very unsightly expression could be seen on his face. In fact, this was the first time that fear had ever been seen in his eyes. All of a sudden, he seemed to put all the pieces together, and slowly said, "That was the Ghostform Lifedraining technique! Who exactly are you!?"

Gongsun Wan'er seemed surprised by his words. She looked closely at him, her eyes turning pitch black for a moment. Then the blackness faded away, and she smiled.

"Oh, you actually cultivate an incomplete form of the Ghostform Lifedraining technique.... Interesting.... Heh. I wonder if my true self has some secrets that even I don't know about...." She chuckled, and the greedy glint in her eye grew stronger.

The Giant Ghost King's expression grew more unsightly, and his breathing became irregular. Clearly, what Gongsun Wan'er had just said was incredibly shocking. The truth was that the technique he cultivated, the Giant Ghost Incantation, had been passed down orally by his predecessors from one generation to the next. No one other than the Giant Ghost Kings knew the truth, which was that... the Giant Ghost Incantation had been created by the first generation Giant Ghost King when he came across some incomplete ancient records from beyond the heavens.

The very fact that it was incomplete was why it contained a fatal flaw. At the same time, it made the Giant Ghost Incantation so powerful that it gave birth to the line of Giant Ghost Kings in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty!

“As for who I am,” Gongsun Wan’er continued, “well that’s simple. I’m Bai Xiaochun.” Laughing, she blurred into motion as she sped toward the Giant Ghost King!

Although their small interchange had been somewhat confusing to all of the Giant Ghost King’s subordinates in the area, they could tell that there was some enormous secret at play.

Furthermore, the fact that Gongsun Wan’er was this strong had them all gasping in astonishment.

However, Bai Xiaochun felt like he was about to go crazy, and could hardly control his emotions. Although he didn’t completely understand everything they had said either, he did know that the little girl came from the Fallen Sword Abyss, and that that sword... had fallen from beyond the heavens....

“She’s from beyond the heavens!! And did she just say something about her true self...?” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide, and his heart began to pound. As of this moment, he felt convinced that the little girl had actually come from beyond the heavens. Furthermore, she wasn’t complete. She was actually the soulclone of some almighty being!!

It was a shocking thought. Furthermore, it explained why Gongsun Wan’er hadn’t even needed to use her full power to handle both him and Mistress Red-Dust earlier. She had really been... fishing!

That mere thought caused him to shiver in fear, look up at the sky, and wonder what exactly existed beyond the heavens.... It was also in that exact moment that the Giant Ghost King waved his hands violently out in front of him.

“Get out of here, all of you! And keep back!” A massive wind sprang up that pushed away all of the Giant Ghost King’s subordinates, as well as Bai Xiaochun.

At that point, the Giant Ghost King’s expression turned

unprecedentedly serious. Lifting his right foot, he stamped down, causing a powerful boom to echo out. At the same time, he began to grow larger. In the shortest of moments, he went from the size of an ordinary person to being 30 meters tall. Then he was 300 meters tall. Then 3,000! In the end... he reached a height of 15,000 meters!!

In addition to becoming an enormous giant, a vortex sprang up around him that sucked in all of the energy of heaven and earth in the area.

Beyond that, his skin turned green, he grew enormous tusks, and two curved horns grew out of his forehead. As of this moment... he looked exactly like the statue back in the city which bore his name. He looked like... a giant ghost!!

The explosive energy which surrounded him caused all heaven and earth to shake. Lightning bolts danced across the surface of his body. And most shocking of all was that, after fully powering up, it was as if he had touched something that acted as a limit of the world in which he lived.

Unexpectedly, numerous magical restrictive symbols appeared in the sky, forming something that looked almost like a net. They were blood-red, enormous, and seemed to contain the most ancient of wills.

It was as if they were the guardians of this world!!

With them in place, this world would always stand firm and stable!

Chapter 830: That's Not Bai Xiaochun!

The instant the enormous restrictive sealing spell appeared in the sky above, the Giant Ghost King roared and unleashed the full power of his cultivation base in the form of a trump card....

“Giant Ghost World Extermination!” He threw both of his enormous hands up into the air, whereupon a black sun appeared!

It contained terrifying power that was clearly capable of destroying all heaven and earth, and anyone who saw it, deva or demigod alike, would be shaken down to their very soul.

The Giant Ghost King was putting everything on the line, and was completely ignoring any effects this attack might have on the world around him. Apparently, if he didn't wipe out this bizarre opponent, the consequences would be too severe, even more so than the possibility of his trump card destroying the world!

Bai Xiaochun was so shocked that his tongue stuck to the top of his mouth. The spectacular nature of the Giant Ghost King's divine ability defied description, and Bai Xiaochun could actually sense the rage in the aura that emanated off of him. And there was little need to even mention that black sun!

When Bai Xiaochun looked at the sun, he could visualize endless charred lands filled with agony and death!!

If that sun landed onto the surface of the ground, he couldn't be exactly sure of what would happen, but he was fairly certain that a large portion of the Wildlands would end up in complete ruins!!

“How... how could this be happening!?!?” he thought, his face draining of blood. Stunned by the Giant Ghost King's dramatic choice, his heart began to pound, and then he quickly transmitted a message. “Your Highness, be careful if she explodes! She'll turn into a blood shadow that absorbs life force!!”

Although the Giant Ghost King didn't show any sign of having

heard, his eyes flickered slightly.

Even Gongsun Wan'er gasped, and a very serious expression appeared on her face.

“Well, this is what I would expect of a demigod.... It hardly took you any time at all to find... my one weakness....” Although her pupils constricted with shock, it was still possible to see the same glimmer of greed therein. Letting out a high-pitched shriek, she leapt up into the air, performing an incantation gesture that caused a spinning black vortex to appear in her palm!

“I'm an indestructible soul! Nobody can kill me! All divine abilities and all living things are nothing more than food for me.... I get stronger with each fight, and the only way to kill me is to make me absorb so much energy that I explode.... Alright, let's see what happens. Will you exploit my weakness to kill me, or... will you help me get rid of that weakness!?!?”

A crafty smile could be seen on her face as she flew forth and then slammed directly into the black sun.

As they connected, the terrifyingly destructive power released by the black sun was actually absorbed into the black vortex in Gongsun Wan'er's palm!

As it happened, Gongsun Wan'er trembled, and was pushed backward relentlessly. And yet, she continuously absorbed the destructive power, her eyes flickering with bizarre light as she did.

When the Giant Ghost King saw what was happening, his expression flickered. And yet, a cold smile touched his eyes, and he waved both hands out in front of him.

“Since you like it, I'll help you absorb your fill!!”

With that, he shoved the black sun toward her. At the same time, black smoke roiled off of him, merging into the sun and lending it more power.

The process caused the Giant Ghost King to shrink. And yet, his

goal of making the sun more powerful was met. Intense rumbling sounds spread out, causing heaven and earth to grow dark, and a massive wind to kick up. All spectators in the area began to fall back, their faces pale with fear.

From a distance, it was possible to see the Giant Ghost King shrinking down and down while the black sun grew larger and larger. In the blink of an eye, it was thousands of meters across, and the Giant Ghost King was the size of a normal person, pushing the sun toward Gongsun Wan'er.

A scream escaped Gongsun Wan'er's lips. Her body seemed to be swelling from the influx of destructive power, and as she struggled to maintain control, she lost her ability to maintain the appearance of Bai Xiaochun.

Cracks spread out across her face, and then the rest of her body. In the blink of an eye, the surface of her body... shattered like a mirror!

As the pieces fell, Bai Xiaochun's face disappeared, revealing that she was not a man, but rather, a beautiful young woman!

She had smooth, fair skin, and a sinister gleam in her eyes. Furthermore, anyone who could look closely enough would see that she had a second pair of smaller pupils within her pupils!!

All onlookers gasped in shock.

“That's not Bai Xiaochun!”

“Who is that?!?!”

By this point, Mistress Red-Dust had regained consciousness, and her face was a mask of shock at the bizarre nature of Gongsun Wan'er.

Bai Xiaochun looked up at her nervously, aware... that now everyone knew she wasn't him!

More intense rumbling sounds echoed out as the black sun began

to shrink down rapidly. The Giant Ghost King was focusing all of its destructive power onto Gongsun Wan'er, forcing her to absorb it whether she wanted to or not!

Soon, the black sun was only 3,900 meters across, and Gongsun Wan'er, who was inflated almost like a balloon, trembled violently. Cracks appeared on her face, neck, and body, as she began to yet again crumble like a shattering mirror. It only took a moment before she let out a shrill shriek... and collapsed into pieces!!

This time, as the pieces fell away, something else appeared... a young girl wearing a red robe, with a face so pale it seemed to be completely devoid of blood!!

As soon as that girl appeared, the entire world seemed to grow colder. Furthermore, ice appeared everywhere, causing everyone in the audience to shiver from the nearly unbearable cold.

“She has another body!!”

“Who is she!?!?!”

Bai Xiaochun's scalp felt like it was being stabbed with pins and needles, and he gasped. He would never be able to forget this little girl, whom he had first seen in the depths of the Fallen Sword Abyss.

At this point, the Giant Ghost King's eyes glittered, and he quickly performed an incantation gesture with both hands, causing the 3,600-meter black sun to enter the girl's body with explosive force!

The girl panted, her eyes gleaming with bone-like sinisterness. Then she let out a scream that cause the souls of all present to tremble as, for the third time, cracks began to spread out over the surface of her body!!

At the same time, the black sun continued to shrink. Soon it was only 1,500 meters. 1,200 meters. 900 meters... 300 meters. 150

meters. When it was only 30 meters across, the Giant Ghost King roared and shoved it forward with even more force!

The little girl trembled violently as cracks filled the surface of her body, and then, she finally collapsed!!

Revealed beneath the crumbling pieces was a shadowy form that looked like a conglomeration of fresh blood. Almost immediately, that blood exploded into something like a sea, that emanated a vile aura as it swept out rapidly in all directions.

The Giant Ghost King bore the brunt of the attack. Even with his demigod cultivation base, he still coughed up a mouthful of blood, and flew back at top speed.

“Get out of here!!” And yet, the crimson sea of blood spread out faster than even the Giant Ghost King’s voice. It didn’t matter how quickly everyone fell back, it only took the blink of an eye for the sea to overwhelm them. As it did, any soul cultivators who it touched, regardless of the level of their cultivation base, were instantly transformed into desiccated corpses!

Their life force, cultivation base, soul, and everything else about them were absorbed by the sea of blood. As for Bai Xiaochun, he had been relatively far away to begin with, and had been on guard, so as soon as the sea of blood appeared, he fled at top speed.

However, his heart was pounding with even more shock and fear than before.

“Not even a demigod can kill her!!” he thought, terrified. He knew that this ghostly girl had taken an interest in him on more than one occasion. It was all very mysterious, and in fact, upon analysis, it really seemed as if the girl should be thankful.

“Biting the hand that feeds you!!” Looking back at the corpses in the sea of blood, he saw the deva patriarch of the Bai Clan, which caused him to tremble and accelerate. Others were near him in the same area, and were also fleeing in terror.

Even as everyone fled, an enormous face appeared within the seething sea of blood. It was the face of the young girl, and she had a crooked smile on her face as she looked up at the grim Giant Ghost King.

“You... lose!!” she said in a bizarre voice that sounded like a combination of men, women, old ones, and young children!

The Giant Ghost King suddenly smiled. “Oh really?”

Chapter 831: Experts Unite!

The Giant Ghost King was a profound schemer and expert strategist. That much was possible to see from the game he had played with the three great clans back in Giant Ghost City.

Heart pounding with fear, Bai Xiaochun turned back to watch what was happening on the battlefield. After all, he found it hard to believe that the Giant Ghost King would so blithely shoot himself in the foot.

“My big bro Giant Ghost is a wily old fox, that’s for sure....” he told himself. However, he hoped that the Giant Ghost King could actually be a bit more wily than he normally was. Otherwise, Bai Xiaochun was certain that he would end up losing his poor little life.

Even as he pondered the possible outcomes, the Giant Ghost King’s cool voice echoed out into the area.

“How’s that speed of yours doing?!”

Even as the words left his mouth, the girl’s pupils constricted, and her face fell. In the process of absorbing the full destructive power of the Giant Ghost King’s black sun, she had lost several bodies. Although she had survived... even she could not quickly absorb all of that power. As a result, she was now much less quick and agile than she had been before.

Furthermore, she was now spread out into the form of a sea of blood, which essentially meant that she was locked in place. Although that wouldn’t last for long, at the moment, she was incapable of going anywhere. She might as well have been sealed!

And that had been the Giant Ghost King’s plan all along. This opponent was too powerful, and shockingly fast. Furthermore, her origin was too terrifying to ponder deeply at the moment. He had known all along that ordinary methods could not be used to defeat

her, and therefore, he had to take a bit of a risk. That was why he had summoned his world-exterminating sun. If the sun ended up destroying her, then all would be well and good. But if it didn't... then it would show that he was absolutely incapable of defeating her on his own, and that... he needed help!

And the truth was that the Giant Ghost King had long since used a demigod secret magic to send word to the Grand Heavenmaster!

Therefore, he only needed to buy enough time for the Grand Heavenmaster to come with reinforcements. If he could keep the girl locked in one place for long enough, that would give enough time for his allies to arrive and then join him in cutting her down!

And yet, all of that was only two thirds of his full plan.

The final step of the plan had not yet been enacted.... It was at this point that the Giant Ghost King suddenly reached out, summoning yet another gigantic ghost hand that stretched down from the sky toward the sea of blood.

A vicious expression appeared on the face of the girl as she suddenly caught on to what the Giant Ghost King was doing. Feeling both humiliated and enraged, she let out a piercing shriek, causing the sea of blood to seethe as it surged toward the ghost hand.

Bai Xiaochun was watching all of this happen, and when he heard what the Giant Ghost King just said, breathed a sigh of relief as he realized what he was up to.

“The Giant Ghost King really does deserve his reputation....” he thought excitedly. Everyone else in the area also seemed to be filled with hope. A moment later, four figures suddenly stepped out of thin air!

The first one wielded a massive battle-axe. He was burly and tall, with a frightening murderous aura. He wore a black suit of armor, and a helmet with two long, curved horns sticking out on either

side. He was the type of person who caused the air to shatter around him wherever he went.

He was none other than... the Nine Serenities King!

The second figure was like a pile of flesh, fat to the extreme. And yet, that didn't seem to make him any less nimble. Every step he took caused windstorms to spring up. It was as if the will of the heavens would bow to him wherever he went, and make way for his passage.

This person was none other than Xu Shan's father, the Spirit Advent King!!

The third figure moved with incredible quickness, and radiated a fearsome desire to do battle. He was surrounded by countless sword projections that seemed capable of crushing worlds. Rumbling sounds echoed out in all directions, and in the middle of it all was a middle-aged man in a long green robe. He was handsome, and stood tall and straight, with features that somewhat resembled Gongsun Yi's. This man was none other than... the War Champion King!!

The fourth figure came from Arch-Emperor City. He had white hair, and a wrinkled face, and yet his aura clearly placed him at the forefront of the other four. He was the person whose every deed and thought could shake the Wildlands. He was none other than... the Grand Heavenmaster!!

Behind the Grand Heavenmaster were the ten heavenly dukes, including Chen Haosong. All of them had extremely grim expressions as they strode forward!

A short time earlier, they had received messages from the Grand Heavenmaster, with information that caused dread to fill all of their hearts.

“A soul has appeared which is suspected to be from beyond the heavens!! It has terrifying powers of absorption and consumption!!

It has an unknown cultivation base that can consume demigods!!”

It was a matter that left the Grand Heavenmaster feeling very shaken. Never could he have imagined that the person suspected of being Bai Xiaochun would be so powerful. After receiving the report from the Giant Ghost King, he hadn't wasted a moment to summon all of the most powerful experts to go deal with the situation!

Although it all takes some time to describe, they all began to arrive in the roughly same moment that the Giant Ghost King once again began to fight with the young girl. The first person to reach the scene wasn't the Grand Heavenmaster, it was... the green-robed War Champion King with his towering sword energy!!

A sword slashed through the air, creating an opening through which he stepped. The first thing he saw was the young girl in the form of a sea of blood, locked in place down below.

“Aberrant soul, how dare you cause trouble in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty!” The War Champion King's voice was as cold as ice, and as he spoke, he extended his right hand. Immediately, the sky behind him grew blurry, and then a massive green greatsword materialized, which he grabbed and slashed down toward the sea of blood!

A gold sword light appeared that seemed capable of ending all forms of life. Anyone who saw it would be shocked, regardless of the level of their cultivation base. Even devas. They all knew that if they were the ones to face this sword, they would be powerless to defend against it, and would surely perish!

The Giant Ghost King chuckled. Although his face was pale from all the exertion, he immediately joined the War Champion King to attack the enemy.

The girl's expression flickered, and she began to howl piercingly. The sea of blood began to surge as two blood-colored hands stretched up from within it toward the War Champion King and

the Giant Ghost King!

Intense rumbling sounds filled the air as that shocking sword made contact with the blood-colored hand. The hand grabbed it, but subsequently shattered into pieces. And yet, even as it shattered, it reformed!

Bai Xiaochun was so shocked his scalp had gone numb. Every time he assumed this girl had reached her limit, she would do something even more shocking than before. Astonishingly, she was using these two blood-colored hands to fight against two demigods!

“She absorbed that black sun, which made her stronger... Although she fell into a bit of a trap, it could be that she did it intentionally... all to be able to consume more energy!” Forcing his thoughts into order, he grabbed the recently awakened Mistress Red-Dust and began to flee again. However, that was when a howl ripped through the air, along with a black battle-axe, which slashed down toward the sea of blood.

The power of that battle-axe defied description. Bai Xiaochun could tell just from looking at it that it had the power to destroy the heavens and extinguish the earth. Clearly, any deva who tried to accept a blow from that axe would be destroyed in body and soul.

And yet, as the axe fell, the girl in the sea of blood let out another soul-trembling scream, whereupon a third arm rose up to meet the attack of the Nine Serenities King!!

Three demigods were fighting this young girl!!

Things weren't over yet, though. The battle caused the sky to darken and winds to scream, and yet, that was when a cold snort ripped through the air. A gigantic sealing mark appeared, larger even than the sea of blood. As it descended from the sky, the eyes of the young girl finally... focused into a very serious look.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as a fourth and fifth blood-colored arm stretched up to deal with the sealing mark. That was when the Grand Heavenmaster himself stepped out into the open from within the sealing mark!

Heaven and earth trembled in response to his appearance. Fluctuations that vastly surpassed ordinary demigods rolled out as he extended his right hand and pushed down, causing afterimages of the magical sealing symbol to appear as more than 100,000 duplicate layers of it came into being!

“Be destroyed!” he said, his eyes narrowed. Then he pushed his hand down, and the 100,000 sealing marks descended toward the blood-colored hands with mountain-toppling, sea-draining power.

When the hands met the sealing marks, the hands shattered instantly. The sealing marks destroyed them like a boulder crushing a drinking glass!

At this point, Bai Xiaochun’s heart began to pound with excitement. For the first time, he finally felt hope!

“Nice one, Giant Ghost King. Your scheming powers are terrifying! You got the enemy stuck in place. Then the War Champion King and the Nine Serenities King attacked with full force. And yet, just in case they couldn't complete the job, the deadliest blow was launched... by the strongest of all, the Grand Heavenmaster!!”

Chapter 832: Second Deadly Blow!

This was Bai Xiaochun's first time ever seeing multiple demigods joining forces to attack like this, and it wasn't quite what he had expected. After all, the political climate in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty was very delicate, and the demigods all had tenuous relations with each other at best.

He could never have imagined that they would all join forces so quickly to deal with a foreign enemy. In fact, the Giant Ghost King had paid a huge price just to buy an opportunity for the others to gain victory!

Then, the War Champion King and the Nine Serenities King were willing to play mere supporting roles, using their battle prowess merely to keep their opponent in check for a short moment. They even risked being injured to do so. Even the Grand Heavenmaster, who already had the ultimate level of prestige in the Wildlands, didn't hesitate at all to unleash his most powerful blow to cut down the enemy!

Although the fight seemed to be happening very quickly, there was clearly a high level of cooperation between these various demigods. Although they all had separate goals in their political struggles, when it came to fighting a foreigner, they were all on the same page!!

Bai Xiaochun was both moved and enlivened. Everything around him was shaking and rumbling, and there was also the shriek of the young girl as her blood-colored hands collapsed. Then, the sealing mark descended onto the sea of blood!!

The lands quaked, and yet the effect didn't spread very far; the Grand Heavenmaster controlled everything perfectly to keep the effect localized. Even still, the resulting shockwave blasted out for tens of thousands of meters, destroying all plants and vegetation in the area.

In the face of the blast, Bai Xiaochun and the others near him all fell back even further. At the same time, he anxiously craned his neck to see whether or not the girl had been destroyed.

Even as he looked over, the Grand Heavenmaster's 100,000 sealing marks caused the sea of blood to shatter. However, as it happened, a terrifying aura erupted out that sent Bai Xiaochun's emotions spinning!!

The Grand Heavenmaster's face fell, as did the faces of the Giant Ghost King, the War Champion King, the Nine Serenities King, and the ten heavenly dukes!

Without the slightest hesitation, all of them prepared to fall back. And yet, before they could, an eerie, sinister voice spread out that seemed to be composed of countless other voices....

“Unfortunately, you couldn't quite pull it off....” As the voice rang out, the sea of blood erupted. In the blink of an eye, it transformed into something like a blood sphere that grew larger with every moment that passed. Rumbling sounds echoed out, filling the Wildlands to the point where it seemed like they might collapse as a result!

Despite being some distance way, blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth, as well as from everyone around him. As for the Giant Ghost King, he had been severely drained, and was very weak, so he was sent tumbling backward, blood also spraying out of his mouth.

Blood oozed out of the mouths of the War Champion King and the Nine Serenities King, with the Grand Heavenmaster being the only one who seemed less affected. However, he was clearly having a tough time dealing with it, and his face turned a paler shade of white.

But then, the exploding blood sphere suddenly began to shrink back down. Soon, it was a sea of blood again, and then it was half of its previous size! And yet, it was far more viscous than before!

The young girl's face appeared again, and she laughed in sinister fashion.

“Truly a pity.... However, I have to offer you people my thanks. You really helped me to absorb a lot.... Well, you still have one more chance. If you don't take it... then I won't have any weakness at all.”

Bai Xiaochun's eyes nearly popped out of his skull. What was happening seemed almost completely unbelievable.

“Four demigods, including the Grand Heavenmaster... and they can't kill her!?!?”

Even as Bai Xiaochun's mind reeled, the injured Giant Ghost King looked up with shining eyes. Then he reached out and waved his finger at the girl.

Although he didn't speak even a single word, the War Champion King, the Nine Serenities King, and even the Grand Heavenmaster all unhesitatingly unleashed the full power of their cultivation bases, causing demigod fluctuations to spread out as they charged again toward the sea of blood.

The Grand Heavenmaster, who actually occupied the most prominent position among them all, didn't seem to be paying attention at all to his status as he joined forces equally with everyone to try to kill the enemy!

As the three demigods closed in, the Giant Ghost King waved his finger. In response, ten blood-colored arms stretched up from the sea of blood. At the same time, the face of the young girl suddenly changed, going somewhat slack, as though her thoughts were muddled.

Gasping, she looked at the Giant Ghost King!

“You!!”

Another flicker of blankness passed through her eyes, and her thinking seemed to slow even further. In fact, the blood-colored

hands also appeared to decelerate.

This was the third part of the Giant Ghost King's plan, after the unleashing of the black sun!!

The black sun contained part of the Giant Ghost King's cultivation base power. After consuming that power, the girl couldn't digest it quickly, and therefore, the Giant Ghost King could use a special technique... something that the first generation Giant Ghost King had created, a divine ability used to control the Giant Ghost Incantation!

Bai Xiaochun was unfamiliar with that technique, but the weakened Mistress Red-Dust was not. In fact, it was the very same technique that the Giant Ghost King had told her could help her achieve a cultivation base breakthrough!!

Now, the very same thing that occurred with Mistress Red-Dust was occurring with the girl. Furthermore, the Giant Ghost King was exercising even stronger control; he was affecting all of the girl's thoughts!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened as he got an inkling of what was happening. Even as the young girl's mind was cast into chaos, and her blood-colored arms slowed down, the War Champion King, Nine Serenities King, and Grand Heavenmaster unleashed the full power of their cultivation bases to attack her, joined by the ten heavenly dukes! It was a deadly trump card attack!!

And yet... they weren't the ones to be delivering the final blow!

By combining all of their divine abilities and magical techniques, they managed to shatter the blood-colored arms, which collapsed back down into the seething sea of blood. That was when, all of a sudden, a massive mountain of flesh appeared on the ground beneath the sea!!

That ball of flesh contained the power of a demigod, violent and explosive as it shot up into the air, destroying the ground that it

left behind. The Grand Heavenmaster and other demigods and devas attacked from above, and the ball of flesh attacked from below. There was no way for the sea of blood to avoid the blow!

The ball of flesh smashed into the sea of blood, causing it to explode out into countless bits!

Rumbling sounds filled the air as the ball of flesh sped up higher into the air, transforming into an enormous, fat man who was... the Spirit Advent King!!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide as he was once again shaken by how these demigods all worked together.

"This time she's definitely going to die!" Even as Bai Xiaochun looked on nervously, the Grand Heavenmaster and the other demigods and devas called upon their previous experience to prevent the sea of blood from scattering. Instead, they unleashed intense power to reduce it to flying ash!

And yet, even as they destroyed the blood, all of a sudden, one particular clump of violet-colored blood suddenly rose up, moving with such incredible speed that it left behind nothing but afterimages. As it moved, it seemed possible to see something like an arm inside of it. Moments later, the arm vanished, to be replaced by the young girl's face, which was twisted with rage!

"All of you are going to die!!" she shrieked, creating an indescribable sound wave that rolled out in all directions.

The sound was like the wailing of a ghost, and filled the entire 500-kilometer area, seemingly cutting it off from the rest of the Wildlands as surely as if an invisible blade had severed it!

From the pressure radiating down, it didn't seem like a magical technique that originated from this world. The sky began to shatter, and the intense noise caused the air to ripple and distort!

And yet, that wasn't even the most terrifying thing. As the ripples of the sound filled the area, numerous shadowy souls

appeared.... None of them seemed to possess intelligence, but they instinctually began to move toward that 500-kilometer area of sound, as if it were a holy place!

In fact... all of the souls in the Wildlands that were not controlled by some owner or master... began to fly in the same direction!!

Chapter 833: Ow... Oww....

The Wildlands was a huge place, and there were so many vengeful souls there that no one could ever possibly count them. Furthermore, even with all of the soul cultivators in the Wildlands using them in necromancy and cultivation, their numbers would continually be replenished, or even increase.

Right now, all of the unfettered vengeful souls in the Wildlands, regardless of where they were, all looked up and let out soundless shrieks. Then, they began to fly in the same direction, almost as if they had been summoned!!

It didn't matter how close or how far away they were. They seemed to be acting on instinct as they drew upon all the power they could to fly through the air. Some of them even began to teleport, lending them even greater speed than before!

The place that all the souls in the Wildlands were heading toward, as if it were a holy place... was the conglomeration of blood with the face of the young girl on it, and the 500-kilometer-area that had become a lake of soundwaves!

The fact that a collection of soundwaves in a 500-kilometer area could affect all of the Wildlands was hard to even imagine!!

The Giant Ghost King's face fell. "Ghost Harmonization!!"

Blood sprayed out of his mouth as he staggered backward, helpless to do anything other than rotate his cultivation base to protect himself from the sound!!

He was trembling, seemingly hovering on the verge of collapsing completely, and it was the same with the War Champion King, Nine Serenities King, and Spirit Advent King, although all of them seemed to have it a bit better off than the Giant Ghost King!

The intense level of the sound battered at the demigods... to the point where they almost couldn't handle it.

“She’s just a soulclone! How could she be so powerful!? And... what is the cultivation base of her true self!?!? It must be beyond the Demigod Realm!!”

“This magical technique doesn't belong to our world!!”

The War Champion King panted, madness rising up in his eyes, his sword qi erupting out to defend himself, and yet was completely suppressed by the sound.

The Spirit Advent King’s body was shrinking down, his fat disappearing, his facial features changing; clearly, he wasn’t holding anything back in his attempt to defend himself.

If they were affected in such a way, there was little need to mention Chen Haosong and his compatriots. The ten heavenly dukes were all trembling and withering up, their eyes filled with disbelief and terror. They were obviously completely powerless to defend themselves against this sound.

The face of the girl in the violet glob of blood shrieked continuously, and as she did, a look of scorn appeared in her eyes.

“This is legendary Archaean divine magic.... You’re the subordinate of an archaean from beyond the heavens? But which one?!” The Grand Heavenmaster gritted his teeth as a glittering defensive shield of light sprang up around him. Although he was still capable of movement, he could only do so with great difficulty, and every movement of his feet made him feel like he had mountains attached to them.

In response to his words, the little girl’s pupils constricted. Then, despite the fact that she continued to scream, that voice which seemed to contain many voices rang out from within the conglomeration of blood.

“You’re very well-informed....”

Even as the power of the sound within the 500-kilometer area continued to surge, a sea of vengeful souls was converging on the

area. None of them hesitated for a moment to pour into the sound and then into the young girl, making her even stronger than before.

Everyone on the outside was shivering with terror, their faces pale and their minds reeling as if they had been struck by lightning. Never could they possibly have imagined that the most powerful forces in the Wildlands, five demigods, would all join forces in attack, and yet fail to destroy this one strange girl!!

In fact, not only did they fail to kill her, but they were all placed in mortal danger!

“Father!!” Mistress Red-Dust shouted, trembling in anxiety. She tried to wrest herself out of Bai Xiaochun’s arms, but he held her tight.

“Get your hands off me!!” she yelled. But she was too weak, and no matter how she struggled, she couldn't break free. She could only watch her father stuck in a position of imminent death within that lake of sound.

Furthermore, the Giant Ghost King had been injured and weakened more than anyone else, and was clearly not going to be able to hold out much longer.

“Calm down!” Bai Xiaochun barked, his eyes bloodshot. “If you go over there now, you’re dead for sure!”

Tears filled Mistress Red-Dust’s eyes. At the moment, she didn’t seem at all like a mighty deva. She seemed heartbroken. Turning to Bai Xiaochun, she angrily said, “My father showed you immense kindness, Bai Hao! If you don’t want to save him, fine, but how dare you stop me! You--”

“Shut up!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, unable to prevent the anxiety in his heart from showing in his bloodshot eyes. Perhaps he could ignore what was happening to everyone else, but not the Giant Ghost King. Staring bitterly at the 500-kilometer lake of sound, he

wracked his brain trying to come up with ideas. At that point, the Giant Ghost King coughed up some more blood, and then swayed weakly. Mistress Red-Dust began to struggle even harder, and tears began to pour down her face.

“Father!!”

Apparently, the Giant Ghost King heard her. He opened his weary eyes and looked over at Bai Xiaochun and Mistress Red-Dust, and a faint smile could be seen. He opened his mouth as if to speak, and yet, just like everyone else in the same predicament as him, was working too hard to fight back against the sound to say anything.

Mistress Red-Dust redoubled her efforts to free herself. However, it was at that point that Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and roared. Depositing Mistress Red-Dust off to the side, he shot through the air toward the 500-kilometer lake of sound.

He simply couldn't stand idly by and not try to save the Giant Ghost King. The Giant Ghost King had treated him too well, and now was the time to try to repay that kindness. He couldn't just watch him weaken and die right there. Furthermore, the little girl actually didn't seem to be moving!

“I'm gonna go for broke!” he shouted. “Go for broke!” As he closed in on the 500-kilometer lake of sound, the Giant Ghost King noticed. Although his gratitude was visible, he mostly seemed anxious.

“Get back, Bai Hao!! This ghostess is using a magical technique from beyond the heavens! We can't move, nor can she! Just get out of here! Go back to the Underworld River Restricted Area!!”

Speaking out loud caused his defensive powers to waver. A tremor ran through him, and blood sprayed out of his mouth.

All of the onlookers got even more nervous than before, especially Mistress Red-Dust, who trembled, and seemed like she

wanted to speak, but was too overwhelmed by tears. However, Bai Xiaochun continued on as if he hadn't even heard the Giant Ghost King. Soon, he was at the border of the lake of sound. Not bothering at all about what secrets he might reveal, he sent his turtle-wok flying out from inside of him. Hefting it overhead, he charged into the lake of sound.

As soon as he was inside, he dropped to the ground and put the wok on top of him. It was exactly the same method he had used back when he was in the River-Defying Sect, when the Middle Reaches sects had been fighting each other in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's legacy zone.

It was the only tactic he could think of that might work. Of course, as soon as he stepped into the area of the sound, it affected him, and blood sprayed out of his mouth. However, when he dropped down and placed the turtle-wok over himself, all of the sound around him disappeared!!

"No sound?" After a moment of feeling stunned, his blood-spattered face lit up with delight. At first it almost seemed too good to be true, but after a moment, he began to cautiously move forward. When the Giant Ghost King and everyone else saw what was happening, they were completely taken aback. Everyone observing from afar was so shocked they forgot to breathe.

As for Mistress Red-Dust, she began to gnaw on her lips in anxiety.

As he moved along, Bai Xiaochun realized that since he was on his way to save someone, he should try to make himself seem a bit braver. For that purpose, and in order to forestall any suspicions, he lifted the corner of the wok up and began to shout out as if in pain, making sure to be loud enough that everyone could hear him.

"Ow... Oww...! Dammit.... OWW.... I'm not holding back anything for you, father-in-law!! Ow.... Oh father-in-law... ow! Your son-in-law's poor little life is going on the line to save you....

Owwwww....”

And thus it was that on that bitter and somber battlefield, Bai Xiaochun’s voice echoed out for all to hear. He looked like a turtle as he crawled along, getting closer and closer to the Giant Ghost King. As for the onlookers, whether they were inside the lake of sound or outside, they all stared in complete shock.

Even the girl in the conglomeration of violet blood was stunned. The Giant Ghost King was the closest to the turtle shell.... Despite the intensity of the sound waves battering him, he could clearly hear the exaggerated cries of pain coming from inside, and it caused his jaw to drop slightly.

“Don’t worry, Zimo. Even if I die, I’ll definitely... ow...! I’ll definitely save our father!! Ow... Oww...!

Chapter 834: The Hell-Emperor Cometh!

Everyone present was dumbfounded, including the Giant Ghost King, the War Champion King, and even the Nine Serenities King. Although they were exerting all their effort to fight back against the sound attack, strange expressions still appeared on their faces. That was saying a lot, considering that this was a deadly battle in which no one knew who would come out alive and who would end up dead.

Everyone felt incredible pressure weighing down on their hearts because of the bizarre little girl, and they were all wondering about what serious consequences there could be depending on how things turned out.

And yet... in the middle of such a dramatic and bitter struggle, Bai Xiaochun showed up... yelping in exaggerated fashion as he crawled along underneath a turtle shell. It left everyone completely flabbergasted.

The Giant Ghost King's tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth, and the Spirit Advent King's jaw hung wide open. There was little need to mention how shocked the Grand Heavenmaster was.

All eyes were glued to the hollering Bai Xiaochun as he and his turtle shell got closer and closer to the Giant Ghost King.

“Bai....” the Giant Ghost King began. And yet before he could even think of what to say, Bai Xiaochun grabbed his leg, turned around, and began dragging him away.

The Giant Ghost King was already weak enough as it was. When Bai Xiaochun began pulling on him, he didn't resist. He was like a statue underneath the eyes of all present, being inexorably pulled toward safety.

“Ow... Oww...! I'll get you out of here even if I die in the process, father-in-law!! Owe... Oww...!”

Of course, Bai Xiaochun continued to shout as he dragged the Giant Ghost King along.

“Whatever works....” That was what everyone was thinking, whether they were inside of the lake of sound or outside. As for the little girl, her eyes were blank with shock. Not even she could ever have guessed that Bai Xiaochun would use a method like this to drag someone to safety....

If he only saved the Giant Ghost King, it might not have been a very big deal. However, just as he was closing in on the border of the lake of sound, the Spirit Advent King, who was being shrunk down with every moment that passed, took a deep breath and shouted, “Bai Hao, uh... how about you drag me out too!?”

The expressions of blank shock on the faces of the onlookers grew even more pronounced, and many jaws dropped. Although the bitter and tragic feeling that had gripped the battlefield still remained, it was fading.

Bai Xiaochun ignored the Spirit Advent King. Pushing forward with all the speed he could manage, he physically threw the still-shocked Giant Ghost King out of the lake of sound. Mistress Red-Dust hurried forward excitedly to catch him.

Seeing that the Giant Ghost King was now safe, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief and prepared to crawl out to safety.

“Hey, Bai Hao. Um... don’t you remember Shanshan? She’s waiting for you back in Spirit Advent City!” More odd expressions appeared on the faces of the onlookers. Feeling a bit annoyed, Bai Xiaochun looked out from under the turtle-wok at the Spirit Advent King. Then he thought about how nothing had been done to block his path to the Giant Ghost King, so, gritting his teeth, he turned around and headed back in.

More cries of pain could be heard as he approached the Spirit Advent King and then grabbed his leg just as he had the Giant Ghost King. Amidst the battering sound waves, he dragged the

Spirit Advent King toward the edge of the lake and then threw him out.

Grumbling curses echoed out from beneath the turtle-wok the entire time.

“Spirit Advent King you... ow! You’re so fat!! Can’t you lose a bit of weight!? I can barely move you... ow!”

The Spirit Advent King was feeling very embarrassed about it all. However, he continued to shrink as he moved along, until he was roughly the size of an ordinary person. That was when Bai Xiaochun threw him out of the lake of sound.

By this point, the ten heavenly dukes were feeling extremely anxious. Their cultivation bases were too low, making it impossible for them to even speak. All they could do was cast piteous, imploring glances at Bai Xiaochun. When Bai Xiaochun saw that, his heart softened.

“Ah, whatever. You people all hate me, but I’m a generous guy. Besides, as the saying goes, if you’re going to herd sheep, you might as well collect the whole flock....” Sighing at how important his mission was, he continued to shout and holler as he crawled back and forth through the lake of sound.... Before long, he had dragged away the dumbfounded Grand Heavenmaster and the proud and arrogant War Champion King, as well as Chen Haosong and the other devas.

Everyone watched as Bai Xiaochun saved them all one by one. Before long, the only person left within the 500-kilometer area... was the Nine Serenities King, who stood there with a blank look on his face.

He had long since begun to curse inwardly; however, he quickly realized that Bai Xiaochun seemed to be ignoring him and saving everyone else.

Although he knew about everything that had gone on between

Bai Xiaochun and his son Zhou Hong, he didn't think that it would earn him treatment like this. At least a few people should have been left behind to accompany him....

By this point, the little girl was about to go crazy, and her face was twisted with fury. She might have been able to accept the fact that her technique didn't affect him, but then he had gone and rescued everyone else....

Even as she began to sink into hysteria, the Grand Heavenmaster and everyone else settled down cross-legged and began to recover. By use of demigod secret magic, the process went very quickly. Soon, the Giant Ghost King didn't look weak anymore, and was mostly recovered.

If nothing happened to interfere, it wouldn't be long before all of the demigods were back at peak battle prowess.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” the girl screamed. Everyone in the area went stiff at the sound of her voice, and Bai Xiaochun shivered anxiously. However, before anything else could happen, the Grand Heavenmaster, War Champion King, Spirit Advent King, and Giant Ghost King all opened their eyes. Four demigods all rose to their feet and strode forward to attack the 500-kilometer lake of sound.

Meanwhile, the Nine Serenities King howled at the top of his lungs and went all out to join the other four demigods in the assault.

Shocking booms rang out in all directions as the 500-kilometer lake of sound began to tremble and collapse. After only ten breaths of time, it completely shattered. Blood sprayed out of the mouth of the Nine Serenities King as he staggered backward, visibly aged, and obviously seriously injured.

As soon as the lake of sound collapsed, the Grand Heavenmaster and the other demigods attacked in full force, unleashing one divine ability after another. In response, the little girl screamed,

and the violet conglomeration of blood writhed as it took human shape. Then the girl waved both of her hands up into the air.

As she did, the sky distorted, and intense rumbling sounds echoed out everywhere. All of the Wildlands souls which had been rushing in her direction increased their speed significantly, hundreds upon hundreds of millions of them all closing in on the girl.

The sky grew dim from all of the howling vengeful souls. Soon, there were billions of them, swirling around the little girl like a cyclone!

The souls soon began to take the shape of a face, a face that filled the entire sky. It was the little girl, her eyes sinister and filled with anger and resentment that caused the entire world to tremble.

“Nobody can save you!” she howled, borrowing the voices of all of the countless vengeful souls to speak. At the same time, she opened the mouth of the face of souls, and a black wind sprang out.

Shocking power filled the gusts of wind, power that caused the Grand Heavenmaster and the other demigods to look on in shock. Bai Xiaochun also gasped, and began to back away.

That wind carried the power to destroy everything in existence, and yet, before that could happen... a sigh echoed out, a sigh of profound ancientness!

A figure appeared within the swirling black winds. He wore a long black robe, and at first, it was impossible to see his face. He was so old that anyone who looked at him would immediately come to the conclusion that he had just stepped out from profoundly ancient times.

“Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper!” Bai Xiaochun said, stunned.

“Hell-Emperor!!” cried the Grand Heavenmaster and the other demigods, expressions of profound reverence on their faces.

When Bai Xiaochun heard what they were calling the

gravekeeper, his jaw dropped.

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it all happened in the briefest of moments. The gravekeeper seemed to exist in a different dimension than the black wind, which didn't affect him at all. He strode forward until he was right in front of the enormous face of the young girl. Then he reached out with his ancient, withered hand, and pushed down onto it.

Chapter 835: Cause And Effect

When the gravekeeper pushed his hand out, there was no screaming wind, nor any smoke or fire. However, the entire world seemed to go completely still and silent.

The sky didn't tremble. The lands didn't quake. The winds which had surrounded the gravekeeper vanished. As for all of the countless vengeful souls, their resentment seemed to vanish, and they prostrated themselves in worship to the gravekeeper.

Everyone who saw what was happening was shaken. As for the little girl, the souls which made up her face scattered as they too prostrated themselves to the gravekeeper.

Then, an enormous manifestation of the Underworld River appeared, waves glistening as it filled the world. The countless souls which filled the area then began to float toward the river, like stars returning to their place in the sky.

The face of the girl faded away, revealing the violet conglomeration of blood. A moment later, the face reappeared in the blood, eyes shining with strange light as she looked at the gravekeeper. Then, she unleashed the very same technique that had destabilized the divine souls of the demigods, that which the Grand Heavenmaster had referred to as... Archaean divine magic!

“So you finally decided to show up, Hell-Emperor!! I knew it! I could sense traces of you on that Bai Xiaochun over there! I knew that if I followed him around long enough, he would lead me to you!!”

Shocked looks appeared on the faces of all present in response to her words. At the same time, the same sound waves appeared as last time, except instead of spreading out for 500 kilometers, they were focused in an attack on the gravekeeper.

The girl had previously mentioned Bai Xiaochun, but that had

been a dramatic and frenzied moment, leaving people little time to contemplate the implications. But now, he who was like a god to the Wildlanders had appeared, the Hell-Emperor. Therefore, the words which had just been uttered by the girl caused everyone to turn their gazes onto Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Xiaochun!?!?”

“Grandmaster Bai is Bai Xiaochun?!?”

The soul cultivators from Giant Ghost City were all completely shocked, to the point where their jaws hung open....

“Bai Xiaochun...?” Chen Haosong and the other heavenly dukes had strange expressions on their faces as they looked over at him.

The Nine Serenities King, War Champion King, and Spirit Advent King were all stunned.

Only the Grand Heavenmaster and the Giant Ghost King didn't have any reaction, as though this news wasn't surprising to them at all.... However, mixed emotions could be seen on Mistress Red-Dust's face.

Although this possibility had existed in the bottom of her heart for a long time, she hadn't been willing to devote any thought to it. But now, having heard the little girl essentially say the same thing twice, it caused Mistress Red-Dust to begin to pant. The fact that her own father had given her hand in marriage to Bai Xiaochun... turned her world completely upside down.

Bai Xiaochun's heart began to pound because of all the eyes looking at him. However, there was nothing he could do to change how events were playing out. After blinking a few times, he put on a blank expression, as though he didn't understand what was being talked about. Then he looked around as if trying to figure out who in the crowd was really Bai Xiaochun.... In response, many strange looks could be seen on the faces of the others present.

At the moment, Bai Xiaochun didn't have time to worry too

much about what exactly everyone was thinking. At long last, he had realized why this ghostly girl had been following him for such a long time... she had been using him to find the Hell-Emperor.

“No wonder....” Although it was a bit of a shock to find out that the gravekeeper was the Hell-Emperor, when he thought about how mysterious the man was, it all made sense.

“When she said she noticed traces of Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper on me, was she referring to how he saved me from the Luo Chen Clan?”

As Bai Xiaochun was wrestling with these thoughts, the girl's Ghost Harmonization erupted out, causing the sky between her and the gravekeeper to shatter. The gravekeeper sighed, waving his hand to cause the shattering sky to transform into a huge black hole. The black hole began to explode, releasing power that seemed capable of destroying the entire world. Thankfully, the same world-sealing net existed as had appeared when the Giant Ghost King unleashed his black sun. The illusory net easily dispersed the world-destructive power, and it faded away!

The gravekeeper shook his head and spoke in an ancient, weary voice, “I've been avoiding you at every turn. Why do you insist on hounding me?”

“If you want me to stop hounding you, then open the Worldgate! Allow me... to leave this place!!” Sound waves continued to stream out, destroying the air as they went along. However, the young girl's bizarre, echoing voice could still be heard.

Her eyes were filled with focus, determination, and madness. Furthermore, there was no deceit in her words. She was not a person of this world. She had come from beyond the heavens, a discarnate soul who had fallen down into the world along with an enormous sword.

She had once been confused and unintelligent, with no hope of ever regaining her senses. But then Bai Xiaochun had entered the

Fallen Sword Abyss, and she had consumed his medicinal pills. Her soul body had been stimulated, and her mental faculties had recovered. At that point, she remembered everything about her past!

She found the world she was in a very strange place, and instinctively wanted to keep Bai Xiaochun next to her, considering that he had been the one to restore her mental faculties.

However, despite the fact that her soul body was indestructible, her battle prowess wasn't sufficient. Because of that, Bai Xiaochun escaped. She had later escaped the Fallen Sword Abyss to roam the world on her own, whereupon she learned more about the truth of where she was. She eventually came to realize... that if she wanted to escape, if she wanted to get home, she needed the gravekeeper to open the gate to this world.

Unfortunately, she wasn't powerful enough to locate the gravekeeper. However, she remembered the traces of the gravekeeper that she had sensed on Bai Xiaochun!

At that point, she came to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun... had been looked upon kindly by the gravekeeper. And she also realized that if she followed Bai Xiaochun for long enough, that she would likely find the person she was looking for.

And that was what led to the entire situation.... It was also why she had sometimes even protected Bai Xiaochun. Unfortunately, after the labyrinth spell formation was activated, something unexpected happened. She lost track of Bai Xiaochun!

No amount of searching had turned up any clues. Therefore, she eventually decided to impersonate him, all with the goal... of luring him out into the open, and thus, getting access to the gravekeeper!

It almost didn't matter how things played out, she would succeed. Furthermore... when Bai Xiaochun had attempted to flee earlier, she had not unleashed the killing techniques she was

capable of, all because her true goal was to force the gravekeeper out into the open!

When the demigods attacked, it was to further her main goal that she had summoned all the souls of the Wildlands, in order to shake the foundation of the world.

It was something she could not do in the Heavenspan River region. After all... the souls that existed only in the Wildlands were the best tool for her to aid her recovery, and also the best advantage she had in a fight!

More important than anything else... she had another friend out there somewhere....

With such thoughts on her mind, she chuckled. Even as her Ghost Harmonization continued, she opened her mouth, causing the air behind her to distort as the enormous head of an evil ghost appeared behind her. The ghost immediately opened its mouth and lunged toward the gravekeeper.

The evil ghost radiated battle prowess equivalent to a demigod, which left the Grand Heavenmaster and everyone else in the area completely shocked.

However, the appearance of the gigantic evil ghost only caused the gravekeeper to shake his head. With that, he extended his ancient right hand and pointed at the ghost head.

All creation began to tremble. The air around the evil ghost then began to collapse, creating what appeared to be the shape of an enormous mouth, which instantly gobbled up the ghost!

At the same time, the gravekeeper performed an incantation gesture and waved his finger at the girl.

“Wind!” he said. It was one simple word, but when it came out of the mouth of the gravekeeper, it seemed to contain the power of the natural laws of heaven and earth. Almost immediately, the entire sky filled with a wind capable of destroying all living things!

The terrifying power in that wind surpassed that of a demigod, and caused even the little girl's face to fall. As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes went wide, and he gasped at how unbelievably powerful the gravekeeper was!!

“The Hell-Emperor....” he murmured to himself.

Massive energy surged, energy that surpassed the ability of all onlookers to even react to it. When the gravekeeper uttered that single word, wind, it was as if all the wind in the world reacted with explosive fury.

The world became a place of wind, with the gravekeeper being the eye of the storm, a mountain-toppling, sea-draining vortex that crushed toward the little girl!

Chapter 836: Daoist Magic Of Heaven And Earth!

From a distance, it was possible to see that the vortex of wind filled most of the sky, and caused rumbling sounds to be heard in all corners of the earth. Down below, the lands quaked. As for the Grand Heavenmaster and everyone else who could see what was happening, they were profoundly shaken.

The vortex of wind spun dramatically, unleashing power that struck fear into the hearts of all onlookers. As for the little girl, she was like a rowboat in a sea of violent waves, teetering on the verge of capsizing.

And that was what everyone was hoping would happen. Unfortunately, that was when the girl suddenly looked up, her eyes as red as blood. Then she opened her mouth wide. In fact, her mouth opened wider and wider in exaggerated fashion, to the point where, in the blink of an eye, she seemed like nothing more than a gigantic mouth!!

The mouth became like a vortex, with a shocking gravitational force that spread out in all directions!

BOOOOM! CRAAASH!

When that gravitational force locked onto the gravekeeper's wind vortex, an ear-splitting boom filled the air. Then, the wind vortex began to slow down, and even tilt to one side... as the girl began to consume it!!

The hearts of the onlookers seized, and Bai Xiaochun gasped. This was a battle that surpassed the level of demigods, and was the most shocking thing he had ever seen in his life. This little girl seemed almost completely unkillable, whereas the gravekeeper seemed to have infinitely powerful techniques.

The thought that this terrifying girl had been following him

around since his days in the Heavenspan River region left him feeling both frightened and also relieved that nothing bad had happened along the way.

“It’s a good thing I didn’t offend her too badly in the past. If I had, she could have killed me as easily as breathing....” Even as he shivered in fear, intense booming sounds filled the air. By this point, the wind vortex had completely collapsed, and... had been consumed by the little girl!!

The faces of the onlookers fell. However, the gravekeeper simply sighed, as though this was no surprising development for him. With that, he waved his finger, and yet again spoke in an ancient voice.

“Rain!”

It was one simple word. However, as soon as it left his mouth, countless dark clouds sprang into being, stretching out to fill almost all of the Wildlands!

Those dark clouds contained absolutely no lightning, only water!!

Great, bean-sized drops of rain began to pour down, almost as if there were a giant far above, overturning a huge bucket. In the very shortest amount of time possible, the entire world became a world of violent downpour!!

Furthermore, this was not ordinary rain, this was... magical rain!!

The rain contained shocking force, almost like a divine ability or magical technique.... There was so much rain, it was almost impossible to see. Bai Xiaochun’s eyes turned wide at the mere shocking feeling of how much energy it contained.

“So... so awesome!!” He wasn’t the only one to be shaken. The Grand Heavenmaster and all the other powerful experts were completely bowled over by how shockingly strong the

gravekeeper's rain was.

The little girl's face fell. This rain filled her with an intense sensation of deadly crisis, and she immediately fell back. Unfortunately, no matter how quickly she moved, she couldn't escape it!

In fact, none of the rain actually reached the ground. Each drop spun in the air and began to race directly toward the girl.

Her hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture, causing a defensive shield to spring up. Then, booms rang out like that of an enormous drum being beaten as countless drops of water slammed into the shield!

The sound grew louder and louder, and the rain fell harder and harder! Before long, the rainwater had formed into something like a solid sheet that shot forward in attack!

A sphere of water began to form around the girl, causing her expression to flicker. Her defenses were crumbling, and the sphere was growing larger, filling with more and more water.

300 meters. 3,000 meters. 15,000 meters....

From a distance, it was like a terrifying ball of water surrounding the little girl, crushing her defenses and growing larger by the moment.

Bai Xiaochun could hardly keep his breathing in check. The girl's defensive shield was almost completely destroyed, and all of the onlookers were getting excited. However, it was in that moment that the girl's face twisted and shrank as she transformed into...

A sword!!!

It was the most ancient and archaic of swords, so much so that rust was visible on its surface. It almost seemed ordinary in nature, and yet, as soon as it appeared, billowing waves began to sweep across the surface of the sphere of water.

No one present recognized the sword, except for Bai Xiaochun! As soon as he saw it, his eyes went wide.

“The fallen sword!!” he shouted in shock. Back when Bai Xiaochun had reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment... it had been in the eastern Lower Reaches of the Heavenspan River... in a huge sword!!

That was the place where this strange girl had first appeared!!

Although the sword was vastly smaller than the first time he had seen it, Bai Xiaochun recognized it immediately. In the same moment that the words escaped his lips, the girl in fallen sword form spun in place and then slashed through the remnants of her destroyed shield at the sphere of water!!

As the sword descended, a gigantic sword materialized in the sky up above. It was so huge that only part of the blade was visible, streaking down from above, filling the vision of everyone present as it attacked the sphere of water!!

A massive boom rang out as the water sphere collapsed. Countless drops of rain showered out, filling the lands below with mist. As for the girl, she was clearly weaker than before, and could not maintain the form of the fallen sword for very long. Amidst the swirling mist, she quickly reverted to her normal appearance, and then shrieked, “I’m an unkillable soul, gravekeeper! Since you can’t cut me down, I might as well consume you right here and now!!”

The faces of the onlookers fell, and Bai Xiaochun began to tremble. He even thought about trying to escape. However, that was when the mist which filled the world began to rush toward the girl, as if it were under her control.

A sea of mist began to converge on her in shocking fashion, gradually taking the shape of a gigantic ghost head!

Despite being made of mist, it was very lifelike, with a vicious

expression and curved horns. Furthermore, closer examination revealed that it did indeed resemble the young girl in some fashion. Just like the enormous sword from moments before, it filled the sky, obscuring the sun as it looked down at the grounds below and then sucked in a breath!!

In response, the sky distorted and the lands shifted. It was as if all creation were about to be absorbed into the mouth of this huge ghost head. Some people felt their bodies beginning to move beyond their control, something that left Bai Xiaochun feeling completely stunned.

Even the Grand Heavenmaster and the other demigods were shaken.

However, the gravekeeper merely shook his head, and then murmured something in a voice that only he could hear.

“Still hiding your face, huh...?” With that, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, and then waved his finger again.

“Lightning!”

The instant the word left his mouth, a bright red bolt of lightning appeared in the twisting sky. As soon as it appeared, another followed it....

In the briefest amounts of time, there were three lightning bolts. Then 100. Then 10,000.... There was no sound to accompany them, and yet they were so densely packed that they looked almost like the rainwater had moments before. The entire world slowly began to glow with the red light they cast!!

Then, the countless red lightning bolts shot toward the misty ghost formed by the little girl. As Bai Xiaochun looked up, what he saw was something that almost looked like a hand formed from lightning... reaching toward that gigantic ghost head!

Chapter 837: The Celestial Cometh!

Although the ghost head was huge, the enormous hand made of bright lightning was bigger!

It almost looked like the hand of an adult compared to the head of a baby! And as that hand reached out, intense rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth, as did the sensation of crackling lightning!

It seemed like the hand didn't care at all that the girl was attempting to consume heaven and earth. The ghost head's mouth suddenly ceased breathing in, and screamed as though it were going all-out to avoid the lightning hand. But the surging energy of the hand contained the pressure of all creation, allowing it to easily wrap around the misty head!

The hand clenched into a fist, and cracking sounds rang out. The ghost head tried to fight back, but couldn't, and collapsed. As it did, the girl appeared, fleeing backward at top speed. Terror was visible in her eyes, fear of the converged power of heaven and earth contained in that hand of lightning.

However, no matter how fast she fled, it didn't seem enough to evade the hand, which clearly aimed to blot her out of existence!!

The entire area seemed sealed, leading to complete terror on the part of the girl. Her hands flashed with a double-handed incantation gesture, causing countless shadowy ghosts to appear around her. However, the ghosts were quickly dissipated by the crimson lightning.

The onlookers were enlivened; what was happening now was profoundly shocking, a battle which surpassed the Demigod Realm. Bai Xiaochun's heart raced as his eyes tracked the huge hand, and the shadowy ghosts. As for the girl, she shrieked as the huge hand came closer and closer.

That was when, all of a sudden, an enormous rift appeared in the

sky. It was fully 3,000 meters long, and looked almost like a gigantic eye!!

As the eye stared out at the gravekeeper, cold and emotionless, a second rift opened up. Then a third, and a fourth....

In the briefest of moments, countless rifts opened up in the sky, revealing numerous eyes!

All of them were cold and emotionless, and all of them stared directly at the gravekeeper!

This sudden development led to widespread shock among the onlookers. As for the Grand Heavenmaster, his face fell, and he blurted, "The Celestial!!"

In the same moment that his voice echoed out, the countless eyes blinked, sending numerous beams of sword light shooting out toward the gravekeeper!

It was impossible to count exactly how many beams of sword light there were. The sky seemed filled with them, until that light surpassed everything else. It was like a web of swords that immediately slashed into the enormous lightning hand and began to tear it to pieces!

That hand contained the converged power of heaven and earth, and therefore, only similar power could affect it. And in this world... there was only one person other than the gravekeeper who could use such power.

He was...

The Celestial from Heavenspan Island!

Rumbling booms filled the Wildlands, causing the ground to shake and the sky to vibrate. The innumerable beams of sword light sliced the gigantic hand apart, saving the girl, and then proceeding on to attack the gravekeeper himself!

Although all of these things take some time to describe, from the

moment the sword light appeared until it destroyed the hand and then proceeded on toward the gravekeeper, only a single breath of time passed.

Any one of those beams of sword light would be enough to kill a deva, and yet here were countless beams, interlocking into a gigantic pillar of light!

Massive waves of shock battered Bai Xiaochun's mind. From the moment this fight had begun until now, he felt like he had been made privy to some of the most important secrets in the entire world!

But it was an urgent moment, and there wasn't time to ponder the implications right now. He could only watch as the gravekeeper turned his head, his eyes flickering with profound light. He didn't seem surprised at all, as though he had been expecting the Celestial to arrive. Lifting his hand toward the incoming sword light, he spoke again in an ancient voice.

"Thunder!" Again, it was only one word. However, as it left his mouth, it grew in volume until it was like a roar uttered by countless voices. Vengeful souls and living beings alike, Bai Xiaochun included, voluntarily or not, shouted the same word in their hearts!

The Grand Heavenmaster, the Giant Ghost King, Chen Haosong and the other demigods and devas... all of them did the same!

The sound reached an unbelievable level in a short time. Heaven shook, the earth trembled, and ripples spread out everywhere. As for the incoming sword light, as soon as it encountered those sound waves, it began to shatter into something that looked like innumerable tiny stars!

Innumerable beams of sword light all collapsed at the same time, and yet, the sound waves did not disperse. They continued on with heaven-rending, earth-crushing power, assailing the little girl's ears, causing her to tremble violently and begin to grow

transparent. Meanwhile, in another part of the sky, the air began to distort, as though a veil were being lifted to reveal... a person who had been concealed there!!

He was a spectacularly handsome middle-aged man wearing a suit of golden armor, with sword-like eyebrows. He seemed threatening without being angry, with eyes that shone like the sun and moon!

He wore an imperial crown, and had flowing black hair that swirled around him. In sharp contrast to his black hair, he had one lock of red hair which curled down across his forehead. Now that he had been revealed by the parting of the veil of heaven and earth, he stepped forward, reached out, and pushed his hand up into the air!

Thunderous crashing filled the sky, as though an enormous, invisible hand were ripping it apart. At the same time, a bright blue spear appeared from within the resulting rift. It didn't fly toward the armored man, though. Instead, it shot with lightning-like speed to stab down into the ground.

The lands quivered, and cracks spread out left and right. The sound of the impact, combined with the previous sound of the thunder, became like an invisible attack that blasted out in all directions.

Although Bai Xiaochun was rather far away, the blast of energy hit him and caused blood to spray out of his mouth as he tumbled backward. Chen Haosong and the other devas staggered back, blood oozing out of their mouths. Even the Grand Heavenmaster and the other demigods were forced back, their faces turning pale.

As for the soul cultivators from Giant Ghost City whose cultivation bases were below the Deva Realm, they had no time to react, and most were instantly transformed into ash....

Mistress Red-Dust would likely have been killed too, were it not for the fact that the Giant Ghost King stood protectively in front of

her.

“The Celestial!!” The Giant Ghost King looked up at the armored man, his eyes flickering with fear.

The War Champion King, Spirit Advent King, Nine Serenities King and the Grand Heavenmaster, as well as the heavenly dukes, were all staring at the same person, their hearts pounding with fear!

“The Celestial!?” Bai Xiaochun thought, gasping in shock. He wasn’t quite sure what to think as he looked up at that shocking figure who looked down from the sky with arrogance and disdain!

He was none other than the ruler of all of the Heavenspan regions, the Celestial from Heavenspan Island!!

This was Bai Xiaochun’s first time actually seeing him, and at first glance, he could see that he was the type of person who had become one with the world. In fact, the man’s eyes were as piercing as the sharpest of blades or needles.

Even as Bai Xiaochun looked on, the little girl flew over to the Celestial. Keeping her distance, she said, “You’re late, Daoist Heavenspan!”

The Celestial smiled. Ignoring the girl, and everyone else, he kept his gaze fixed on the only person he had been looking at the entire time, the gravekeeper.

“You knew what I was planning all along, didn’t you old man?”

“As clear as day,” the gravekeeper replied calmly, his expression the same as ever. However, his eyes flickered with profound light, and his words were thought-provoking to the extreme.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding. Obviously, the little girl and the Celestial had been in league for a long time. As for this day’s battle, it wasn’t just one being fought by the little girl. She was allied with the Celestial in opposition to the gravekeeper!

As for why, it was presumably because of what the girl had mentioned earlier... that mysterious Worldgate!

“So many secrets....” he thought. At the moment, he felt himself to be in a very awkward position. In fact, he almost wanted to yell out loud to the Celestial that everyone here was basically on the same side.... However, such thoughts were immediately crushed when he thought about how the girl had been following him to find the gravekeeper, and that the Celestial must have known that.

“I was being used....” he thought, his heart trembling as he looked at the three powerful entities floating up above in the sky.

Chapter 838: What Right Do You Have To Withhold Your Approval!?

Even as Bai Xiaochun scowled on the verge of tears, the Celestial looked at the gravekeeper and coolly said, “So what if you knew? Whether I lured you into the open, or you did it to me, in the end... it will all come down to who wins the fight!”

Even as he spoke, a domineering air exploded out from him that made him seem like the ultimate entity in heaven and earth!

In the moment that he finished speaking, the little girl chuckled oddly and began to blur into the form of a black hole. At the same time, that odd voice of hers which seemed to be composed of countless living things spoke.

“Void Devouring Grand Magic!!”

Black light erupted from the black hole that was the little girl, filling a 30,000-meter area and pulling everything toward it. Plants, vegetation, rocks, mountains; everything began to fly through the air toward her.

The gravekeeper was in that 30,000-meter-area, and was actually the focus of her Void Devouring Grand Magic. From the look of things, it had him locked in place and incapable of moving!

Even as the girl attacked, the Celestial took a step forward. He knew that this battle needed to be ended quickly, and was prepared to make that happen. As his foot descended, the lands quaked. At the same time, he reached out with his right hand and made a grasping gesture.

“Heavenspan Sea!” he said coolly. Rumbling sounds could be heard, and ripples filled the air, along with a golden color that bore the appearance of a sea!

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped and his mind began to reel. He immediately identified that golden, illusory body of water. It was

none other than... the Heavenspan Sea!

“What kind of magical techniques are these?” he thought, his heart racing. “He’s actually using the Heavenspan Sea as a weapon?!” As of this moment, he came to the conclusion that the techniques being used by these three were true divine abilities. In fact, they made the magical techniques he usually used seem almost embarrassing. But then he reminded himself how amazing the Waterswamp Kingdom and Undying Emperor’s Fist were, and felt a bit better. If he had a higher cultivation base, his Waterswamp Kingdom would probably crush these people like dry weeds.

“Ai, my cultivation base is really just too weak.” he thought with a scowl. At the same time, he backed up as quickly as possible. The Grand Heavenmaster and the other powerful experts all had very serious expressions on their faces. They too realized that the Celestial was making drastic transformations to heaven and earth by using a projection of the Heavenspan Sea itself!

The entire sky became a huge sea, with churning water and huge waves. Within moments, that golden water transformed into the shape of a massive hand, which began to crush down toward the gravekeeper!

The sky had become a sea, and the sea had become a hand. With the little girl’s Void Consuming Grand Magic locking the gravekeeper in place, it seemed impossible for him to evade that all-destructive attack.

It was a moment of crisis that had Bai Xiaochun’s heart leaping into his throat. However, that was when the gravekeeper looked up, his eyes flickering with profound light as he lifted both hands above his head and spoke in a gravelly voice.

“Underworld River!”

A powerful aura of death sprang up around him, along with raging black river water that quickly filled all creation. Then he

took a step forward, and the river water roared forth like a black dragon!

The gravekeeper was like the source of the Underworld River water, which erupted like a fountain, growing more numerous by the moment. The water seethed madly around him as he climbed into the sky to meet the gargantuan hand that was the Heavenspan Sea!

They grew closer and closer together, and then collided with force to shatter mountains, destroy the sky, and crush the land. Countless lines spread out across the surface of the hand as deafening rumbling sounds filled the air. It was an attack in which the gravekeeper and the Celestial were facing off using the Underworld River and the Heavenspan Sea as their weapons.

A black dragon was fighting a golden hand!

The golden hand was the first to lose out. It shattered into pieces which, as they fell apart, revealed the sinister Celestial floating up above!

As for the Underworld River, it was clearly stronger. After destroying the hand, it continued onward like a black lightning bolt, striking directly at the Celestial, with the gravekeeper in the forefront!

A boom rang out as the Celestial backed up. However, in the moment before impact, the gravekeeper turned to the side, revealing that his target wasn't actually the Celestial, but instead, the little girl!

The girl's face fell, and she immediately fell back with incredible speed. Unfortunately for her, her shocking speed still wasn't a match for the gravekeeper. A moment later, a huge boom rang out as the majestic Underworld River slammed into the unkillable soul that was the little girl.

The girl screamed as the river made contact with her, and she

shattered into countless motes of light. The light shot off into the distance and reformed into a soul shadow. She had not been destroyed. After all, she called herself unkillable. However, the gravekeeper's blow had clearly wounded her seriously!

In fact, it seemed likely that if she sustained enough blows of that level, she actually could be destroyed!

The Grand Heavenmaster and other powerful experts were all enlivened by that revelation. Furthermore, it was now possible to see how powerful the gravekeeper truly was. If he hadn't had another purpose in mind requiring the Celestial to be present, he very likely could have defeated the young girl.

When the Celestial saw that the gravekeeper in Underworld River form was shooting toward the newly reformed girl, his expression turned very grim. He couldn't just look on while the girl was killed; not only were they allies, but he had an oath binding him. Most importantly, he wasn't confident in being able to take on the gravekeeper by himself. He needed help!

Therefore, his eyes immediately began to shine with fierce determination.

"If the Heavenspan Sea can't put you in your place, then how about... the Heavenspan continent!" His hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture, and then he pointed at the sky. Instantly, the sky began to peel back, layer by layer, as if it were completely transforming!

Then... the Heavenspan Sea appeared again!!

This time, it was even more magnificent, shining with boundless golden light. Shockingly, a black island was visible in the middle of the sea. Furthermore, there were four mighty rivers stretching out from it in four directions. Land surrounded those rivers, which contained rolling mountains, vast plains, and thick jungles!!

Close examination would even reveal the four enormous sect

headquarters at the mouths of the rivers. But that wasn't it. The Middle Reaches, the Lower Reaches, and even the delta regions were all clearly visible!

Bai Xiaochun stared in shock as he realized that even the River-Defying Sect was there! Projected right there in the sky... were all the lands of Heavenspan!

“Gravekeeper! You said in the past that you wouldn't open the Worldgate for me because I was illegitimate! But all you are is a gravekeeper! You're an old ghost who watches over the Worldgate. I might not have the blood of the Arch-Emperors in me, but the lands of Heavenspan approve of me! What right do you have to withhold your approval!?!? You will either open that gate for me right now, or die!!” The Celestial blurred into motion, merging into the projection of the lands of Heavenspan, becoming something like their soul!

Massive energy began to build up, as if the will of the Celestial were drawing upon all the power of the entire world!

At that point, a gleam of madness appeared in the eyes of the little girl. Seemingly ready to put everything on the line, she shrieked loudly as she transformed into a paper crane!

Black mist surrounded her, within which existed innumerable howling ghost projections. In fact, it was obvious to Bai Xiaochun that this was... power from beyond the heavens!

Such power did not conform to the nature of this world. It was like a black glob of ink on a white sheet of paper. It was instantly obvious!

The black paper crane surged with power from beyond the heavens, joining the Celestial in an attack on the gravekeeper.

“Are you gonna open that gate or not, you old ghost?!?!”

The Grand Heavenmaster and the other experts were all completely shocked by the divine abilities and energies on display.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was wailing inwardly, filled with incredibly uneasy feelings as he fell back at top speed.

The gravekeeper looked up at the Celestial, his expression the same as it had been the entire time. However, there was a certain exhaustion visible within his eyes as he sighed and said, “You still don’t understand. You are illegitimate, not because of matters of bloodline or approval, but because... you lack the legacy!”

For some reason, the retreating Bai Xiaochun suddenly had the feeling that upon uttering those words, the gravekeeper... was looking at him.

Chapter 839: Unmatchable Battle!

“That can’t be right....” Bai Xiaochun thought, his heart pounding. If the gravekeeper really had looked at him, it would mean he was in great danger. That would mean he was part of this dangerous fight between the gravekeeper and the Celestial!

“A little nobody like me couldn’t possibly matter to almighty people like that!” He immediately ducked his head down and hurried backward even faster. As he focused on fleeing, the battle above once again reached a fever pitch. Behind the projected image of the lands of Heavenspan, a figure appeared.

It was none other than the Celestial, and he appeared to be controlling every aspect of the lands of Heavenspan. Waving both hands out in front of him, he sent those lands rumbling toward the gravekeeper!

At the same time, the little girl in paper crane form erupted with black mist as she also shot toward the gravekeeper.

All onlookers were shaken to the core by what was happening. As for the gravekeeper, he sighed, and a glint of determination appeared in his eyes. He knew he had reached the point where hesitation wasn’t an option. The Celestial had manipulated things to provoke him into coming out into the open, and yet, it was also an opportunity for the gravekeeper to put an end to something profoundly problematic for the Heavenspan Realm.

“It’s ahead of schedule, and will disturb the balance. It will also harm the world itself. But my time... is limited. I need to do this for the future generations.” The gravekeeper sighed in his heart, but his eyes gleamed with decisiveness. Even as the paper crane and the projected lands of Heavenspan closed in, he closed his eyes!

As he did, an intense, explosive rumbling sound filled the Wildlands and the lands of Heavenspan alike. All sects, all living things, all cultivators, all beasts, even the mortals could hear it!

RUMBLE!!

The volume seemed too intense for the world to sustain. The ground in the Wildlands shook as intense force erupted from the ground beneath Bai Xiaochun's feet, causing his face to fall. In Arch-Emperor City, in the four kingly cities, in countless tribes and clans, everyone was shocked by the violent quaking.

“What is that sound?!?!”

“The ground is shaking.... Don't tell me that earth dragons are on the move?!?”

It wasn't just the Wildlands. The enormous Great Wall that had been built by the four riversource sects began to tremble. The armies encamped on the four major sections of the wall were rocked by astonishment, especially when they realized that the restrictive spell formations built into the wall itself were filled with cracks and vibrating dramatically.

“What's going on?!?!”

“The enemy is attacking!!”

The effect wasn't limited to the Wildlands and the Great Wall. Everywhere in the Heavenspan River region, from the delta regions, to the Lower Reaches, to the Middle Reaches, all the way to the riversource sects and even the rainbow structure of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, began to shake.

Countless individuals were in an uproar. Every living thing in the entire world was filled with shock!

As of this moment, there was only one way to describe the shocking divine ability that the gravekeeper was using... it was shaking the entire world!

The Celestial's face fell, and the little girl in paper crane form lurched to a halt, a sensation of deadly crisis filling her heart.

“What magical technique is this?!?!” The girl didn't dare to fly

any closer to the gravekeeper, and in fact, began to fall back rapidly. However, even as she did, cracking sounds filled the sky as an enormous rift opened up. It quickly spread out, reaching the nearly indescribable length of 300,000 meters!!

Everyone in the Wildlands could see it. Everyone on the Great Wall could see it. And as for the sects in the lands of Heavenspan, although they couldn't see it directly, they could sense that drastic transformations were underway!

The rift almost looked like a wound... that would remain eternally in place in the heavens of the Heavenspan Realm!

The instant the rift appeared, the gravekeeper's eyes snapped open, and he spoke in a voice that echoed like thunder!

“Spleen. Earth!”

The moment the words left his lips, the rift widened, and a buzzing sound filled the air as... a huge mountain descended!!

It was so enormous that it seemed like a heavenly body. It was such an unbelievable sight that Bai Xiaochun and everyone else were completely taken aback.

“There's a mountain... falling from the heavens?” Not too far away from the stunned Bai Xiaochun, Mistress Red-Dust and the Giant Ghost King were also looking on in complete astonishment.

The mountain was not a mountain from anywhere in the land around them. It was truly... descending from the heavens!

Deafening rumbling sounds echoed into the ears of all onlookers as the pitch-black mountain began to drop down aggressively toward the Celestial's projected lands of Heavenspan, and the girl in paper crane form!

The Celestial's face fell; this was not his first time fighting with the gravekeeper, but it was his first time ever seeing a divine ability like this. His hands began to flash in a double-handed incantation gesture, sending the projected lands of Heavenspan

flying forth in a deadly counter attack.

However, when the lands of Heavenspan reached the enormous mountain, they simply passed right through it! It was as if they existed in different dimensions from each other! The mountain proceeded along as if nothing had happened, until it was directly above of the girl in paper crane form.

A scream escaped the girl's lips; she knew that she couldn't avoid this blow. Eyes shining with naked ferocity, she sent the paper crane flying toward the mountain, surrounded by dense black mist.

When the two of them made contact, Bai Xiaochun could see firsthand what was meant by the expression a mantis trying to stop a war chariot!

The girl simply didn't qualify to challenge the weight of that enormous mountain. Her paper crane shattered into fragments, and the soul of the little girl screamed miserably as... the mountain crushed her back down onto the ground!

Her soul collapsed into motes of light. This time... only about half of the motes of light survived the blow, and when they formed back into the shape of the girl, she was even more blurry than before. She looked like the slightest wind might blow her away, and her eyes were filled with profound terror. Turning her head and not looking back, she fled.

The gravekeeper glanced at her, then ignored her. Voice cool, he spoke for a second time.

“Kidneys. Water!”

A second world-shaking sound echoed out, astonishing all living beings in the world. Many mountains crumbled, and vast gulches and ravines were opened up in the land. More cracks appeared on the surface of the Great Wall, and many mountain ranges in the Heavenspan River region began to shake violently.

At the same time... a second wound-like rift opened up in the sky. Cracking sounds could be heard again, and the Celestial gasped as... a huge river descended!!

This was neither the Heavenspan River nor the Underworld River. It was... a river of blood!!

Fresh, flowing blood shot toward the Celestial, who roared as he sent the projected lands of Heavenspan out to defend himself.

However, as soon as the two made contact, the Celestial's projection proved completely powerless. The lands of Heavenspan were destroyed as easily as twigs!

Bai Xiaochun stared in mute shock at what was happening. First a huge mountain descended from the heavens, and then a river....

By now, the Celestial was alone up in the sky, an unsightly expression on his face that was a mixture of disbelief and shock. However, unlike the little girl, he didn't flee, he shot toward the gravekeeper!

Voice cold and filled with mad killing intent, he said, "Let's see how many times you can unleash a divine ability that eternally harms the world itself!"

As he closed in, he waved his hand in the direction of the gravekeeper.

Expression bitter, the gravekeeper sighed and spoke a third time. "Heart. Fire!"

A third immense sound filled the entire world. As it did, the four sections of the Great Wall which separated the Wildlands from the Heavenspan region began to shake. Countless cultivators had been rushing in an attempt to repair the cracks that had begun to spread out on the Great Wall, but at this point, the wall couldn't hold any longer. The Great Wall... collapsed!!

From the time the four sections of the Great Wall had been

constructed until now, they had been breached and even broken in places. But they had never collapsed. But now, in the east, south, west, and north... the four sections of the Great Wall fell!

Countless cultivators stared in terror and shock at what was happening.

“Celestial phenomena!”

“The Great Wall... is collapsing....”

It wasn't just the Great Wall. Many of the mountains in the Heavenspan region shook so violently that they began to collapse. At the same time, back in the Wildlands, Bai Xiaochun watched as... a third wound-like rift opened up!

From within that rift descended... not a mountain, and not a river, but rather... a globe of fire!!

More precisely, it was a sun!

Chapter 840: Lock Of Blood Hair!

“The sun is falling?!?!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes nearly bulged out of his head as he watched the sun shooting down from the rift toward what remained of the Celestial’s projected lands of Heavenspan.

It didn’t matter how the Celestial tried to avoid the blow, it was impossible. It only took a moment for the sun to slam into the projection!

The projection trembled violently, and immediately collapsed into fragments. The Celestial himself was revealed, his face ashen, blood oozing out of the corners of his mouth. This time, it was without the slightest hesitation that he turned and fled.

Although he could hardly bear to do so, he knew that his plan had failed. Even he and the little girl working together had not been a match for the gravekeeper, which caused rage to burn in his heart.

“Dammit! I already suppressed him in the past. But this time he resorted to a divine ability that can eternally damage the world! He clearly... will stop at nothing to kill me! What makes me illegitimate isn’t bloodline or approval, it’s the legacy? I knew that a long time ago!” However, the Celestial didn’t dare to stick around any longer.

The gravekeeper seemed to not care that he was trying to make a getaway. Voice cool, he spoke a fourth time.

“Lungs. Metal!”

A fourth world-shaking sound erupted into the Heavenspan Realm, and a fourth wound-like rift opened in the sky. Even as the Celestial began to accelerate, golden light spilled out of the rift and... a huge golden cauldron descended!

The cauldron emitted blinding light, along with intense rumbling sounds. It seemed capable of locking down everything in

the air around it, which made it impossible for the Celestial to flee. It was a critical moment, and a fierce gleam appeared in the Celestial's eyes as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, a multitude of eyes appeared around him, which all blinked, sending streams of sword light blasting toward the cauldron.

The powers of the cauldron were mysterious and enigmatic; when the countless streams of sword qi from the Celestial slammed into it, they were like eggs slamming into a boulder. They shattered, and the golden cauldron wasn't harmed at all. A moment later, the cauldron then slammed into the howling Celestial himself.

A huge boom echoed out in all directions, and a shockwave blasted out. Blood sprayed out of the Celestial's mouth; he instantly withered visibly, and his eyes turned completely bloodshot. However, he was the Celestial, the most powerful person in this world other than the gravekeeper.

It didn't matter that the huge golden cauldron had slammed into him, all it did was cause him to cough up some blood. Without hesitating, he continued to speed away into the distance.

Everything was happening so quickly that Bai Xiaochun and the other onlookers had no time to react. The little girl fled, the Celestial ran away, and it seemed as if the fight was already over!

However, it was in this moment that, for the first time, a cold light appeared in the gravekeeper's eyes as he spoke for a fifth time.

“Liver. Wood!!”

A fifth world-shaking noise echoed out. Most of the mountains in the Wildlands collapsed, along with all of the cities connected to them. By this point, there were absolutely no barriers between the Wildlands and the Heavenspan River region!

Countless cultivators had been rocked over and over again by what was happening, and now, many began to cry in alarm and flee from the region of the Great Wall.

Many of the mountains in the Heavenspan River region also collapsed, and one of the branches of the river itself was blocked off by changes to the land!

The entire world had been severely wounded, not to mention the sky, which now had four gaping wounds in it, the likes of which would strike fear into the hearts of anyone who could see them.

However, it was in this moment that a fifth wound-like rift opened up. Then, cracking sounds could be heard as a 3,000-meter-thick vine began to droop down. It was covered with countless leaves, and brimmed with life force as it slashed toward the area where the northern Great Wall had once stood.

It moved with blinding speed, shattering the air around it, and filling the world with heaven-shaking, earth-shattering noise.

It was an attack that completely shattered the air, landing directly onto the Celestial and forcing him out into the open!

More blood sprayed out of the Celestial's mouth. His ashen face was a mask of fear and dread. Never could he have imagined that the gravekeeper would use a divine ability this incredibly powerful!

“Gravekeeper, you old ghost!!” he howled angrily. He turned and attempted to flee in a different direction, but the vine immediately slashed at him again!

Even the Celestial was shocked by the speed with which it moved. His hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture, causing golden light to spring out around him, which was none other than Heavenspan Sea water! The water rapidly formed together into the shape of a huge spear, which he stabbed toward the incoming vine!

The attack caused all light in the world to grow dim. Furthermore, the Heavenspan Sea off in the distance howled as the water within it began to rise up into the air!!

The entire Heavenspan Sea became an empty basin!

All of the water had risen into the air, and began to move with vast power and speed toward the north section of the Great Wall. Apparently, that spear within the Celestial's hand was the nucleus of the Heavenspan Sea; wherever it was pointed, the sea would follow!!

Countless cultivators in the Heavenspan River region saw the Heavenspan Sea flying overhead, and began to cry out in shock!

“That’s....”

“Heavenspan Sea water!!”

“Heavens, what’s going on?!?!”

Only the cultivators in the north could clearly see what was happening. They saw the Celestial, they saw his spear, and they saw that huge vine!

Although all of this takes some time to describe, it happened in the briefest of moments. As the Celestial stabbed out with his spear, Heavenspan Sea water filled the air behind him, rolling forward like a wave, with shocking power that defied description.

The resulting collision with the vine sent out a boom that shook the entire world. As it happened, more than half of the vine was completely destroyed!!

However, the vine also managed to slash the Heavenspan Sea water in two!!

The Celestial remained in between the two halves, trembling and coughing up blood. Furthermore, the red lock of hair hanging down his forehead was severed, and began to float down. He reached out to grab it, but before he could, it vanished, seemingly

grabbed up by someone else.

“No!!” he screamed in rage, his eyes flashing with madness, terror, and fear.

The source of all that emotion was the fact that the red lock of hair had been severed!! That was no ordinary hair. It was a life-saving blood-hair that he had spent his entire life cultivating, a precious treasure filled with life force that could be used almost like a second life!!

In fact, the blow he had sustained just now had actually been enough to kill him.... He had used the blood-hair in the last moment to save his life!

Had he been able to catch the hair before it vanished, he could have continued to cultivate it. It would have been very costly, but once he absorbed it back into his body, he would have been able to use it again.

But now, that critically important blood-hair had been snatched by someone else. As a result, the Celestial was left trembling and in a rage. As of this moment, he didn't dare to stay in the Wildlands. Filled with frustration and rage, he fled back to Heavenspan Island to recover.

As he did, he looked at the collapsed Great Wall and then waved his hand, sending some of the Heavenspan Sea water streaming out to form a barrier that protected the lands of Heavenspan. For now, that barrier would act like the Great Wall had, and create a restrictive spell that would prevent the Wildlands from entering!

Because he had personally set the restrictive spell in place, only someone higher than a demigod, with a cultivation base as powerful as the Celestial, would be able to get past it!

Face ashen and unsightly, he shouted, “Gravekeeper, you old ghost, you win this round. But next time, I refuse to believe that you’ll be able to use that divine ability again. Next time, I’ll cut you

down!!”

With that, he vanished to begin the lengthy and difficult process of recovery.

Chapter 841: Master, Save Me!

Back on the battlefield in the Wildlands, the Grand Heavenmaster and the other powerful experts stood there with very serious expressions on their faces. Bai Xiaochun's mind was still reeling from the sight of that huge vine. However, the northern part of the Great Wall was too far away, so he hadn't been able to see how the vine defeated the Celestial.

However, the Celestial's enraged voice had echoed out to fill the Wildlands, and therefore, everyone back on the battlefield had gasped and looked over at the gravekeeper.

Bai Xiaochun had known before that the gravekeeper was powerful. But to see it with his own eyes was a different thing. Now, he truly knew that the gravekeeper's battle prowess was at an unimaginable level!

“That girl joined forces with the Celestial... but in the end, they were both injured and forced to flee....” Suddenly, Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard. He wished he could run over and grab onto the gravekeeper's leg. After all, his identity had been revealed to everyone.

After thinking about everything he had done in the Wildlands, his heart began to pound with anxiety. His actions as Bai Hao had caused countless people to hate him, and now that they knew he was the notorious fugitive Bai Xiaochun, there would be no shortage of people who wanted to kill him even more than before. In fact, if they lined up and took turns, it would probably take over a hundred years to get through them all....

“The only person who can save me is Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper.... I have to think of a way to get him to pay attention to me....” Muttering to himself, he took advantage of the fact that nobody was paying attention to him to start inching toward the gravekeeper.

Everyone else was still stunned from the shocking battle they had just witnessed. As for the gravekeeper, he sighed and declined to pursue the Celestial. It wasn't that he didn't want to; he simply couldn't. If possible, he wished to avoid that level of conflict with the Celestial right now!

The truth was that he actually didn't have very much time left....

He had been very reluctant to use that divine ability of his which inflicted eternal injuries onto the world itself. There were now five gaping wounds up in the sky.

And on the ground, there was a huge mountain, a river of blood, a golden cauldron... and a sun!

All of them were eternal objects. And of course, the gravekeeper knew that it was just as the Celestial had said; he couldn't use that divine ability again.

The five elements of metal, wood, water, fire, earth, which were closely connected to the five yin organs, were unique, but were also classified as a trump card even for the gravekeeper.

“What a pity that I only managed to hit that blood-hair,” he murmured to himself, “and didn't manage to kill him completely....” He looked much older than he had earlier, and his aura was clearly fading away in a way that could not be replenished.

The Celestial had laid a trap for him, and he had turned that trap around into a deadly ambush!

But in the end, neither of them had completely succeeded in their aims.

The fact that the little girl had escaped wasn't very important to him, and in fact, he had let her go. He knew exactly where she came from, and it was actually a safety precaution to refrain from killing her. Besides, he had another goal in mind, and knew that he could get her to unwittingly help him.

The main thing he cared about was the Celestial!

Even as the gravekeeper sighed and contemplated these things, the cold voice of a woman suddenly echoed out, breaking the silence.

“You think you can get away, Bai Xiaochun!?!?” It was none other than Mistress Red-Dust, who had finally awoken from her reverie. When she looked over and saw Bai Xiaochun slinking away from her, she thought back to their encounter back in the labyrinth, and immediately grew angry.

Her shout caused everyone else to come to their senses, and all of them turned to look over at Mistress Red-Dust and Bai Xiaochun. A strange expression could be seen on the Giant Ghost King’s face. A glimmer passed through the Grand Heavenmaster’s eyes, and he looked over at the gravekeeper. As for the War Champion King and the Nine Serenities King, they both wore frowns on their faces. The only person who was smiling was the Spirit Advent King, and it seemed like a genuine, jovial smile.

Chen Haosong and the other heavenly dukes had unsightly expressions on their faces. Back during the shocking battle which had just played out, they had not been able to spare any attention for Bai Xiaochun. But now that the fighting was over, they thought back to how he had been using the name Bai Hao, and how he had wreaked bloody havoc all through the Wildlands. That caused gleams of ill intent to appear in their eyes.

Terror gripped Bai Xiaochun’s heart, and his expression flickered. Rushing backward a few paces, he cried out loudly, “Everybody calm down! I can explain!”

The demigods didn’t move, nor did the heavenly dukes. However, the rage on Mistress Red-Dust’s face couldn’t have been more dramatic. When she thought back to what he had done to her in the labyrinth, and how he was now her fiancé, it made her so angry that she couldn’t hold back from racing directly toward him.

“You owe me an explanation, Bai Xiaochun!!” she screamed.

“Zimo, you... I saved your life! I’m your greatest benefactor!!” Anxiety mounting by the moment, he backed up even faster.

Turning to the Giant Ghost King, he shouted, “Father-in-law, save me!!”

His words caused even more strange expressions to appear on the faces of the demigods. The Giant Ghost King cleared his throat in embarrassment and pretended he hadn’t heard. However, Mistress Red-Dust’s rage increased.

“Shut up!!” she shot back, accelerating as she headed toward Bai Xiaochun. Wracked with nervousness, Bai Xiaochun turned and started running in the direction of the gravekeeper.

“Master, save me!!”

When he said the word Master, the Grand Heavenmaster gasped, and the Giant Ghost King’s jaw dropped. The expressions of the Nine Serenities King, War Champion King, and Spirit Advent King all flickered, and the hearts of Chen Haosong and the heavenly dukes began to pound.

Even Mistress Red-Dust was caught off-guard, and lurched to a stop. Eyes wide, she watched Bai Xiaochun hurry over to the gravekeeper and then offer him formal greetings the way an apprentice would to a Master.

The gravekeeper wasn’t sure whether to laugh or cry. He looked at Bai Xiaochun staring at him in melodramatic fashion, and couldn’t help but shake his head. Waving his sleeve, he declined to say anything, and simply vanished, taking Bai Xiaochun along with him.

The Grand Heavenmaster and everyone else stared at the spot the gravekeeper had just disappeared from, their hearts shaking with shock. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had used the word Master left them deeply and profoundly shocked.

Chen Haosong suddenly felt profoundly nervous, and dispelled any thoughts of causing problems for Bai Xiaochun in the future. Although the gravekeeper hadn't admitted the truth with words, the fact that he had taken Bai Xiaochun away with him explained everything.

Of course, the Grand Heavenmaster had long since come to the realization that the gravekeeper had taken an interest in Bai Xiaochun. After a short moment of silence, he transmitted messages to the four heavenly kings. Out of respect for the Hell-Emperor, they all agreed to keep the matter of Bai Xiaochun's identity a secret!

The only news which would be allowed to spread was that the little girl had been impersonating Bai Xiaochun. His true identity would not be revealed.

After making the agreement formal, everyone departed. The battle which had just been fought had been too sudden, and too important. Troops needed to be deployed. After all, the fact that the Great Wall had fallen... meant that big changes were coming.

The last to leave were the Giant Ghost King and Mistress Red-Dust. Mixed emotions could be seen on the Giant Ghost King's face as he turned to his stunned daughter. He sighed.

“Mo'er, I didn't think things through carefully enough. About the marriage agreement... let's just cancel it, alright?”

Mistress Red-Dust stood there quietly, looking off into space. She didn't say anything. Her mind was filled with an image of Bai Xiaochun pulling her to safety in a moment of deadly crisis. Instead of just fleeing on his own, he had taken it upon himself to protect her....

Eventually, everyone was gone, and silence filled the lands. However, the five wounds in the sky were still there, and the vast gulches which had been hewn in the lands during the course of the fighting remained. The evidence of the world-shaking battle was

still there.

Back in the Underworld River Restricted Area, two figures stepped out of thin air onto the bank of the river. They were none other than the gravekeeper and Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling as nervous as ever. He knew that the matter of his identity had been declared a secret, and at the moment, he was clasping hands in formal and very polite fashion to the gravekeeper.

“Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper.... Um... it’s not that I wanted to trick everyone. You understand, right, sir? I, Bai Xiaochun, am a very kind-hearted person! I don’t like causing problems! I’m very well-behaved. I just want to get back to the River-Defying Sect. They’re the ones who all want to kill me. I disguised myself to try to be able to get home safely. Proclamation of Universal Grace? Inspections commissioner? Shakedowns? I never meant to do any of those things. Ai. Sometimes in life, you just have to make some compromises!” As he spoke, he kept his eye on the gravekeeper to try to assess his attitude. However, the more he went along, the more he really felt like he had the short end of the stick. He had just been going with the flow, which ended up forcing him to do a lot of things he didn’t really want to do.

No expression could be seen on the gravekeeper’s face as he listened to Bai Xiaochun. Finally, he waved his hand, summoning a black command medallion that he tossed toward Bai Xiaochun.

“The Celestial used Heavenspan Sea water to create a barrier where the four sections of the Great Wall once stood. No one will be able to get through that barrier any time soon. I am unable to leave the Wildlands, so I can’t escort you home. If you really want to get back to the River-Defying Sect, you’ll need to go through the Deadmire. And the only way you’ll get through it safely is with this command medallion.”

Chapter 842: I'm Not Really That Outstanding....

Surprised, Bai Xiaochun accepted the command medallion. As soon as it touched his skin, intense coldness rushed into him. Clearly, it was some sort of precious object. Bai Xiaochun had heard of the Deadmire before. There were even some people who called it the Emptymire, as it was a location between the Heavenspan region and the Wildlands that was completely empty of all life.

There were only four areas where the Deadmire was accessible, all of which were near the Great Wall. With the command medallion he now possessed, he could enter it, and thus leave the Wildlands. Furthermore, it would actually speed up his journey back to the River-Defying Sect. After all, his original plan had been to cross the Great Wall, which would have eventually required that he travel back to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect by boat.

The fact that the gravekeeper was treating him so well was moving. Obviously, the command medallion was no fake; if the gravekeeper wanted to get rid of him, he wouldn't have needed to resort to some trap to do it.

“Great-Grandpa... you really are like my own great-grandfather.... Well, I guess I'll take my leave now!” With that, he prepared to leave. After all, the Wildlands was a dangerous place, and considering that everyone was currently a bit stunned by who Bai Xiaochun's Master was, it seemed like the perfect time to get away.

Of course, the Celestial's attitude gave him pause. But considering that he was a very unimportant person in the grand scheme of things, it seemed unlikely that important people like the Celestial would pay much attention to him. Besides, he hadn't done anything to offend the Celestial directly.

“If I just slip back quietly, it should be fine.” Although he felt a bit hesitant, now that his identity had been revealed, the Wildlands was definitely much more dangerous than the River-Defying Sect.

However, just as he made his decision, the gravekeeper suddenly started talking again. He stood there on the bank of the Underworld River, his hands clasped behind his back as he said, “Do you remember how I answered you all those years ago when you asked for my name...?”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, stopping in place and looking back.

“This world is basically a huge tomb, buried within which is a sovereign known as the Arch-Lord.... I am he who watches over his grave. The gravekeeper.” For some reason, the gravekeeper looked older than ever as he spoke.

“Upon that sovereign’s death, he closed the Worldgate and left instructions that only someone who cultivated his legacy all the way to the Mahayana Realm, a celestial, could open that gate. Until then, no one is permitted to leave this world!” He spoke softly, an ancient gleam in his eyes as though he were contemplating the past.

“A tomb?” Bai Xiaochun said with a soft gasp. Although he had learned a bit about the world in scattered bits throughout the years, this was his first time getting such a detailed explanation. The fact that the world he lived in was actually a tomb caused his eyes to widen, and his heart to race.

“His descendants became the imperial clan,” the gravekeeper continued. “And that is the origin of the Arch-Emperors, and also why this world's true name is... the Arch-Emperor Realm!” The gravekeeper wasn't looking at Bai Xiaochun, which made it seem like he was talking to himself as he contemplated ancient times.

“Were it not for certain unexpected events, this world should have long since seen an emperor who rose from the Demigod

Realm to the Mahayana Realm.... Unfortunately, unexpected events did occur. A cultivator with spectacular talent created a new technique, a type of celestial magic. He forged his own path of cultivation, and eventually toppled the Arch-Emperor Dynasty!” Although the Gravekeeper was speaking very quietly at this point, Bai Xiaochun could tell that there was a touch of praise in his voice when he mentioned this certain cultivator. Obviously, that cultivator was so spectacular that he was deserving of praise by the gravekeeper. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun knew exactly who he was.

“I was unable to interfere with the matter. In fact, there are many things that I can’t interfere with. I’m just a gravekeeper after all. I watch over the sovereign’s tomb, I tend to the cycle of reincarnation, and I defend the Worldgate. The first time I took any action at all was to ensure that the imperial clan wasn’t exterminated, and that the Joss Flame of the world continued to burn here in the Wildlands. However, the price I paid for interfering was that my time of existence was cut in half.

“That cultivator I mentioned spent years trying to find me. When he did, he asked me to open the Worldgate. He was illegitimate, so naturally I refused, but I did tell him the proper method to achieve his goal!

“However, the Arch-Lord’s legacy was not suitable for him. He came to me over and over again, and tried many ways to convince me. But in the end, he finally came to the conclusion that the only way to leave this place would be to kill me.

“Presumably, you know who that cultivator is. He is Daoist Heavenspan, also known as... the Celestial.” At this point, the gravekeeper turned and looked at Bai Xiaochun.

The gravekeeper’s words already had Bai Xiaochun reeling in astonishment, and yet, that astonishment grew more intense when Bai Xiaochun saw the gravekeeper’s face.

“Great-Grandpa, you....”

The gravekeeper seemed even older than before, so much so that he looked like he had just climbed out of a grave. He was very different from before, and fairly radiated a sense of weakness.

“I'm very old.... I've been around for far too long. I suspect that when that sovereign created me, he didn't expect for me to exist for this much time. My original fate was to perish along with the opening of the Worldgate.” It seemed as if the gravekeeper didn't mind the fact that he was growing extremely old at all.

“I don't have much time left, so I decided to take action earlier. Unfortunately... not even calling upon forbidden magic was I able to kill him.

“Acting in the way I did reduced my time even further.... In addition, the wounds caused by the forbidden magic have pushed the world closer to the brink of collapse.” The gravekeeper shook his head, regret shining in his eyes.

As of this point, Bai Xiaochun felt like he understood everything. The gravekeeper was not just regretful for having failed in killing the Celestial in the recent battle. He regretted not having done so earlier. Because of the various limitations he faced, he had allowed the Celestial to keep living and grow into what he was today.

In fact, he had taken action today in the hopes of making up for some of those past mistakes!

“I knew from the beginning that I might fail to kill him. But I decided to try anyway.... The truth was that, even before you came to the Wildlands, I had already begun to make arrangements for what happens after I die.” The gravekeeper sighed and looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

“The successor of the Hell-Emperor?” Bai Xiaochun asked hesitantly, his heart beginning to pound. The gravekeeper nodded, causing Bai Xiaochun's heart rate to increase even more. As far as

Bai Xiaochun was concerned, if he hadn't been able to put the puzzle pieces together, it would have meant he was a complete idiot. After all, it seemed obvious that the gravekeeper had noticed how outstanding he was, and that he wanted him to accept his legacy and become the next Hell-Emperor!

The mere thought of becoming the Hell-Emperor got Bai Xiaochun profoundly excited. However, he cleared his throat and humbly said, "Um... Great-Grandpa, the truth is that I'm not really that outstanding.... However, I can say that I'm ready! Uh, right. What does the successor of the Hell-Emperor actually have to do?"

The gravekeeper looked deeply into Bai Xiaochun's eyes and said, "He will enter the Underworld River, and deliver his soul to the Underworld Palace. He will guard the sovereign's tomb and watch over the cycle of reincarnation. He will defend the Worldgate, and refuse to open it for anyone who is illegitimate!"

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback. The last part of what the gravekeeper had just said seemed interesting, but there was something a bit unsettling about the first part.

"Great-Grandpa, what do you mean by 'deliver his soul to the Underworld Palace'? If his soul goes into the Underworld River, doesn't that mean... that he has to die?" When he saw the gravekeeper nod in response, he gasped, and his face turned as white as a sheet.

"Great-Grandpa, er.... Look, I'm really not very outstanding. I'm just a regular person! I get restless easily, and have a lot of faults. If I'm in charge of the Underworld River, bad things will probably happen. It's too big of a responsibility for a kid like me. Um... why don't you pick someone else? I'll... I'll see you later, Great-Grandpa!" He took a step back, but before he could do anything more, the gravekeeper's hand shot out toward him as if to grab him.

Bai Xiaochun let out a yelp.

“I'm really not the best choice, Great-Grandpa! Wherever I go, I accidentally cause huge disasters! I don't want to cause a disaster for you! I--”

“Pipe down! I'm not so much of an idiot that I would pick you to be my successor!” As it turned out, what the gravekeeper had grabbed was not Bai Xiaochun, but his bag of holding. All of a sudden, Bai Hao's soulhoarding pagoda flew out into the open and came to rest on the gravekeeper's palm.

“The person I've picked to be my successor isn't you,” he said coolly, “it's Bai Hao.”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun replied, visibly stunned.

Chapter 843: The Celestials Blood-Hair

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one to be stunned. Bai Hao sat there inside his soulhoarding pagoda, his jaw hanging open and his mind spinning.

The sudden dramatic turn of events was almost too much to take. During the dramatic battle, Bai Hao hadn't dared to come out into the open. Upon returning to the Underworld River, he had cautiously peered out into the world, listening to the gravekeeper and even feeling excited that his Master was about to become the Hell-Emperor.

Never could he have imagined that the gravekeeper would suddenly grab him... and then say that he was the one who was supposed to be the successor.

Worried that Bai Xiaochun might misunderstand the situation, he anxiously said, "Senior, sir... you must have made a mistake, I-"

Off to the side, Bai Xiaochun looked on, stunned. Actually, he wasn't displeased at all. In fact, there was only one thing he was thinking. "My apprentice is going to be the next Hell-Emperor? Heavens, is this really happening...? If my apprentice becomes the next Hell-Emperor, then nobody in the Wildlands will ever dare to provoke me!!"

He was feeling very excited about the whole thing. Obviously, nobody would ever dare to cause problems for him from now on. If they did, he could have his apprentice wave his hand and crush them! He was essentially going to become invincible....

"Nine Serenities King? Grand Heavenmaster? Chen Haosong? Who will dare to provoke me? Who will dare to glare at me!?!"
Profoundly pleased, he slapped his thigh, threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“Wonderful!” he said loudly. “You have made an excellent choice, Great-Grandpa. This apprentice of mine is the perfect fit to be the Hell-Emperor! In fact, nobody in all the Wildlands is more suitable!” Seeing that Bai Hao was about to jump in and say something, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand dismissively in the way that a Master should.

“As your Master, Bai Hao, I will represent you to accept the offer. It's set!”

A profound gleam could be seen in the gravekeeper's eyes as he looked at Bai Xiaochun and then Bai Hao. No one would ever have been able to guess the gravekeeper's plan ahead of time. The truth was that he had never considered Bai Xiaochun as a possible successor. Furthermore, Bai Hao was only one of several that he had been watching!

For example, there was Zhou Yixing, and the soul of the Luochen Clan chosen that Bai Xiaochun had killed. And there were others.... He had many candidates, including the people on the Hell-Emperor Stele. However, the reason that Bai Hao had risen up from among all those candidates to become the official successor had less to do with the gravekeeper and more to do with... Bai Xiaochun!

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun was more important to the gravekeeper than any of the other people on the list of candidates. Naturally, the gravekeeper didn't want him to become the Hell-Emperor. He had a more important mission in mind for Bai Xiaochun....

It was for this reason that Bai Xiaochun happened to encounter Bai Hao when he was teleported into the Wildlands. Back then, when Bai Xiaochun had made his departure, the gravekeeper had appeared, with a very profound look in his eyes.

It was also for this reason that Bai Xiaochun ended up encountering Bai Hao's soul in the Necromancer Kettle....

The gravekeeper wanted Bai Hao and Bai Xiaochun to meet, and

to make that happen, he had interfered behind the scenes several times. Although Bai Xiaochun had been suspicious about certain things over the years, the clues had been too vague for him to come to any conclusions.

Of course, not even the gravekeeper could have anticipated that Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao would become apprentice and Master, would accomplish so many things, and would develop such deep feelings for each other. All the gravekeeper had done was ensure that they met. And if Bai Hao could gain Bai Xiaochun's approval... well then, he would become the chosen successor!

If he was unable to do that, then the gravekeeper wouldn't have hesitated to discard him and pick another candidate. He would have then ensured that the next candidate encountered Bai Xiaochun and got to know him. And he would have continued to do that until he found a successor that Bai Xiaochun approved of.

In fact, as far as he was concerned, Bai Xiaochun's approval was the only main requirement to become his successor!

Of course, he didn't explain that to Bai Xiaochun. After looking closely at Bai Hao and Bai Xiaochun, he turned his attention to Bai Hao, to whom he spoke in a voice that seemed to echo out from ancient times.

“Bai Hao, are you willing to become my successor?”

Looking very nervous, Bai Hao looked over at Bai Xiaochun. “Master....”

Bai Xiaochun was worried that the opportunity might pass. Besides, he really did feel that this was a wonderful thing for Bai Hao. “Hurry up and agree, my little apprentice,” he said. “This is good fortune for you!”

Bai Hao hesitated for a moment, mixed emotions in his eyes as he looked at his Master. The truth was that he didn't care too much about the supposed position of being the successor to the Hell-

Emperor. What he was more worried about was losing out on the happiness he felt by being able to accompany his Master.

His Master was his only family, and the only person he truly liked. That relationship was the most important thing in his entire life.

However, he also realized that his Master had offended too many people in the Wildlands. By becoming the Hell-Emperor, he could make sure that no one ever dared to cause problems for his Master.

Having reached the conclusion that this was definitely the best way of looking at the matter, he gritted his teeth and looked back at the gravekeeper.

“Senior, I am willing to become your successor. However, sir... I can't view you as my Master. For all eternity, I will only ever have one Master!!” Both his voice and his eyes brimmed with determination. He was willing to become the next Hell-Emperor so that he could protect his Master, but that didn't mean that he could change his allegiances.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked to hear Bai Hao's words, and his gaze turned even softer as he looked at his apprentice. However, he knew his apprentice well, and understood how importantly Bai Hao viewed their Master-apprentice relationship.

Although no expression could be seen on the gravekeeper's face, he was smiling inside. The truth was that despite what he knew about Bai Hao, he still wasn't absolutely convinced that he was the perfect person to be the next Hell-Emperor. After all, it was a very important position. As such, he was still performing a few tests.

However, Bai Hao's answer conformed perfectly with what the gravekeeper was looking for. There were no false feelings in them, and they caused the gravekeeper to be even more satisfied.

“Good!” the gravekeeper said, nodding. Although Bai Hao had a lot of questions, the gravekeeper didn't give him an opportunity to

ask them. He waved his hand, causing a streak of red light to fly out toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened as he reflexively reached out to catch... a lock of blood-colored hair!!

As soon as it was out in the open, intense rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth. The sky dimmed, and a whirlwind sprang up around Bai Xiaochun!

It almost seemed like the hair was trying to escape his grasp, prompting him to quickly clasp his hand down to hold it. As he did, he was certain that he could sense something howling, and even detected a dramatic thrum of life force from inside of it.

The gravekeeper's eyes sparkled. He waved his sleeve, and the howling ceased. An invisible seal had been placed on the lock of hair, making it impossible for it to flee, not even if it had more life force than it already did. All it could do was lay there meekly on Bai Xiaochun's palm!

A mere brush with the life force inside the hair caused Bai Xiaochun's entire body to thrum. Of course, he recognized this hair. It was... the very same blood-hair which he had seen on the Celestial!

“The life force in that hair should push your Undying Bones to the peak. Think of it as a gift of good fortune from me to you!” The gravekeeper then took Bai Hao with him as he stepped toward the Underworld River. The water surged as they entered, and then they floated off into the distance until they were gone.

The Underworld River slowly faded away, revealing the dry riverbed. Everything in the area was completely quiet....

Bai Xiaochun was alone on the dry riverbank, holding the blood-red hair, looking off in the direction his apprentice had just vanished in.

Everything had happened so quickly. Although Bai Xiaochun

wasn't interested in becoming the Hell-Emperor, he did hope that his apprentice would succeed at it. However, to have Bai Hao gone so suddenly had him feeling a bit lonely and disappointed.

“When the baby eagles grow up, they have to leave the nest eventually, and soar in the sky....” He sighed, reminding himself that at least he had become someone very important because of everything that had happened. “There’s nobody more powerful than me in the Wildlands now.... My Daoist partner is a deva, my father is a demigod, and my apprentice is the Hell-Emperor! Not even the Grand Heavenmaster could match up to me!”

When he thought about it in this way, his heart began to race with excitement.

Chapter 844: Undying Bones Skyrocket

Happy for his apprentice, and excited about his new status, he looked down at the hair he held, and his heart yet again began to thump.

“A lock of the Celestial’s hair... It was the only red hair on his head.... I can only imagine how important a treasured item like this would be to the Celestial....” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun glanced around subconsciously.

The cultivators that had previously been stationed here to guard the Underworld River Restricted Area were nowhere to be seen, leaving him completely alone. Perhaps it was the doing of the gravekeeper, or perhaps they left because of the shocking battle and the destruction of the Great Wall. The entire structure of the Wildlands would be changing. At this point, he gritted his teeth.

“Fudge. What the hell am I afraid of? Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper gave this to me! It's mine now! Besides, according to what Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper said, if I absorb this life force, my Undying Bones will climb to the very peak. Even if this hair belonged to someone more powerful, I would still absorb it!”

After the tempering he had experienced in the Wildlands, Bai Xiaochun had become somewhat more courageous than he had been in the past. Therefore, he found an area in the Underworld River Restricted Area that was suitable to hew out a temporary immortal's cave, and then went into seclusion to cultivate!

**

Somewhere else in the Wildlands, in what seemed like a different dimension, there was a huge black river that was none other than the Underworld River.

It was as black as night, and yet, it was still possible to see a huge palace at the very end of the swirling river water.

The palace was also black, and very sinister in appearance as it rose up over the river water. There was something consummately powerful about it, and there was a constant stream of souls which flew toward it, encircled it, and then vanished on their way to being reincarnated.

This was none other than the Hell-Emperor Palace!

This place controlled reincarnation, and determined matters of life and death!

In one of the grand halls in that palace, two rows of statues could be seen lining the walls, that looked like underworld generals. At the very end of the hall, beyond the statues, was a huge throne made of black bones!

Suddenly, the gravekeeper appeared, walking through the hall until he was at the throne, upon which he sat down. He was surrounded by a domineering aura, making him seem like a paragon or a god. He wore an imperial crown, as well as a black robe embroidered with an underworld dragon!

With the wave of a sleeve, he caused Bai Hao to materialize right in front of him.

He was clearly ill at ease. He looked around at the awe-inspiring hall with its profound aura of death, and then turned to look at the gravekeeper, who sat there on his throne, face completely expressionless. Bai Hao quickly bowed his head and clasped hands in greeting.

“Bai Hao!” the gravekeeper said, his eyes shining brightly, and his voice echoing like heavenly thunder.

The gravekeeper seemed very different than he had when talking with Bai Xiaochun earlier. Right now, he absolutely seemed like the mighty Hell-Emperor!

Bai Hao could tell that, and a very serious expression overtook his face.

“Listen well, Bai Hao!” the gravekeeper continued, his voice thrumming with mysterious power that pierced into his soul body and resonated with his very soul. Because of this, the gravekeeper would be able to see the tiniest fluctuations in Bai Hao’s soul, and would know instantly whether or not he was lying or telling the truth!

“Bai Xiaochun is currently your Master, and will be in the future! Although I took it upon myself to change your fate, all I did was place you at Bai Xiaochun’s side. He was the one who took you as an apprentice; it was not my arrangement. It was simply your destiny!

“Furthermore, the reason you have become my successor is not because I approve of you, but rather... because your Master Bai Xiaochun approves of you!

“Remember well: your mission is not to guard the Underworld River, nor is it to look over reincarnation. Instead... you are to help your Master in caring for the Underworld River. You are to defend your Master! And if you ever betray him, the Underworld River itself will ensure that you are killed in body and soul!” As he spoke, the gravekeeper’s voice grew louder and louder until it was a crashing boom that caused everything to shake violently, and even caused the water of the Underworld River to vibrate.

Countless souls began to tremble and shake, and then offer obeisance to the Underworld Palace.

Bai Hao was shaken, but it was without the slightest hesitation that he said, “The word betray doesn’t exist for Bai Hao!”

His words were spoken with the utmost solemnity and honesty. In his world, nothing was more important than his Master Bai Xiaochun, who was his only family!

In fact, he wasn’t offended or worried at all by what the gravekeeper had said. In fact, it conformed perfectly with how he felt. And his answer could not have been more forthright!

A flicker of praise passed through the gravekeeper's eyes. This had been his final test of the Bai Hao. The position of Hell-Emperor was too important, and he had to ensure that he didn't make any mistakes. As of this point, he was convinced that Bai Xiaochun had made the right choice!

“Next month... you will be the Hell-Emperor!” With that, he waved his finger at Bai Hao, sending his legacy and his divine abilities into him!

Furthermore, outside of the Underworld Palace, countless magical symbols could be seen, flickering brightly until they transformed into a huge vortex. The spinning of that vortex indicated... that the passing of the legacy had begun!

As the Hell-Emperor's legacy began to be passed on, Bai Xiaochun was in his immortal's cave in the Underworld River Restricted Area, absorbing the life force from the Celestial's blood-hair.

The Undying Codex was divided into Skin, Muscle, Tendons, Bones, and Blood!

Bai Xiaochun had started from the foundation and worked all the way up to the fourth volume. And right now, he was in the Powered Bones level. After that came Heavenly Bones, and in the end, the true Undying Bones!

The key to cultivating his Undying Technique was life force. Only by having access to enough life force could one achieve the meteoric rise that one sought!

In the past, he had relied on his Eternal Parasol to absorb life force from the Wildlander chosen. That was what had helped him to break through from the Tempered Bones level to Powered Bones.

But now... with the life force that the Celestial had gone through countless trials and tribulations to cultivate into his blood-hair, Bai Xiaochun was making shocking progress.

Intense rumbling sounds could be heard, and he shook physically as his bones creaked and cracked. It was as if he were completely changing his skeleton, causing him to rise rapidly through the fourth volume of the Undying Codex.

In fact, he immediately broke through to the Heavenly Bones level!

He became like a black hole, absorbing all of the life force from the blood-hair, and then using the Undying Codex techniques to send it rushing into his bones, utterly transforming them!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

No one outside could hear any of the shocking sound, but Bai Xiaochun could hear it as clear as day. Furthermore, he could sense his Heavenly Bones rapidly absorbing the life force that continued to pour into them.

His Heavenly Bones instantly went into the third stratum, then the fourth, fifth, seventh... and ninth!!

It was skyrocketing!

Another breakthrough!

He was now in the first stratum of the Undying Bones, and yet, had only absorbed a portion of the life force from the Celestial's blood-hair. Now, that life force continued to propel him through the Undying Bones level!

The final level of the Undying Bones required a massive amount of life force, more than all three of the previous levels put together. Furthermore, once he reached the peak... it meant that his fleshly body would be at an astonishingly high level!

His fleshly body would be comparable to a deva! His skin, muscles, and bones... would be at a level that would make them almost impossible to destroy!!

Later on would come the Undying Blood, which came with

dramatic restorative powers. At that point, his fleshly body would be very close to the truly undying level.... Then, he would be at the same level as the Blood Ancestor back in the River-Defying Sect!

At that point... his cultivation of the Undying Codex would be complete!

Right now, he relied on the blood-hair of the Celestial to advance by leaps and bounds. His Undying Bones advanced from the first stratum to the fourth, and then continued!!

Fifth stratum, sixth, seventh....

Chapter 845: Shaking The Wildlands

The blood-hair was slowly transforming into ash, and Bai Xiaochun was completely wrapped up in his cultivation. As such, he didn't even know how much time was passing. By the time he reached the seventh stratum of the Undying Bones, half a month had gone by.

There was simply too much life force within that lock of blood-hair, and as it poured into Bai Xiaochun, he continued to advance through the levels of the Undying Codex.

In fact, it seemed possible that, by the time he reached the peak of the Undying Bones, there might still be life force left over, which he could then use as fuel for his future Undying Blood!

Meanwhile, word was spreading through the lands about how the Celestial, along with an imposter Bai Xiaochun, had fought with the Hell-Emperor. The news spread like wildfire, and was the subject of discussion among soul cultivators, necromancers, and savage tribes alike.

It was a monumental event, and anyone who heard about it for the first time would gasp in response.

Although not everyone in the Wildlands and the Arch-Emperor Dynasty knew who the Celestial was, many did. He was widely understood to be the emperor ruling in the Heavenspan River region, someone similar in status to the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, with a cultivation base that surpassed the Demigod Realm.

He was the reason that, years ago, the Arch-Emperor Dynasty had relocated to the Wildlands. Despite how many years had passed since then, the two sides of the conflict had continued to fight.

The endless sieges of the Great Wall had created seas of blood, as well as constant enmity. Although the conflict hadn't reached the

point where no resolution was possible, it was nearly at that point.

The common people of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty yearned to fight their way back into the Heavenspan River region and reestablish the glory of their dynasty. And now... the emperor of that Heavenspan River region had joined forces with a ghost to fight the Hell-Emperor. It was truly a shocking matter.

Even more astonishing was how the ghostess who had impersonated Bai Xiaochun ended up being seriously injured, and fleeing. The Celestial was also hurt. It was a matter of great excitement to the Wildlanders, and caused their morale to soar.

The fact that the four sections of the Great Wall had collapsed caused countless people in the Wildlands to be filled with the urge to charge forth in battle! In fact, many suggestions and proposals were made to that effect.

But the Grand Heavenmaster was a wise person, and knew that a world war like that would be very costly. Besides, upon making his escape, the Celestial had placed temporary defensive measure in the place of the collapsed Great Wall.

Those defenses... could not be broken through!

However, that didn't hold the Grand Heavenmaster back from taking advantage of the opportunity to begin preparing for war!

It would be a war in which even the common people fought. Furthermore, it gave the Grand Heavenmaster a further reason to continue the enforcement of the Proclamation of Universal Grace. That made him more popular than ever among the people. In a rare turn of events, the four heavenly kings supported him. The truth was that the coming war would be vastly important. And one of the main things on the minds of the Giant Ghost King and other demigods was that they knew very well who the current Hell-Emperor was... but weren't sure about who the next one would be....

Because of the support offered by the four heavenly kings, the entire Wildlands was shaken, and everyone thirsted to do battle.

It was at around this time that a third bit of news began to make the rounds. It was hard to say where it started, but the nature of the news was even more shocking than the first two. Whether it was in Arch-Emperor City, the four kingly cities, or in the various clans and tribes, soon, everyone was talking about it.

The news pertained to Bai Xiaochun. Supposedly, he had another identity in the Wildlands, and although no one knew the exact details, they were sure that it was a position of incredible power and authority!

“If that ghostess who fought the exalted Hell-Emperor was impersonating Bai Xiaochun, then... where has the real Bai Xiaochun been hiding all these years?”

“Hey, that’s right! Bai Xiaochun must have been in hiding somewhere here in the Wildlands! But who exactly is he disguised as!?”

As this news spread, people began to speculate about the matter, and before long, people were saying that Bai Xiaochun... was actually the former inspections commissioner of Arch-Emperor City, the earthly necromancer Bai Hao!

It was a shocking concept that shook the whole Wildlands. Heavenly marquis clans, heavenly duke clans, and the countless other people who had formed grudges with Bai Xiaochun over the years, especially the direct bloodline successors and the chosen, almost couldn’t believe what they were hearing. However, they were also elated. As far as they were concerned, whether Bai Hao really was Bai Xiaochun or not, it gave them the perfect chance to kill him. Even being an earthy necromancer wouldn’t keep him safe!

“Hahaha!! I knew that Bai Xiaochun was up to no good. He impersonated Bai Hao! How evil-minded and devious!”

“It doesn’t matter whether you’re really Bai Hao, or Bai Xiaochun! I refuse to exist under the same sky as you! I’ll never forget the humiliation of that Aphrodisiac Pill!!”

“Kill Bai Hao!!” The direct bloodline successors were particularly riled up, and immediately began searching high and low for Bai Xiaochun.

The marquises such as Zhao Xionglin and Liu Yong were particularly excited, especially Zhao Xionglin. After he heard the news, he laughed so loud that it filled the entire Zhao Clan mansion.

As for the people who had developed close relationships with Bai Xiaochun over the years, they were simply stunned. That was especially true of many people in Giant Ghost City.

The Spirit Advent King’s daughter Xu Shan was completely flabbergasted.

As for Zhou Yixing, he had long since gone into hiding, his heart filled with bitterness. He took Song Que with him. When Song Que heard the speculation that Bai Xiaochun was Bai Hao, he felt completely and utterly thunderstruck!

However, many people noticed that neither the Grand Heavenmaster, nor the four heavenly kings, nor the ten heavenly dukes would say a single word about the matter of Bai Xiaochun.

Before long, the heavenly marquises mysteriously stopped talking about the matter, and they even restricted their clan members from discussing it. Zhao Xionglin appeared to be frightened by something, and unhesitatingly went into secluded meditation.

As these two wild situations regarding Bai Xiaochun’s identity appeared, a fourth bit of news spread, news that surpassed everything else and shook the Wildlands to the core!

In fact, it was something that struck every Wildlander deep in

the soul!

“The Hell-Emperor picked Bai Hao... to be his successor!!”

“Bai Hao isn't Bai Xiaochun. He's the next Hell-Emperor!!”

This news was like an invisible slap to the face to countless individuals in the Wildlands who had longed to kill Bai Hao. They felt the world spinning around them as they realized that they would never again be able to give voice to any thoughts about killing Bai Hao.

“Heavens! He's the next Hell-Emperor! This... this means that no one in the Wildlands will ever dare to offend him!”

“Dammit! Why does it have to be this way!? The Bai Clan from Giant Ghost City wanted to kill him, but in the critical moment, the Giant Ghost King protected him! The chosen of Arch-Emperor City wanted to kill him, but in the critical moment, the Grand Heavenmaster saved him!”

“Then he committed the grave offense of killing a heavenly marquis, and all of the aristocracy in the entire dynasty teamed up against him. But then, his status as an earthly necromancer saved him. Now... when his identity was brought into question, and everyone wanted to kill him... Fudge! I can't believe he's going to be the next Hell-Emperor!!” Everyone who had grudges with Bai Xiaochun harbored similar thoughts upon hearing the news.

Whether it was Zhou Hong, Little Wolfgang, Zhao Xionglin, or others, they were struck mute with fear, and could do little more than wail inwardly in grief.

Furthermore, they couldn't stop from wondering what would happen now that someone like him, someone who had caused trouble wherever he went, now had such a position of authority....

Bai Xiaochun had rocked the Wildlands and established a legend.... In fact, many people now viewed Bai Xiaochun as so fantastic... that he was like a god!!

Of course, Zhou Yixing was beyond delighted. Song Que breathed a sigh of relief, and was very glad that everyone had been wrong in their speculations. Clearly, it had been the right decision after all to follow Bai Hao. He was going to be the next Hell-Emperor!

“Hmph!” Song Que said arrogantly in his heart. “How could Bai Xiaochun possibly be Bai Hao? He doesn’t even qualify to polish his shoes!”

Chapter 846: The Hell-Emperors Successor

Only the Grand Heavenmaster and the other most powerful figures were privy to the general truth of the matter. To them, the matter of the Hell-Emperor's successor was no big surprise. The main thing they weren't sure about was whether the Hell-Emperor would arrange for Bai Xiaochun to continue to use the identity of Bai Hao.

After all, the name Bai Xiaochun was very sensitive, and therefore, having someone named Bai Hao as the next Hell-Emperor would resolve many issues.

As the news was still rocking the Wildlands, roughly a month into Bai Xiaochun's session of secluded cultivation, the Underworld River materialized in the sky above the Wildlands!

It took only a moment for everything to turn dark, and massive pressure to weigh down.

Everyone looked up into the sky and saw the huge Underworld River, churning and seething as countless souls inside turned in a specific direction and prostrated themselves in worship!

They weren't the only souls to do so! All of the souls in the Wildlands in general all did exactly the same thing!

The direction they bowed in was none other than Arch-Emperor City!

Numerous structures in Arch-Emperor City had begun to shine with black light, including the heavenly marquis pagodas, the heavenly duke pagodas, and the imperial palace. The old dragon in the clouds above the city let out a massive roar, but didn't dare to fly up into the sky.

The common people, the nobility, the aristocracy, the Grand Heavenmaster, and even the Arch-Emperor, all walked out into the open and looked up at the river.

Gasps could be heard in the city, as well as in other locations in the Wildlands....

Everyone knew exactly what was happening....

The Hell-Emperor's legacy was being passed onto his successor!

With the Underworld River having taken over the sky, everything was cast into darkness. Neither sun nor moon were visible, although, there was something like starlight that spilled down onto the lands below.

Anyone who looked closely would see that the supposed starlight actually came from innumerable souls within the Underworld River. Soul fire burned on them, which from a distance, made them look like stars. It was something most people were seeing for the first time in their lives!

It was with bated breath that everyone stared up at the huge river. They felt pressure that seemed to come from within their bones, or their souls, a pressure that resulted in feelings of reverence. Soul cultivators and savages alike, regardless of the level of their cultivation bases, including even the Grand Heavenmaster and other powerful experts like him, all felt their hearts pounding with awe.

It was something instinctual, something branded into their blood, something that even the wild beasts in the Wildlands possessed.

It was hard to say who did it first, but soon, endless crowds of people were dropping to their knees in worship. Everywhere in the Wildlands, people bowed in the direction of Arch-Emperor City. Common people and aristocrats alike, the Grand Heavenmaster and the four heavenly kings, all bent over in worship!

All living things offered obeisance!

It was a show of respect to the Underworld River, and an expression of reverence for the Hell-Emperor!

Bai Xiaochun didn't participate, because he was still in secluded meditation. And there was one other person who refrained from offering worship. The Arch-Emperor! Despite being a mere figurehead in the modern age, he was still the Arch-Emperor, and he was the only person who qualified to continue to look up somberly into the sky.

Gradually, a figure appeared within the seething, howling Underworld River up in the sky. It was the gravekeeper, and this was the first time he had ever shown his face to the throngs of living beings in the Wildlands!

He didn't look at all like he had when dealing with Bai Xiaochun. He wore a black robe, but this one was decorated with swirling underworld dragons. It made him seem like a supreme and venerable being, an effect which was enhanced by the imperial crown he wore. He truly seemed like an emperor, the type who could shake all of the Wildlands!

The people in the Wildlands were all deeply shaken by the sight of the gravekeeper. Gasps could be heard, and many eyes began to shine with passion and veneration. The truth was that, to these people... the Hell-Emperor was in some ways more important than the Arch-Emperor!

After all, the position of Arch-Emperor was hereditary, and passed down from generation to generation. But up til now... there had only been a single Hell-Emperor in heaven and earth!

To the people of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, the Hell-Emperor... was like a divine figure, a god to whom they prayed!

“Hell-Emperor!”

“Hell-Emperor!!”

“Hell-Emperor!!!”

The sound of their voices joined together, rolling out across the Wildlands and causing everything to tremble.

Their god was present, causing everyone to be deeply moved!

As the thunderous sound of their voices filled all creation, the gravekeeper waved his right hand, causing a silence to fall.

At that point, the Underworld River seethed, and a second figure came into view!

He was young and handsome, with fair skin, wearing a long black robe, and emanating an energy that seemed capable of suppressing the boundless light of the soul fire. As he stood in front of the gravekeeper, there was nothing about him that seemed out of place. In fact, it almost seemed... like he belonged there.

The instant he came into view, countless people in the Wildlands gasped in shock, and there were many who couldn't hold back from blurting out their thoughts.

“Bai Hao!”

“Earthly Necromancer Bai Hao!!”

“So the rumors were true! Bai Hao... is going to be the next Hell-Emperor!!”

Zhou Hong, Little Wolfgod, and the other chosen were all shaking visibly, their hearts filled with bitterness. If they had such a reaction, there was little need to mention the others who had had conflicts with Bai Xiaochun. Thankfully, most people had been prepared for this outcome, otherwise there would have been many more people who lost their composure.

However, the Grand Heavenmaster and the four heavenly kings, those who were more familiar with Bai Xiaochun than the average person, were actually stunned by what they were seeing.

“That's not Bai Xiaochun! That's the soul slave who always kept him company....” The Grand Heavenmaster was the first one to understand the truth. It was for the sake of this Bai Hao that Bai Xiaochun had killed a heavenly marquis! That was how the Grand Heavenmaster had come to learn that Bai Hao was Bai Xiaochun's

apprentice!

“His apprentice is going to be the Hell-Emperor!!” Even the powerful Grand Heavenmaster was shaken by the development.

The four heavenly kings had similar reactions, especially the Giant Ghost King.

They had seen Bai Xiaochun close up. That, coupled with their powerful cultivation bases, ensured that they detected the differences between Bai Hao and Bai Xiaochun!

Although such differences might not be visible with the naked eye, they were as plain as day to the acute divine sense of the demigods.

“They're not the same person!” the Giant Ghost King thought with a gasp. This turn of events was something he could never have predicted. He had assumed that Bai Xiaochun would be the one to succeed the Hell-Emperor! He was also aware of who Bai Hao was, and therefore, was just as stunned as the Grand Heavenmaster!

Chen Haosong and the other top most powerful experts were also incredibly perceptive, and were thus able to come to the conclusion that Bai Hao and Bai Xiaochun were not the same person!

As for Zhou Yixing, he knew Bai Xiaochun better than anyone in the Wildlands. Although his cultivation base wasn't sufficient to perceive the truth, there were other ways for him to tell!

“That's... milord's apprentice Bai Hao?!” Zhou Yixing was stunned. In contrast, Song Que didn't notice any differences at all, and remained as excited as he had been before.

Of the people who had witnessed that spectacular battle recently, some did not notice the clues, and had mixed feelings as a result. Others did notice the clues, and were shocked. Regardless not a single person wasn't shaken in some way as they looked at those

two figures high up in the sky! At the same time, the Hell-Emperor Stele in the middle of Arch-Emperor City slowly faded away into nothing.

It was in that exact same moment that, back in the Underworld River Restricted Area, in Bai Xiaochun's temporary immortal's cave, a tremor ran through him, and intense rumbling sounds filled his body as the Celestial's blood-hair transformed into ash.

Indescribable levels of life force coursed through him, pushing his Undying Bones all the way to the very peak!

When that happened, his eyes opened. He currently felt power swirling within him the likes of which defied imagination! And it was ready to explode out into the open at any moment.

When it did, he could topple mountains and drain seas!

“The great circle of the Undying Bones!”

His eyes began to shine like heavenly bodies, illuminating the entire immortal's cave!

Chapter 847: Taking Off The Mask

The qi and blood inside of him was powerful to an indescribable degree!

Furthermore, he yet again felt as though a mountain were crushing down onto him from above, which was none other than... the fourth of the five shackles inside of him!

He couldn't break through that shackle right now. He would need to wait until he became a deva!

At that time, he would finally be able to cultivate the last level of the Undying Codex...

Undying Blood!!

"I finally mastered the Undying Bones!" He laughed heartily, but before he had a chance to feel very pleased with himself, he sensed that the passing of the Hell-Emperor's legacy was occurring up in the sky.

Stunned, he blurred into motion, appearing outside of his immortal's cave to see the gravekeeper up above, as well as... his apprentice, Bai Hao!!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide with anticipation and well wishes.

High up in the Underworld River Restricted Area, Bai Hao suddenly sensed that Bai Xiaochun was looking at him. Shivering, he turned his head to look at Bai Xiaochun down in the Wildlands, and his eyes shone with respect and deep emotion. Furthermore, there were many people who noticed that, and were quite taken aback.

It was at this point that the gravekeeper reached up, took off his imperial crown and then tossed it over to Bai Hao.

When it landed on Bai Hao's head, he had no choice but to look away from Bai Xiaochun.

As the crown settled down, Bai Hao shivered, and his energy suddenly skyrocketed. Intense pressure weighed down, pressure that surpassed that of devas or even demigods!

Intense rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth, and the Underworld River churned madly, as though the source of that river were being changed. Instead of coming from the gravekeeper, it came from Bai Hao!

At the same time, nine underworld dragons appeared on Bai Hao's black robe, all of them howling as Bai Hao's energy continued to rise!

As for the gravekeeper, as soon as he took the crown off, his robe turned into an ordinary black garment. His aura suddenly seemed vastly weaker than before, and he looked like an old man rotting away into death.

Smiling, he looked at Bai Hao, who in turn looked out over the Wildlands and then spoke four words.

“I am the Hell-Emperor!” After speaking the words, he added a line in his heart!

“And I shall protect my Master!”

Shocking rumbling sounds echoed out as if to bear witness to his words. At the same time, the countless souls in the Underworld River all bowed to him, their eyes shining with passion as they cried out in piercing voices.

“Greetings, Hell-Emperor!” The living beings who could hear the sound were all shaken. And then, one by one, they joined in, until their voices caused all heaven and earth to tremble.

“Greetings, Hell-Emperor!!”

Everyone from the Grand Heavenmaster to the four heavenly kings all clasped hands and bowed in Bai Hao's direction. They knew that for many years to come, this person would be the Wildlands' Hell-Emperor!

Zhou Yixing's heart trembled as he bowed, and Song Que was filled with excitement. Although Song Que was still loyal to the River-Defying Sect, the fact that he was the pet of the Hell-Emperor meant that from now on, no one in the Wildlands would ever dare to provoke him.

Even the Arch-Emperor and the gravekeeper now bowed their heads respectfully to Bai Hao!

Not only was it a show of respect to the reigning Hell-Emperor, it was a long-standing tradition within the Arch-Emperor Dynasty!

Soul cultivators and wild beasts alike, all living things, did the same thing. With the exception of one person....

One person didn't bow.

He stood there looking up with a smile on his face. Bai Xiaochun! He was the only person in all of the Wildlands who didn't offer formal greetings!

After all, despite the fact that Bai Hao was now the Hell-Emperor, he was still Bai Xiaochun's apprentice. Of course, Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been more pleased for his apprentice. And in terms of his own life, it really felt like he had reached another major milestone.

"My Daoist partner is a deva. My father-in-law is a demigod. And my apprentice is the Hell-Emperor...." A wonderful feeling of smug contentment filled his heart. It was almost like he was the secret overlord of the Wildlands!

"What a pity that hardly anyone knows Bai Hao is my apprentice." He sighed regretfully. Although he didn't know about how the Grand Heavenmaster had recently issued orders to quell the talk about him, he did know that very few people were aware that he had actually been impersonating Bai Hao.

Even as he stood there sighing, Bai Hao, the gravekeeper, and the Underworld River all faded away, and the sky returned to normal.

Although the ceremony of succession had been short, it was profoundly significant. Furthermore, it was easy to imagine how, from this day on, stories about Bai Hao would abound. As time went on, his position as the Hell-Emperor would ensure that everyone in the Wildlands revered and respected him.

After watching his apprentice fade away, Bai Xiaochun sighed and then looked down at the transmission jade slip he had in his hand. That jade slip had vibrated numerous times during his session of cultivation, but he hadn't had time to pay much attention to it. But now, he was in the great circle of the Undying Bones, and his apprentice had become the Hell-Emperor. Therefore, he now had time to take it out for inspection.

The instant he looked closer, his jaw dropped. Almost all of the messages were from Zhou Yixing, and provided all of the details of what had happened while he was in seclusion.

After perusing the messages, Bai Xiaochun came to the realization that his identity... had not been revealed!!

"I can't believe people don't know!" he thought, his eyes widening. He immediately drew the conclusion that it was the work of the gravekeeper. Either that, or the Grand Heavenmaster had taken steps to make sure that the public didn't realize who he was.

When he saw what Zhou Yixing had said about how some people had guessed that he was Bai Hao, but that the rumor had not gone very far, he realized the truth.

It was all a protection for him!

After all, he had done many momentous things in the Wildlands, things that could be detrimental to him after returning to the Heavenspan River region. If word got back there about who he was, it could make things difficult. On the one hand, it was a bit disappointing to have done so many amazing things but not be able to brag about them.

On the other hand, the people who really needed to know, did know. The upper echelons in the Wildlands all knew his true identity, and also knew who his apprentice was.

“As long as the important people know, I guess that’s enough. Hmmmphh! If I have the chance, I’m going to go visit the Grand Heavenmaster. This time he’ll be the one offering greetings to me! And as for that Nine Serenities King, I’ll have to make sure my apprentice teaches him a lesson sooner or later!

“Otherwise, how could I possibly remain safe in the Wildlands?” At this point, his heart began to pound a bit harder. When all was said and done, he was still tied to the River-Defying Sect. Although there were some people in the Wildlands that he would miss dearly, there were even more people in the River-Defying Sect. Whether it was Li Qinghou, Hou Xiaomei, Song Junwan, Big Fatty Zhang... all of them were faces that popped up in his thoughts constantly.

“I’ve been away for a long time....” he thought, sighing. Actually, the more he thought about it, it wasn’t the Heavenspan River region in general that he cared about, it was the River-Defying Sect.

“Ah, whatever. I guess I should just get back to the River-Defying Sect. If I end up missing the Wildlands too much, I can always just figure out a way to bring the River-Defying Sect back here....” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he patted his bag of holding to produce the command medallion the gravekeeper had given him, which would allow him passage through the Deadmire.

“There are still a few things I have to take care of before leaving. And now that I think about it, it wouldn’t be good to use my apprentice’s face to do them.” It was a bit frightening to think about going back to his true appearance. However, considering his high status, he decided that the time had come. Flicking his sleeve, he took off his mask.

As of this moment... his true face was visible for all to see!

Chapter 848: Farewells

“Zhou Yixing has been my follower for years now. Since I'm leaving, I'll need to make sure he's taken care of.

“And then there's Song Que. Since I'm his uncle, I have no choice but to take him with me.

“And what about the Giant Ghost King...?” He wanted to go say his goodbyes to the Giant Ghost King, but the thought of Mistress Red-Dust made his head swell with frustration. After some thought about the matter, he sighed.

“Ah, whatever. I'm going to see my sweetie again later anyway.

“I brought a reign of terror to the Wildlands that lasted for many years. Now it's time to leave... and there's no need to make it a solemn occasion.”

Shaking his head, he clasped his hands behind his back and contemplated how it actually made him a lot more mysterious to vanish without a trace. Enjoying his ability to revel in his success, he sent a message to Zhou Yixing, telling him to come to the Underworld River Restricted Area.

**

Zhou Yixing was currently holed up in Giant Ghost City, and when he got the message, his jaw dropped, and his heart began to race. He was suddenly struck with the premonition that Bai Xiaochun... was going to leave.

Obviously, now that Bai Xiaochun's apprentice had become the Hell-Emperor, he was going to go home. And the fact that he was asking Zhou Yixing to come see him beforehand was very telling.

Zhou Yixing's excitement began to build. He felt more than ever that his decision all those years ago had definitely been the best decision he had ever made!

Filled with anticipation, he tossed Song Que into his bag of holding and then hurried off in the direction of the Underworld River Restricted Area.

While Bai Xiaochun waited for Zhou Yixing, he sat down on the bank of the river and thought back to everything he had done in the Wildlands. Then started reminiscing about the River-Defying Sect, and before long, he felt his heart tugging him in the direction of home.

Eventually, it was midnight, and vast quantities of mist appeared, as well as an intense aura. The Underworld River... once again became visible, seething and churning right there in front of Bai Xiaochun.

For the first time, Bai Xiaochun actually felt some connection to the Underworld River water. He could just barely sense the aura of his disciple, which then began to grow stronger and stronger. A moment later, Bai Hao materialized right in front of him.

He wore an imperial crown, and imperial robes, but in every other way, looked just like he always had. An emotional look could be seen in his eyes, as well as a gleam of respect. As soon as he appeared in front of Bai Xiaochun, he clasped hands and bowed.

“Master!”

Bai Xiaochun could see that his apprentice's feelings toward him had not change just because he had become the Hell-Emperor. He wasn't surprised at all that his apprentice had shown up, and in fact, would have been surprised if he didn't.

“What does it feel like to be the Hell-Emperor?” he asked, smiling broadly.

“I have a lot to learn from Senior Gravekeeper,” Bai Hao replied softly. It was clear in his eyes that he already missed Bai Xiaochun. “I'm still not able to unleash the divine abilities of the Underworld River yet, and--”

Before he could say anything else, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand dismissively and interrupted, “Make sure to treat Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper with the same respect you treat me. Pay good attention to what he teaches you, that way you can learn to be a good Hell-Emperor. Unfortunately, Master has to leave. Otherwise I would pass on some more of my special divine abilities to you.”

He sighed, already realizing how much he missed his apprentice.

Bai Hao stood there silently for a moment, his mind filled with all sorts of memories of the things he and his Master had done. However, he knew that his Master was from the Heavenspan River region, and that getting back home to his sect had been his goal all along.

“Master,” he said in a serious tone, “you need to be careful on your way back.... The Heavenspan River region is a very different place. I’ll do my best to master the Underworld River divine abilities, and before long, I’ll be able to send my mind anywhere in the world!”

Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily. The two of them chatted a bit more. Obviously, the moment of departure was coming. Bai Xiaochun spent most of the time exhorting Bai Hao to become a good Hell-Emperor. As for Bai Hao, he was obviously worried that the trip back to the Heavenspan River region wasn’t going to be safe, and offered a lot of advice about what to do.

It was just like old times when they would work on various problems and issues together. After a bit of time passed, Bai Hao suddenly said, “Master, remember Zhao Xionglin and Liu Yong? And that Chen Haosong? They treated you disrespectfully on multiple occasions. I’ll definitely make sure they regret that!

“And as for... Sect Mother Xu Shan, and Sect Mother Chen Manyao, and Sect Mother Zhou Zimo... I’ll watch out for them for you. If anybody dares to harbor any evil intentions, I’ll take action immediately!

“Apprentice will also take good care of the Giant Ghost King.

“About those chosen like Zhou Hong, well, they provoked you over and over, Master! Don’t worry, I won’t let them get away with what they did!” Bai Hao had clearly paid very close attention to everyone who had either caused problems for his Master, or who had treated him with kindness.

Most other Masters in the world would remind their apprentices of the old saying a great man does not bear petty grudges. But Bai Xiaochun was actually very pleased by what he was hearing, and his eyes gleamed with approval.

“Excellent. Don’t let any of those people off the hook easily! And don’t forget that codger the Nine Serenities King. Make sure to find an opportunity to give him a good thrashing!” Master and apprentice went on to have a long discussion about how to teach all of these people a lesson. In the end, Bai Xiaochun was very pleased, and couldn’t help but marvel at how well his apprentice understood him.

“Oh right, Master, I almost forgot. With the power of the Underworld River that I have at my disposal, and with the advice of Senior Gravekeeper, I’ve already created the formulas for twenty-and twenty-one-colored flame!” Although he spoke the words casually, the truth was that one of the reasons he hadn’t mastered the Underworld River divine abilities yet was that he had been spending so much time using the Underworld River power to work on those flame formulas.

He had produced both formulas in only a month!

“Unfortunately, it seems that twenty-one-colored flame is the limit. I’m not sure why, and I think you won’t be able to tell for sure until after you actually conjure that flame. As for twenty-two colored flame, even Senior Gravekeeper didn’t have anything to say about it. Twenty-two colored flame is just too difficult for me right now. Hopefully you can give me some more time to work on

it.” Bai Hao made a grasping gesture, and a jade slip materialized out of thin air.

Bai Xiaochun was shaken. Considering how high his skill in flame conjuring already was, he knew that things got more difficult as they went along. The fact that Bai Hao had been able to create these two formulas in such a short time meant that he must have expended significant effort.

A warm look could be seen in his eyes as he accepted the jade slip and then looked at his apprentice.

“How thoughtful of you, Hao’er!” he said softly.

Bai Hao was very pleased with these words. Although he had become the Hell-Emperor, in his heart, everything was just like before. A kind word of approval from Bai Xiaochun was enough to make him very happy.

“Master, it’s still early. Since nobody understands twenty-colored flame better than me right now, let’s take advantage of this opportunity to conjure it together. What do you say?”

After a moment of thought, Bai Xiaochun nodded. Right there on the banks of the Underworld River, Master and apprentice worked on their last flame conjuring together. Everything went very smoothly. After all, they had been thinking about this type of flame for a very long time. And now that Bai Hao commanded the Underworld River, he had plenty of souls at his disposal.

In only a few days’ time, Bai Xiaochun successfully conjured a twenty-colored flame, which caused bright light to fill the sky, and the lands to shake.

Twenty-colored flame was the highest level for earthly necromancers. In the current Arch-Emperor Dynasty, there was only one other necromancer who could conjure it. With Bai Xiaochun able to do so, there were now two!

If he pushed past this level and conjured a twenty-one-colored

flame, then he would become a legendary, never-before-seen... heavenly necromancer!

According to the legends, if one could use a twenty-one-colored flame to perform a spirit enhancement on a nascent soul, one could immediately break through to the Deva Realm. Of course, it was just a legend. No one had done it successfully.

Filled with excitement, Bai Xiaochun went on to work on a twenty-one-colored flame.

However, twenty-one-colored flame was very difficult. Even with the formula and Bai Hao's help, Bai Xiaochun could do nothing more than start to get familiar with the process. Success was not something that could be had in a few short days.

In order to make sure that his Master could continue to work on flame conjuring after leaving the Wildlands, Bai Hao hid the fact that he was gritting his teeth from effort, and finally called upon the Underworld River divine abilities he knew. He summoned a mind-boggling number of souls from inside, which he gave to Bai Xiaochun to use in flame conjuring.

Even Bai Xiaochun gasped at the number of souls. As long as he didn't fail too many times, he definitely had enough to eventually conjure a twenty-one-colored flame.

It was at just about this time that Zhou Yixing finally showed up.

Chapter 849: Is This Some Sort Of Mistake...?

Bai Xiaochun sensed Zhou Yixing almost as soon as he stepped into the Underworld River Restricted Area. As for Zhou Yixing, he immediately caught sight of both Bai Xiaochun... and Bai Hao!

In that instant, Zhou Yixing's heart leapt. He knew exactly who Bai Hao was; he was a figure of unparalleled power and importance in the Wildlands.

“So, Bai Hao really is the Hell-Emperor.... And milord really is his Master!” Although he had speculated all of these things before, to see it confirmed with his own eyes caused his heart to tremble with shock.

Normally speaking, he would never be able to even enter the presence of someone as important as the Hell-Emperor. Trembling, he hurried forward toward the two. However, he didn't forget the relationship between Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao. The first person he offered formal greetings to was Bai Xiaochun, and after that, Bai Hao.

“Yixing offers greetings, milord! Greetings, exalted Hell-Emperor!” He ducked his head nervously, unable to conceal his excitement.

Zhou Yixing's respectful and excited attitude was quite pleasing to Bai Xiaochun. Although he couldn't go and tell everyone how important he was now, to be so adored by people close to him was good enough.

“What about my Que'er?” he asked. “Did you bring him along too?”

Of course, he couldn't wait to see how Song Que would react upon finding out who he was.

As for Bai Hao, a strange expression could be seen on his face.

However, he understood his Master well, and cooperated in full, allowing the impressive aura of the Hell-Emperor to erupt out in full force. Zhou Yixing gasped, his respect deepening as he quickly pulled Song Que out of his bag of holding.

Song Que had only been in the bag of holding for a few days, so when he came out, he wasn't gasping for breath like he often had in the past. He had grown used to spending time inside bags of holding, and actually liked it to some degree. Besides, considering all of the cultivation resources he had benefited from, all traces of his previous ordeal were gone, and his cultivation base had even made progress. He was now very close to the mid Nascent Soul stage.

As soon as he was out in the open, he plastered an expression of respect onto his face, laying eyes, not on Bai Xiaochun, but Bai Hao.

He was aware of the fact that Bai Hao had become the Hell-Emperor, and it filled his heart with excitement. However, it was at this point that he noticed a familiar face next to Bai Hao.

His eyes widened, and he even wondered if he was seeing things. When he looked closer, he began to tremble, and then slowly reached out and pointed at Bai Xiaochun.

Zhou Yixing remained off to the side in silent introspection, not daring to interfere with this reunion. As for Bai Hao, his expression grew more awkward. However, he knew that Bai Xiaochun was obviously relishing this moment, and therefore, he held back from saying anything.

“You....” Song Que breathed. He really had not expected to see Bai Xiaochun here; it was so unexpected that it threw his mind into chaos. In fact, because of that, he didn't notice at all how Zhou Yixing and Bai Hao were reacting.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, smiled, and said, “Hi, Que'er!”

Inside, he was feeling incomparably wonderful.

As soon as Song Que heard himself being called Que'er, he was pushed to the point of exploding. However, after everything he had experienced in the Wildlands, he felt as if he had grown up quite a bit. Therefore, he suppressed his displeasure and, brimming with confidence, he yelled, "How dare you show up here in the Hell-Emperor's presence!"

After all, he and Bai Xiaochun were both fellow disciples of the River-Defying Sect. Although he was not very happy to see him, and in fact didn't even speak his name, he at least decided to vaguely point out that Bai Hao was the Hell-Emperor.

"I gave him his chance," he thought. "If he's smart, he'll flee immediately, or at least figure out a way to resolve the situation. If not, then he'll be dead, and it won't be my fault." With that, he simply stared at Bai Xiaochun, inwardly shaking his head at how the two of them now existed on totally different levels.

The fact that he had come to be the Hell-Emperor's pet gave him a status that Bai Xiaochun couldn't even compare to. In fact, it was highly likely that he would soon have the chance to crush Bai Xiaochun underfoot, just like he'd always wanted to.

"It's just fate," he said to himself. "Bai Xiaochun, ah, Bai Xiaochun. You're just unlucky. You never managed to be anything more than a fugitive in the Wildlands, with everyone running around trying to kill you. As for me, I managed to become the pet of the Hell-Emperor! Considering my important position, I'm more powerful than you can even imagine." A look of pity appeared in Song Que's eyes as he looked down his nose at Bai Xiaochun. Then he sighed inwardly. Considering their past, he knew that if he could manage to save Bai Xiaochun, he probably should. After all, they were both from the River-Defying Sect.

It was roughly at this point that, all of a sudden, he began to wonder why it was that Bai Xiaochun was right here in Bai Hao's

presence, and that there didn't seem to be any conflicts or tension. Just when he was about to ponder the subject, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. By this point, Bai Xiaochun could tell based on what he knew about Song Que that he wasn't going to try to do anything villainous.

Considering that, his impression of Song Que improved. Furthermore, considering that they were at a critical moment, and that he was Song Que's uncle, he suddenly felt a bit protective.

"Ah, whatever," he thought. "I guess I can do without his respect." Feeling very much like he was acting in the best interests of his nephew, he glanced at Bai Hao and then pointed at Zhou Yixing.

"Hao'er, this Zhou Yixing has been my follower for years. He was always there to support me, and did many things for me. Since I'm leaving, I hope that you can accept him as a follower."

When Zhou Yixing heard that, it was like music to his ears. His heart trembled with joy, and he felt like he had been struck with the greatest luck in the world. Profound gratitude welled up in his heart, to the point where his knees began to shake.

"Milord... many thanks! Many thanks, milord!!"

He was a true Wildlander necromancer, and therefore, felt complete adoration and fervor for the Hell-Emperor, more so than Bai Xiaochun would ever be able to comprehend. Therefore, when he heard Bai Xiaochun's words, he simply couldn't remain calm.

He knew that if he worked for the Hell-Emperor, he would essentially be like an emissary in the world of the living. It was an extremely high honor that would put him very close to the level of the four heavenly kings.

In fact, from now on, his clan would never again dare to treat him as the crown prince of the clan. That title wouldn't befit someone of his standing.

He would be the person his clan relied on, both patriarchs and ordinary clan members alike! Everyone would treat him with the utmost respect!

As Zhou Yixing went wild with joy, Song Que stared with eyes as wide as saucers. In that moment, his confidence and arrogance all faltered, and he suddenly felt like he might collapse mentally. A sensation of disbelief rose up in his heart, and he actually began to wonder if he was hallucinating....

“Did you... just call the Hell-Emperor Hao’er?!” he asked. Then turned from Bai Xiaochun to look at Zhou Yixing. “And did you... just call him milord?!”

“Is this some sort of mistake? This... this seems off....” He drifted off into speechlessness, grabbing his head in his hands to stop it from spinning. He was feeling so profoundly and utterly shaken that he could hardly take it.

Startled, and a bit worried, Bai Xiaochun realized that this was clearly a huge blow to Song Que, and quickly tried to come up with a way to explain the situation.

Despite how excited Zhou Yixing was, Song Que’s words caused a strange expression to appear on his face. Sighing inwardly, he suddenly felt very sorry for Song Que....

Bai Hao felt the same. However, he smiled wryly, turned to Bai Xiaochun, and offered formal greetings with clasped hands.

“Orders received, Master!” When it came to who was his emissary in the world of the living, if anyone else had provided the suggestion, Bai Hao would have put a lot of thought into the matter. But since Bai Xiaochun had suggested it be Zhou Yixing, he didn’t bother to worry about it.

Furthermore, he accepted the instructions from Bai Xiaochun in the same way that he always had in the past. And his response struck Song Que like zillions of lightning bolts!

“Did you... just call him Master?!”

Chapter 850: Calm Down, Que'er....

Song Que wasn't even aware that he was talking. He stood there, staring blankly at Bai Hao, shaking physically and almost forgetting to breathe.

"No. This has to be a mistake...." The world seemed to be spinning around him, as though he had broken through some barrier of incredulity that he hadn't even realized existed.

He didn't want to think too deeply about how these three people were connected, but... he simply couldn't control his own train of thought.

Bai Hao was the only person who Zhou Yixing would call milord. And the fact that Bai Hao had called Bai Xiaochun Master made everything even more clear.... Bai Xiaochun was Bai Hao's Master, and was Zhou Yixing's lord.

Song Que felt like his mind was filled with crashing bolts of lightning, leaving him standing there with a blank look on his face. As for Bai Xiaochun, he couldn't let that happen, so he hurried forward to explain.

"Calm down, Que'er, let me explain...."

"You... you...." Song Que pointed at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes turning red. Before Bai Xiaochun could offer any sort of explanation, Song Que shouted, "Bai Xiaochun!! Tell me the truth. Were you impersonating Bai Hao before?!?!"

Song Que was teetering on the verge of madness as the question of Bai Hao's identity pounded at his mind. If it was true that Bai Hao was Bai Xiaochun, and that he had become Bai Xiaochun's pet, and had even stretched his head out to have his hair tousled more deeply by him, then Song Que's world would surely collapse.

"Absolutely not!" Bai Xiaochun said without a moment of hesitation, shaking his head vigorously. Worried that Song Que

wouldn't believe him, he pointed back at Bai Hao and Zhou Yixing.

"I'm serious! Ask them. I wasn't impersonating Bai Hao at all. And this is my first time seeing you here in the Wildlands. I'm not joking! It's the truth!" As he spoke, he didn't blink even a single time, making his words seem very sincere.

Panting, Song Que glared at Bai Xiaochun for a moment, and then turned to look at Bai Hao.

Bai Hao blinked a few times. He knew that Bai Xiaochun was Song Que's uncle, and therefore didn't dare to tell him the truth. He quickly nodded, which caused Song Que to relax a bit. However, he still wasn't completely convinced, and looked to Zhou Yixing for further confirmation.

Zhou Yixing was actually feeling quite stunned himself, although not as much as Song Que. Bai Hao's words of 'orders received' were still ringing loudly in his mind.

Neither Bai Hao nor Bai Xiaochun had thought very much about that. It was the way Bai Hao usually spoke. But when Zhou Yixing heard it, it filled his heart with pounding waves of shock that threatened to overwhelm him.

In fact, he almost wondered if he had been hearing things. Bai Hao was the Hell-Emperor! As far as Zhou Yixing was concerned, even if he did accept directions from Bai Xiaochun, there was no need for him to say anything more than 'alright' or something like that. Maybe he could even just nod. Never could Zhou Yixing have imagined that Bai Hao would outright say that he would follow orders!!

In fact, just about anyone in the Wildlands who heard that would be stunned. It immediately led Zhou Yixing to the realization that the true overlord of the Wildlands was... Bai Xiaochun!

Zhou Yixing simply couldn't get control of himself at the moment. Therefore, when Song Que looked over at him and

realized that he wasn't saying anything, his heart suddenly began to pound, and he started shaking again. White steam even began to rise from the top of his head.

Bai Xiaochun's nervousness mounted. Worried that Song Que had been offended too deeply, and couldn't handle the truth, he glared over at Zhou Yixing.

“What are you doing, Zhou Yixing?!” he shouted. “I said that I wasn't impersonating Bai Hao, and this is my first time seeing Song Que in the Wildlands. Back me up here!”

Bai Xiaochun's shout tore Zhou Yixing out of his reverie. He immediately began to nod, and in fact, worried that Song Que wouldn't believe him, he thumped himself on the chest and loudly said, “I, Zhou Yixing, hereby swear that milord never once impersonated Bai Hao!”

When Song Que heard Zhou Yixing's words echoing back and forth, he relaxed some more. His mind was in chaos, and he could hardly think straight. Therefore, the ‘evidence’ provided by Bai Hao and Zhou Yixing was like a branch extended to a drowning man. He didn't even want to think about the matter too closely.

Bai Xiaochun was very relieved to see Song Que finally calming down a bit.

“Ah, Que'er,” he said, “there's no need to get so excited. It's just fate that the two of us have met here in the Wildlands. You've grown up quite a bit, Que'er. Getting worked up like this really isn't good for you. Look, you even have steam coming off the top of your head!” Without even thinking about it, he reached out to brush Song Que's head free of steam.

It was exactly the way he had reached out to tousle Song Que's hair in the past, and Song Que even reflexively stretched his head forward to meet Bai Xiaochun's hand....

However, in that instant, both of them froze....

Bai Xiaochun's heart immediately began to pound wildly, and he pulled his hand back. And Song Que instantly let out a howl that could shake heaven and earth.

“This feeling... it's you, Bai Xiaochun! You tricked me!! It was you all along!!!”

By this point, Song Que was fully convinced that everything had been an act for his sake. The speed and familiarity with which Bai Xiaochun reached out toward his head had revealed the truth. And the idea of himself being Bai Xiaochun's pet, and that he had reflexively stuck his head out to have his hair tousled, caused masses of white steam to explode from the top of his head. Mind reeling, he let out a howl and then passed out.

Stunned, Bai Xiaochun hurried over, pried open his mouth, and shoved a medicinal pill inside. Then he looked over helplessly at Bai Hao and Zhou Yixing.

Bai Xiaochun already felt a headache coming on. “It's not my fault... You two help me figure out what to do!”

“Um... Master, I've already been here for quite a while. I'm pretty sure Senior Gravekeeper is waiting for me.... See you later!” Bai Hao simply couldn't take anymore, and had convinced himself that he had already followed his Master's orders.... A strange look appeared on his face as he flew toward the Underworld River.

Zhou Yixing quickly clasped hands to Bai Xiaochun and then followed Bai Hao. The instant he reached the Underworld River, both he and Bai Hao began to fade away. As they did, Bai Xiaochun's voice echoed behind them.

“Hao'er, remember to help me track down the other cultivators who were teleported out into the Wildlands!”

Bai Hao voiced his assent in the moment before vanishing.

After watching the two of them rush off, Bai Xiaochun looked back down at the unconscious Song Que. Tousling his hair, he

sighed.

“Ah, whatever. The child just got too worked up, and passed out. That’s all. In any case, it’s not the first time. Once he wakes up, he’ll be fine.” After setting up some defensive spell formations around Song Que, he went back into his immortal’s cave and sat down cross-legged.

“He just needs some time to recover. Now that I have twenty-colored flame, it’s time to push my cultivation base to the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage!” Without any hesitation, he produced his turtle-wok and then sent his nascent soul into it. Then he produced his twenty-colored flame, which he looked at for a moment, eyes shining with anticipation.

As soon as the flame touched the wok, dazzling golden light shone out, enveloping his nascent soul. Then, a shocking energy of heaven and earth began to pulse.

Rumbling sounds could be heard, but quickly passed. At the same time, the golden light faded away, revealing a shining, crystalline nascent soul!!

The nascent soul looked like Bai Xiaochun in every respect, and pulsed with Heaven-Dao fluctuations. This was the great circle of the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage!

It was a state of power that could not be compared to anything else in heaven and earth!

The air rippled and distorted around the nascent soul as a tenth golden design appeared!

Each and every one of the designs on its surface pulsed with shocking magical fluctuations. Furthermore, it was possible to imagine what would happen after the twenty-onfold spirit enhancement was performed. Those golden designs would merge into a single... violet design!

In that moment, something legendary and unheard-of would

occur. He would become... the perfect deva!

“The legends say that a twenty-onfold spirit enhancement on your nascent soul will break you through to the Deva Realm.... Whether it's true or not, I'm going to try!” Eyes flickering with anticipation, he continued, “Once Que'er wakes up, we'll leave the Wildlands. And since there's no Great Wall to go through, we'll have to traverse the Deadmire!

“After that, I need to get familiar with the formula for twenty-one colored flame, and find an opportunity to become a deva!” At this point, Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been more filled with excited anticipation.

Chapter 851: Why Wont You Accept It, Song Que?

“I’m so close to being a deva!” The idea of becoming a deva somehow made the world a more perfect place for Bai Xiaochun. That was especially true when he thought about the fact that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, a majestic riversource sect, only had five devas. Any one of those five devas could be considered supremely important.

[“They’re all almighty figures who live on the blue rainbow.”](#) The more he thought about it, the more exciting it seemed. Then he thought back to his time at the Great Wall, and how the deva Chen Hetian had so brazenly screwed him over.

“Just wait until I’m back. It won’t be long before I’m a deva. And then... hmmmphh! It’s been decades, but it’s still not too late to get my revenge, Chen Hetian!” Bai Xiaochun felt extraordinary. His time in the Wildlands had propelled him toward the very peak of life. As of this moment, it would be very difficult to find very many chosen in heaven and earth who could match up to him.

“What a lonely feeling!” Claspng his hands behind his back, he shook his head and savored the wonderful sensation. Then he swaggered out of his immortal’s cave and walked over to the unconscious Song Que.

Just looking at Song Que caused his head to ache. After a bit of thought, he waved his finger, sending a stream of spiritual energy into him. Song Que shivered and slowly opened his eyes. At first, his expression was blank, but when he saw Bai Xiaochun, he began to tremble. His eyes turned bloodshot, and his mind began to spin as he recalled everything that had occurred before he had passed out.

Bai Xiaochun quickly said, “Let me explain, Que’er, I--”

However, before he could say anything more, Song Que shouted, “You... you...!”

The thought of him having become Bai Xiaochun’s pet was the most horrific thing to ever happen in his life. The anger and resentment he felt because of it had him teetering on the verge of completely exploding.

Bai Xiaochun’s headache worsened. Seeing that Song Que was about to erupt, he scrambled to come up with a plan for what to do. Suddenly, his expression flickered. Instead of looking like he was trying to provide an explanation, he seemed somber, even sorrowful. Before Song Que could say anything, he spoke with such enormous volume that Song Que’s madness was stifled.

“Song Que, I know you refuse to accept this. But. Why won’t you accept it!? It’s true that I, Bai Xiaochun, have reached incredible heights, in the Blood Stream Sect, the River-Defying Sect, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the Great Wall, and here in the Wildlands. But you’ve only seen me in my best moments! Do you know how I got to those moments? I’ll tell you. Fudge! The only reason I reached such heights was by sacrifice!” This sudden outburst by Bai Xiaochun caught Song Que completely off-guard. He had never seen Bai Xiaochun acting like this before.

“In the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, you people all abandoned me! I had only my own skill and ability to rely on. I started an inn, and even got you promoted to the rainbow district. I didn’t owe you anything back then!

“At the Great Wall, it was my skill with medicinal pills that saw me reach the rank of major general. Do you think the deva there was a complete idiot? Do you think the sect is full of fools? Do you think they just randomly allowed me to become a major general? No! I earned that rank with my success!” He swished his sleeve to emphasize his words, and his voice thrummed with intense decisiveness. Despite the fact that Song Que was hovering on the verge of madness, he couldn’t help but be shaken by Bai

Xiaochun's words.

“You saw for yourself how many people in the Wildlands want to kill me, right? Do you know how many deadly crises I faced? All of the nobility and aristocracy hate me down to their marrow! I even risked exposing myself to save you!

“So what if I tousled your hair? What's so wrong with that? I'm not allowed to touch your head or something? I don't qualify? Not only am I your uncle, I have a demigod for a father-in-law! I'm the Master of the Hell-Emperor! I'm the overlord of the Wildlands! You want to talk status? I'm on the same level as the Celestial! Who out there dares to talk to me about qualifications?!” By this point, he was shouting. Song Que's face was devoid of blood, and his humiliation and rage were collapsing. Bai Xiaochun's tirade caused him to edge backward, his eyes bloodshot, but his heart pounding as if with thunder.

He had to admit that everything Bai Xiaochun had just said was true. Bai Xiaochun didn't owe him anything, and yet had blessed him with good fortune. He had even saved him on multiple occasions. In fact, if it weren't for Bai Xiaochun, Song Que would either be dead, or at the very least, wallowing in abject misery.

His refusal to accept the truth came mostly from his own pride. And the fact that he didn't like Bai Xiaochun was because of his own inability to measure up to him!

As for the last thing Bai Xiaochun had just said, about qualifications, there was literally nothing Song Que could say by way of retort. All he could do there was stand there, his chest heaving.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that Song Que had been cowed, he breathed an inward sigh of relief. He really had had no other choice than to say what he had. And the fact that it had worked had him feeling quite pleased with himself. However, he kept that somber expression on his face.

“You don’t have to like me, Song Que. In fact, just think of me as a mountain that you will overturn one day in the future! Bai Xiaochun... will be waiting for you! But... before you acquire the proper qualifications, you will behave!” With that, he waved his sleeve dramatically. His voice resonated in profoundly domineering fashion, and in fact, he even secretly threw in a bit of energy from the Undying Emperor’s Fist. That, coupled with the actual words he had spoken, made him seem like a powerful king or emperor, the type who everyone would respect.

His devastating verbal attack slammed into Song Que’s mind, causing him to back up a few more paces. Trembling, he looked at Bai Xiaochun and suddenly realized that there was a bit of respect rising up in his heart!

“I’m going to be leaving the Wildlands and going back to the River-Defying Sect,” Bai Xiaochun continued. “So, Song Que... do you want to come with me? If not, I won’t force you!” Snorting coldly, he looked away from Song Que and began to float slowly up into the air as he waited for a response.

“Everything I said should work,” he thought. “Ai... what a headache! Oh, Junwan, how truly I care for this nephew of ours!” Blinking a few times, he rubbed the bridge of his nose and sighed.

As for Song Que, he stood there on the bank of the Underworld River, mixed emotions playing out in his eyes. Finally, he sighed and closed his eyes for a moment. When he opened them, they shone with determination.

“Sooner or later, I’m going to surpass him!” The truth was, even he didn’t believe that. However, he was used to saying such things, and it would feel too strange to not say them. Snorting coldly, Song Que flew up into the air after Bai Xiaochun.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he breathed another inward sigh of relief. The truth was that he felt bad about the mistake he had made in reaching out to touch Song Que’s head....

“Well, I didn’t ask him to stick his head out toward me. He did that on his own!” Of course, he didn’t say that out loud. If he did, Song Que would likely explode, and he had just worked hard to calm him down.

“Ai, he flies off the handle too easily.” Shaking his head, he began to fly off into the distance, Song Que in tow. The two of them flew along silently for some time, heading toward the location where the eastern and northern sections of the Great Wall had once met. That was the location where they would head back to the River-Defying Sect. Their pathway home led through... the Deadmire!

Based on the speed they were capable of, it would only take a few months for them to reach it!

Two months passed in the blink of an eye. They didn’t see any cities, only rugged and crumbling mountains and sprawling jungles. There were few soul cultivators, and only the occasional tribe of savage giants.

Bai Xiaochun was already beginning to sigh at how quietly he was making his departure. It was almost as if no one cared about him....

“Ah, whatever. Keeping a low profile is always the best thing to do.” Sighing again, he looked off at a distant mountain range. According to the map he had, after passing through those mountains, they would be on the very border of the Wildlands.

However, even as he was preparing to lead Song Que in that direction, he stopped in place. Song Que, whose expression had been very grim during the last two months, suddenly looked off in a certain direction, his pupils constricting.

At this point, the two of them realized that, standing right there at the peak of one of the nearby mountains, was a woman! She had long hair and a red robe, and was as beautiful and elegant as an immortal!

She was none other than... Mistress Red-Dust, Zhou Zimo!

Hey everyone, this chapter contains a detail that was never included in the original descriptions of the SSDPS. Apparently, each of the seven rainbows is a different color. I need to go back to check earlier references to see if I missed something in the earlier chapters, or if this is indeed a detail that was added later on. I vaguely remember some of the individual rainbows being described as having different colors in them. I will do that at some point, perhaps after the translation is completely done and I got back for a final edit. In any case, the rainbow that the devas live on is the blue one.

Chapter 852: You Owe Me An Explanation, Bai Xiaochun!

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw Mistress Red-Dust, his heart began to pound, and he scowled.

Of all the people he feared in the Wildlands, Mistress Red-Dust was at the top of the list. Furthermore, thanks to the Giant Ghost King playing matchmaker between the two of them, things were even more complicated.

At first, he had found the whole thing to be a bit exciting. But after everything that happened with Gongsun Wan'er, and afterward, matters with Mistress Red-Dust came to be a big headache.

He wasn't even sure how he should act around her. On the one hand, he felt like he should attack her. It wasn't as if she were a match for him in combat. But on the other hand, he felt like he couldn't bring himself to do such a thing....

"I'm trying to leave, and Zhou Zimo is actually blocking my path...." His initial reaction was to just flee.

In fact, as soon as that idea popped into his head, he found it impossible to get rid of.

"Que'er, this person isn't up to any good. She's probably here to try to capture you. Let's skirt around her." With that, he turned and headed off in a different direction.

Inside, Song Que was sneering in ridicule. After all, he knew about some of the things that had gone on between Mistress Red-Dust and Bai Xiaochun. However, he didn't say anything, and even slowed down a bit. He didn't want to get involved.

Mistress Red-Dust stood atop the mountain, looking coldly at Bai Xiaochun, complex emotions in her eyes. She wasn't any more certain of how to view things between herself and Bai Xiaochun

than he was. Everything that had gone on had her feeling very confused.

She also knew that she shouldn't have come here. And yet, here she was. Then, she saw him looking at her with a scowl, and an indescribable fire began to burn inside of her. Moments later, she realized that he wasn't even going to come talk with her. Instead, he turned and headed in a different direction. Her anger erupted.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” she screamed, her voice echoing like a clap of thunder. In response, Bai Xiaochun shivered and picked up speed. As for Song Que, he backed up.

Mistress Red-Dust became a beam of red light that shot off of the mountain toward Bai Xiaochun, indescribable rage filling her as she whistled through the air. Then she waved her right index finger in Bai Xiaochun's direction, causing the sky to turn red as her will filled the area, locking everything down.

Bai Xiaochun frowned, but didn't slow down in the slightest. The air around him shattered as the power of a deva descended, and yet, it could do nothing to hinder him!

In the past, it would have required him to rely on some divine abilities to get away. But now, he was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, and was fully capable of fighting someone in the early Deva Realm!

In fact, he could even fight someone in the mid Deva Realm if he used his most powerful divine abilities!

As soon as Bai Xiaochun blasted through the barrier of deva power, Mistress Red-Dust's eyes shone with cold light, and she performed an incantation gesture, causing the power of her Red Dust Violet Road technique to appear.

It was a consummate divine ability, a giant ghost secret magic that she had previously used to seal Gongsun Wan'er. Instantly, a miniature version of Giant Ghost City appeared around Bai

Xiaochun, stifling his aura and preparing to seal him.

Bai Xiaochun's face fell. He knew that this magical technique was a trump card of Mistress Red-Dust's, and that it required a significant wastage of longevity. It was a hexing magic that most ordinary devas would never have access to.

“Are you crazy or something, Zhou Zimo!?” he shouted angrily.

In response, Mistress Red-Dust picked up speed. As she closed in, her hand flashed with an incantation gesture, causing the sealing powers of Red Dust Violet Road to grow stronger.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as an immense gravitational force sprang up around him. The truth was that he had no desire at all to tangle with Mistress Red-Dust.

“Just what do you think you're going to accomplish, Zhou Zimo?! Do you really think I'm scared of you or something?!” Even as the gravitational force gripped him, he spun in place, and began to grow larger! At the same time, countless rocks began to fly in his direction as he transformed into a stone golem.

It was none other than the Living Mountain Incantation!

He launched into motion, his fleshly body power bursting out. This was the great circle of the Undying Bones, which surpassed the Nascent Soul stage, and was similar to a deva. As soon as he attacked the Red Dust Violet Road illusion, it shattered, completely decimated by his fleshly body power.

“You owe me an explanation, Bai Xiaochun!” Zhou Zimo yelled. Not pausing for even a moment, she performed an incantation gesture and spat out a mouthful of blood, which transformed into ten blood-colored spears. Then, the ten spears became streaks of red light that swirled through the air at top speed toward Bai Xiaochun!

Seeing the dangerous situation caused Bai Xiaochun to sigh. He waved his hands out in front of him, causing the stones

surrounding him to explode outward, and then speed to meet the ten blood-red spears. The instant they met, a boom echoed out, and the spears were sent spinning off to the side.

Bai Xiaochun was now in the open, and instead of fleeing, he blurred into motion, shooting directly toward Mistress Red-Dust, hand clenched in a fist!

“Can you just not flip out!?” he yelled as his fist strike landed.

A boom rang out as Mistress Red-Dust was shoved backward several paces. When she came to a stop, her expression looked more complex than ever. Bai Xiaochun’s progress was shocking; although she had not attacked with full force right now, it was obvious that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t either. The complexity of her emotions deepened as she apparently remembered something important.

Phoenix-like eyes radiating rage, she looked at him and coldly said, “I’m not flipping out! We’re engaged, remember!? My father arranged it. Maybe you can just up and leave, but what do I do then?! And what does my father do?! Look at you! I didn’t even say a single word to you, and you upped and ran? Are you even a man, Bai Xiaochun?!”

Bai Xiaochun’s headache grew more intense as he rushed to offer an explanation.

“Listen, Zimo. You’re a beautiful, outstanding girl. You can definitely find another Daoist partner better than me. And as for my old pal Giant Ghost, this was all just a misunderstanding! The old man will definitely understand.... Look, I wasn’t running away from you, I’m just in a hurry to get home.... Oh, and yeah, I’m definitely a man. I--”

Before he could say anything else, Mistress Red-Dust exploded again. “Bai Xiaochun!! Do you really not get it? Or are just pretending to be thick? Well?! Everybody in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty thinks that my Daoist partner is your apprentice, Bai Hao!

And that means they think I'm an empress! Everybody's watching me! What do you want me to do, marry your apprentice!?" Mistress Red-Dust was very angry, and therefore, her shouting echoed out very loudly in all directions.

Some distance away, Song Que had been watching the two of them fight. Although he had been aware that Bai Xiaochun was strong, to see it with his own eyes left him shaken.

And then he heard what Mistress Red-Dust just said, and a strange expression appeared on his face. He even started to get a bit excited.

"Bai Xiaochun, ah, Bai Xiaochun. You've had this coming for a long time!" With that, he simply stood there, watching the fireworks.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was standing there, feeling a bit taken aback. The truth was that he hadn't put much thought into the matter that Mistress Red-Dust had just brought up. And everything she had just said made sense, leaving him feeling more than a bit awkward.

"Zimo, I--"

As soon as the words left his mouth, Mistress Red-Dust flicked her sleeve, gritted her teeth, and said, "You either stay here in the Wildlands and take my hand in marriage, or... you give me a damn good explanation!"

Feeling very much in the wrong, and very embarrassed, Bai Xiaochun promptly tried to calm her down.

"Zimo, just calm down. I swear that I'll come back. Really.... Don't worry. I'll definitely return!" Worried that she might not believe him, he thumped himself loudly on the chest to emphasize his words.

However, both his wording and his gesture seemed a bit too exaggerated.... Mistress Red-Dust immediately realized that he was

just putting on a show, and it caused the rage in her heart to slip out of control.

“Bai Xiaochun!” she said through gritted teeth. Then she burst into motion, unleashing all of the power she could muster to attack him. The will of a deva spread out into the area, causing Song Que to gasp and back up further.

Bai Xiaochun let out a yelp as he retreated. On any other occasion, he would fight back, but right now he actually felt very guilty, and simply couldn't retaliate. All he could do was dodge left and right and throw out some more explanations.

“Zimo, you need to listen to me....”

“I'll come back, really....”

“You have to trust me....”

Chapter 853: You Absolutely, Positively Must Not Crush That!!!

No amount of explanation on the part of Bai Xiaochun could resolve the situation. Mistress Red-Dust refused to believe anything he said. As she attacked and he evaded, they got closer and closer to the distant mountains.

Song Que watched them go, his heart quivering in both fear and excitement. To see Bai Xiaochun in a predicament like this significantly reduced some of the frustration and humiliation that had been festering there.

Although he was interested in getting closer to see what exactly was happening, Mistress Red-Dust was on a rampage, and she was a deva. Song Que knew that his own cultivation base wasn't high enough to get close safely, therefore, after a moment of hesitation, he decided to stay put. Before long, Bai Xiaochun and Mistress Red-Dust vanished into the mountains.

That particular stretch of mountains was covered with a lush jungle. Currently, booms rang out in the jungle, as well as flashes of bright red light, as Bai Xiaochun fled pell-mell.

Each and every beam of red light that Mistress Red-Dust launched was powerful enough to severely injure an ordinary cultivator in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. But Bai Xiaochun had immense fleshly body power. Therefore, the attacks that hit him didn't do very much other than destroy portions of his clothes. Before long, he was looking very bedraggled.

“Don't be like this, Zimo....” he cried anxiously. Seeing that nothing she did was having any effect, she snorted coldly and then spat out some more magical blood, summoning a host of spears that she sent flying in his direction.

As the spears flew through the air, they interlocked, creating

something like a net of blood. Shocked, Bai Xiaochun fled at top speed; the danger had suppressed the guilt that he felt, and his anger was starting to burn. It was at this point that Mistress Red-Dust performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing the numerous blood spears to accelerate rapidly toward him.

Enraged, Bai Xiaochun unleashed a fist strike with his right hand, causing a tempest to spring out and destroy more than half of the spears. However, a portion made it through and slammed into him.

Shaking physically, he fell back several paces. Although he wasn't seriously injured, his clothing couldn't stand up to the force, and was mostly destroyed. Some of the blood spears even stabbed into his bag of holding!

A boom could be heard as his bag of holding was torn open, allowing countless objects to spill out from inside.

There was multi-colored flame, countless soulhoarding pagodas, and boxes of soul medicine, plus a variety of medicinal pill bottles, pill furnaces, medicinal pills, command medallions, and hosts of other magical items. All in all, there were tens of thousands of items.

“This is ridiculous, Zhou Zimo!” Waving his sleeve angrily, he began to pull back all the items that had fallen out of his bag of holding.

Mistress Red-Dust seemed to be on the verge of running out of breath. She knew that she had gone a bit too far, but was too thin-skinned. But to hear Bai Xiaochun insult her the way he had, and the thought of all the bitterness of her recent days, made it impossible for her to calm down.

“Is all that crappy stuff important to you?” Snorting coldly, she waved her sleeve at some of the miscellaneous items that he hadn't collected up yet. Instantly, some of the weaker medicinal pills exploded.

“My medicinal pills!!” he shouted angrily, gritting his teeth. “Y-y-you...!”

Seeing him reacting in this way was exactly what Mistress Red-Dust wanted. Without paying much attention, she reached out and grabbed a random pink medicinal pill. Considering she had no skill in the Dao of medicine, she had no idea what kind of pill it was.

However, Bai Xiaochun recognized it immediately, and it caused his eyes to go wide. Gasping, and having no time to worry about the medicinal pills which had just been destroyed, he immediately shouted out, his voice rising a few octaves past normal.

“Zimo! You need to be very, very careful! Do not crush that pill! If you do, something really bad could happen!!” Tears threatened to leak out of Bai Xiaochun’s eyes. After all, the pill that Mistress Red-Dust had picked up was none other than... an Aphrodisiac Pill!!

Bai Xiaochun had drawn deeply on his stockpile of Aphrodisiac Pill during his time in the Wildlands, and didn’t have very many left. And yet, somehow, Mistress Red-Dust had managed to grab one of them.

It was a very weak pill... the slightest pressure would cause it to explode, sending a pink mist out that would affect anything it touched. It was a fact Bai Xiaochun was very well aware of. Based on his experiences in the prisons of the Wildlands, he knew that virtually no one could resist that power. Instantly, his heart began to pound.

Mistress Red-Dust was taken aback by his reaction, and his words. Looking down, she saw what appeared to be nothing more than an ordinary medicinal pill.

The moment Mistress Red-Dust looked down, Bai Xiaochun anxiously opened his third eye. When the power of his Heavenspan Dharma Eye erupted out, he immediately used it to wrest control of Mistress Red-Dust’s movements.

Without the slightest hesitation, he shot forward, using all of the power of his cultivation base and fleshly body. In the blink of an eye, he was right in front of Mistress Red-Dust, reaching out to grab the Aphrodisiac Pill.

However, a gleam passed through Mistress Red-Dust's eyes as she slipped out of the control of his Heavenspan Dharma Eye!

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun was trying to grab the pill, Mistress Red-Dust immediately began to draw her hand back. However, it was in that moment that their two hands collided.

“No!!” Bai Xiaochun screamed. He had been too late to retract his own hand, and when he saw it slam into Mistress Red-Dust's, his eyes went wide, and his mind began to spin. As for the Aphrodisiac Pill... it burst open....

“I'm finished. Kaput....” he wailed inwardly as he lurched backward. However, no matter how fast he moved, he couldn't avoid the pink mist which spread out to envelop both he and Mistress Red-Dust.

Bitterness filled his heart, but no amount of screaming could do anything about what was happening. In fact, a moment later, he began to pant.... As for Mistress Red-Dust, her face fell; she wasn't sure what medicinal pill she had been holding, and did everything she could to avoid breathing in the pink mist. However, there was some strange property to the mist that allowed it to be absorbed through the skin. Almost immediately, a flush covered her face.

She began to pant, and her eyes opened wide, revealing an expression of terror as she suddenly thought back to the things Bai Xiaochun had done at the Great Wall.

“What pill was that!?!?” she shrieked, immediately backing away. However, as she moved, she began to tremble; she had been at the epicenter of the pill explosion, and the mist had instantly been absorbed through the palm of her hand.

She suddenly staggered in place as the mist continued to spread out, enveloping her, causing her mind to spin. At the same time, an uncontrollable heat rose up within her....

Bai Xiaochun was also in the mist, breathing heavily, struggling against its effects. His bag of holding did not contain an antidote to the Aphrodisiac Pill, but he did have some broad-spectrum neutralization pills. Unfortunately, his bag of holding had exploded, and he hadn't had the time to gather everything back.... Flying toward the edge of the mist, he began to search frantically for the specific medicinal pills.

Unfortunately, the Aphrodisiac Pill was simply too powerful. A wave of dizziness hit him, along with a powerful heat inside his body. He was halfway out of the mist by now, and could see a neutralization pill over in the nearby bushes. However, that was when a hand reached out and grabbed his tattered clothing. Moments before, that hand had been as white as jade, but now it was flush from heat. Even as Bai Xiaochun screamed... the hand dragged him back into the mist.

“No! Aaaiiiieee! Don't rip my clothes off.... This... this is my first time!!

“Be more gentle! Aiieee... it hurts....”

Hair-raising screams escaped Bai Xiaochun's lips, as though he were experiencing the most dangerous of crises....

Chapter 854: Is That?

Time passed....

The pink mist lasted for a few hours. When it finally began to dissipate, the first person to become visible was Mistress Red-Dust.

Her face was flushed, and a slight frown could be seen on her face. She seemed out of sorts, with mixed emotions in her eyes. After a moment, she looked over her shoulder at the fading pink mist, and then stamped her foot. That prompted a slight hiss of what might have been pain to escape her lips. Then, looking a bit shy, she turned into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

An incense stick's worth of time passed, whereupon the mist faded completely away, revealing... a scene of complete chaos.

Bai Xiaochun lay propped up against the trunk of a tree, staring listlessly into the sky, his face occasionally twitching.

“So rough....” he murmured, wishing he could cry, but finding no tears to do so. A moment passed, and he began to gather his clothing. “She definitely did that on purpose! Well, that’s what I get for being so outstanding. I can’t believe I actually awakened the beast within her. She even went so far as to use an Aphrodisiac Pill against me....”

At this point within his bitterness, he finally began to feel a bit pleased with himself. Then he thought about the enchanting scene which had just played out, and his heart actually began to beat a bit faster.

“Ah, whatever. I guess that will have to count as the explanation Zhou Zimo asked for.” Sighing, he began to collect all of his scattered items from the jungle around him. Then he got a new robe from his bag of holding, and made his way off.

“Those Aphrodisiac Pills are really too dangerous....” This was his first time experiencing the Aphrodisiac Pill which he himself

had created. Normally, he gave the pill to others to consume, but having done so himself now, he finally understood how terrifying it was. At the same time, his admiration for Zhou Yixing grew.

“I guess Yixing is more formidable than me in this area. Despite consuming multiple pills back then, he still kept himself under control when I put that pig-beast in front of him!”

After flying out of the jungle, he tracked down Song Que, who had been waiting nearby. When Song Que saw the flush on his face, and the wry expression he wore, he wasn't quite sure what to make of it.

Of course, he knew it must have had something to do with Mistress Red-Dust. And based on the way Bai Xiaochun looked, it didn't seem likely that anything good had happened to him.

And thus it was that Bai Xiaochun and Song Que flew through the mountains, drawing ever closer to the Deadmire.

Another half a month went by, and they were in a very remote locale. Although they saw the occasional soul cultivator, the mere cultivation base fluctuations rolling off of them caused any such people to immediately flee.

There were only a few savage tribes, who immediately dropped down to offer obeisance when they saw Bai Xiaochun and Song Que flying through the air.

These remote border regions were actually where most savages tribes originated. Song Que even saw a few tribes that were clearly matriarchal in nature. The women of the tribe were extraordinarily ferocious and mighty, and also physically large.

It was Song Que's first time being in such a place and seeing things like this, and his gaze often lingered on the stunning things he was seeing. As for the savages, they viewed Bai Xiaochun and Song Que almost like gods.

Before long, Song Que realized that Bai Xiaochun seemed to be

lost in a daze most of the time. In his curiosity, he couldn't help but wonder what had happened. Obviously, only Bai Xiaochun had returned from the fight with Mistress Red-Dust.

“Don't tell me he actually killed her?” The mere thought struck him with fear, but he didn't dare to ask any further questions. The only thing he could do was be more on guard in case there were repercussions.

And thus they proceeded onward, Bai Xiaochun in a daze, and Song Que on full alert. At one point when they were roughly four or five days away from the Deadmire, Bai Xiaochun suddenly stopped in place. Then, his blank expression turned into a curious one as he looked off toward a savage tribe located at the foot of a nearby mountain.

It was a small, matriarchal tribe. Whether it came to the warriors in the tribe, or the other important people, they were all women. The men seemed weak, and were apparently kept only for reproductive purposes.

The tribe wasn't very populous either. There were less than a hundred members, ninety percent of whom were women. The men all seemed gaunt and weak. Although they were big-boned like most savages, they seemed listless and exhausted. Most of them were gathered in one location in the tribal lands, where they lay quietly, occasionally chatting with each other.

Some distance away from them was a stack of hay bales. Leaning up against them was a man who was clearly not a savage. He looked more like a soul cultivator. However, he was clad in a grass skirt, and was incredibly weak, little more than skin and bones. He clearly hadn't bathed in some time, and lay there staring at the sky with listless eyes, seemingly resigned to his fate.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun caught sight of him, his jaw dropped.

“Que'er, does something seem familiar about his aura?!”

Surprised, Song Que sent his divine sense out to check, after which his eyes went wide. “Master God-Diviner!!”

Song Que gasped in incredulity. Although Bai Xiaochun had asked Bai Hao to help track down the other Heavenspan cultivators who had been teleported into the Wildlands, the truth was that Bai Hao had only just succeeded as the Hell-Emperor, and could not fully wield the powers of the Underworld River. Tracking down all those cultivators was not something he could easily do in a short time.

“It really is Master God-Diviner!” Bai Xiaochun said, smiling. He immediately flew over to the tribe, followed closely by Song Que. Within moments, they were in the air over the tribe.

Of course, the savages were immediately thrown into a frenzy. They all scrambled to offer obeisance as if to gods, including the many burly and rather ugly females.

It was an interesting and unique tribe, but it didn’t take long for Bai Xiaochun to identify one female savage as the leader. Based on the fluctuations rolling off of her, she was comparable to the Core Formation stage.

When Master God-Diviner’s previously listless eyes came to rest on Bai Xiaochun and Song Que, a tremor ran through him, and his eyes widened. Seemingly worried that he might be hallucinating or dreaming, he rubbed his eyes, then looked back. At that point, he leapt to his feet.

“Song Que! “Bai Xiaochun!!” His voice quavered, and he was clearly too excited to control himself. Tears began to stream down his cheeks as he cried out in a hoarse voice. “Save me! Save me!!”

The savages were shocked, and Bai Xiaochun was delighted. Waving his hand, he caused Master God-Diviner to fly up into the air. As for the savages, they trembled in reverence, and didn’t dare to do anything to hinder him.

“You’re finally here!! I... I almost went crazy! Heavens! Is this really happening? I divined some time ago that people would come to rescue me... I’ve been waiting for years and years. I thought I wouldn’t be able to hold out until you got here....” More tears of excitement welled up in Master God-Diviner’s eyes as he chattered on. Close up, it was possible to see how terrifyingly gaunt he had become, to the point where bones were visible everywhere beneath his skin.

Bai Xiaochun was deeply shaken by the condition Master God-Diviner was in. As for Song Que, considering that he and Master God-Diviner were both from the Blood Stream Division, his face turned particularly grim. Then he turned toward the savages, and seemed about to take action, when Master God-Diviner hurriedly got in his way.

“Let them be.... Many of them are my own blood.” Years ago, when Master God-Diviner had been teleported into the Wildlands, he had been so severely injured that his cultivation base had dropped to the Qi Condensation level. Then this matriarchal tribe captured him, and the leader laid a restrictive spell onto him, making it impossible for his cultivation base to recover. Furthermore, because he was a cultivator, they viewed him with great importance, and made him a reproductive slave of the tribe....

He had worked so hard at his job that he was slowly drained empty and driven to despair. It was made worse by the fact that the savage women were extremely ugly, and very rough. At the same time, the savage men were extremely jealous of him. Master God-Diviner had a hard time not collapsing mentally. If it weren’t for the fact that he had divined that someone would come and save him, he might have killed himself.

And it was finally here on this day that he saw Bai Xiaochun and Song Que again, both of whom were clearly doing much better than him.

Song Que's jaw dropped in response to what Master God-Diviner had just said, and soon, feelings of sympathy rose up within him. As for Bai Xiaochun, he suddenly realized that compared to Master God-Diviner, he didn't have it very bad at all. When it came to being forced, nobody could match what Master God-Diviner had dealt with....

"I understand, Master Snortsnort!" Bai Xiaochun said. Sighing in compassion, he clasped Master God-Diviner's gaunt shoulder.

End of Book 5: The Peak Of Life

Table of Contents

[A Will Eternal](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Book 5: The Peak Of Life!](#)

[Chapter 564: A Fated Pair...](#)

[Chapter 565: Necromancers!](#)

[Chapter 566: Necromancy and Spirit Enhancement Are The Same!](#)

[Chapter 567: I Hate People Named Bai!](#)

[Chapter 568: Bring It On! Let's See Who's Scared of Whom!](#)

[Chapter 569: Make It Stop!](#)

[Chapter 570: Flame Conjuring Techniques](#)

[Chapter 571: Just Who Exactly Are You!](#)

[Chapter 572: I Refuse To Believe!](#)

[Chapter 573: Help Me, Fellow Daoist Bai!](#)

[Chapter 574: Successor of the Hell-Emperor](#)

[Chapter 575: Spirit Enhancement Nascent Soul!](#)

[Chapter 576: I'm Looking At You!](#)

[Chapter 577: Bullying...](#)

[Chapter 578: Terrestrial Necromancer!](#)

[Chapter 579: Rebranding The Mask!](#)

[Chapter 580: Demigod Soul!](#)

[Chapter 581: Trump Card](#)

[Chapter 582: Bai Clan, East Outskirts](#)

[Chapter 583: Bai Hao, Bastard Son](#)

[Chapter 584: A Clue!](#)

[Chapter 585: Peerless Talent!](#)

[Chapter 586: I Want Him Dead!](#)

[Chapter 587: How Very Disappointing Of You](#)

[Chapter 588: Exposing the Malefactor!](#)

[Chapter 589: Placing Hope In The Ancestral Land](#)

[Chapter 590: Endless Rain Of Fire](#)

[Chapter 591: Magical Rain Of Fire](#)

[Chapter 592: I Don't Understand!](#)

[Chapter 593: Cold Father Bai!](#)

[Chapter 594: Assessment During the Ceremony](#)

[Chapter 595: Bite My Tongue](#)

[Chapter 596: Bai Xiaochun's Answer!](#)
[Chapter 597: Condemned By Law!](#)
[Chapter 598: Preaching Ignorantly Of The Dao](#)
[Chapter 599: The Ancestral Land Opens](#)
[Chapter 600: Deva Soul](#)
[Chapter 601: Take Your Pick, Fifth Young Lady](#)
[Chapter 602: Take What I Want](#)
[Chapter 603: Damn You, Bai Hao!](#)
[Chapter 604: If You Kill Me, You're A Traitor!](#)
[Chapter 605: Felled By A Palm](#)
[Chapter 606: Collecting The Deva Soul](#)
[Chapter 607: Conjuring Flame For An Audience](#)
[Chapter 608: Let The Show Begin](#)
[Chapter 609: The Patriarch Makes A Move](#)
[Chapter 610: Fleeing The Bai Clan](#)
[Chapter 611: Time To Die, Unfilial Bastard](#)
[Chapter 612: Crushing Father Bai](#)
[Chapter 613: Heavens!](#)
[Chapter 614: Father Bai Flabbergasted](#)
[Chapter 615: Captured Alive!](#)
[Chapter 616: I Want Him Alive](#)
[Chapter 617: The Patriarch Arrives](#)
[Chapter 618: Another Battle With A Deva!](#)
[Chapter 619: Decree From The Heavenly King](#)
[Chapter 620: Giant Ghost City](#)
[Chapter 621: Fly Off Into The Sunset....](#)
[Chapter 622: Devil Penitentiary](#)
[Chapter 623: Facing The Facts](#)
[Chapter 624: Captain, What Exactly Are They Going Off To Do?](#)
[Chapter 625: Pure Bai Xiaochun](#)
[Chapter 626: I Hope You'll Break The Record](#)
[Chapter 627: Promoted To Inquisitor...](#)
[Chapter 628: Splitting The Loot....](#)
[Chapter 629: Dominating Cellblock D](#)
[Chapter 630: Mysterious Old Man](#)
[Chapter 631: Too Domineering](#)
[Chapter 632: Once The Heavens Change](#)
[Chapter 633: Two Birds, One Stone](#)
[Chapter 634: Recognizing Me Wont Do You Any Good!](#)

[Chapter 635: How Do You Deal With Me?](#)
[Chapter 636: Fourteen-Colored Flame: Success!](#)
[Chapter 637: Fully Equipped With Treasures](#)
[Chapter 638: Cai Clan Elder](#)
[Chapter 639: Just Kill You?](#)
[Chapter 640: The Confident Giant Ghost King!](#)
[Chapter 641: Smells Like Treasure](#)
[Chapter 642: Decree From The Heavenly King!](#)
[Chapter 643: Powerful Lu Shiyou](#)
[Chapter 644: A Secret!](#)
[Chapter 645: Rebellion!](#)
[Chapter 646: The Giant Ghost King's Game!](#)
[Chapter 647: Clean Him Out!](#)
[Chapter 648: How Exciting....](#)
[Chapter 649: Human Shield](#)
[Chapter 650: Miserable Giant Ghost King](#)
[Chapter 651: How Brilliant, Patriarch](#)
[Chapter 652: Demigod Soul Detonation!](#)
[Chapter 653: This Guys Crazy!](#)
[Chapter 654: What A Malicious Restrictive Spell!](#)
[Chapter 655: Myriad Children Blood Banner](#)
[Chapter 656: A Lot!](#)
[Chapter 657: Ninety-Nine Times!](#)
[Chapter 658: Blood, Sweat And Tears](#)
[Chapter 659: Extravagantly Wasteful Battle](#)
[Chapter 660: Ghost King's Soul Blood!](#)
[Chapter 661: Escaping Giant Ghost City!](#)
[Chapter 662: Im Only Doing This To Save You, Old Pal](#)
[Chapter 663: Scared But Not Terrified!](#)
[Chapter 664: Game Over](#)
[Chapter 665: Many Pretenses Can Be Seen Through, But Not Flattery](#)
[Chapter 666: Bring Me The Rebels!](#)
[Chapter 667: Majordomo Bai](#)
[Chapter 668: Goal: Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul!](#)
[Chapter 669: Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul!](#)
[Chapter 670: Invincible To Mortal-Dao Nascent Soul!](#)
[Chapter 671: Cooking Oneself](#)
[Chapter 672: The Hell-Emperor Stele Shakes All Creation!](#)
[Chapter 673: Crazed By A Rise In The Rankings.](#)

[Chapter 674: A Huge Sensation](#)
[Chapter 675: The Old Pervert!](#)
[Chapter 676: Shakedown](#)
[Chapter 677: Study Away, Majordomo Bai...](#)
[Chapter 678: Smuggling Is Useless](#)
[Chapter 679: This Is Outright Robbery!](#)
[Chapter 680: Humiliation](#)
[Chapter 681: Kill Them!](#)
[Chapter 682: Changes](#)
[Chapter 683: Are You Stupid, Bai Hao!?](#)
[Chapter 684: More Power](#)
[Chapter 685: The Ghost King Orchid Blooms](#)
[Chapter 686: He Wants To See Me Again?](#)
[Chapter 687: Dont Worry, Your Highness!](#)
[Chapter 688: An Old Friend](#)
[Chapter 689: They Want To Kill Me?!](#)
[Chapter 690: King Giant Ghost, You Fudge-Licking Prick!](#)
[Chapter 691: No, I Want Revenge!](#)
[Chapter 692: You Screw Me, I Screw You!](#)
[Chapter 693: An Eagle Catching Baby Chickens....](#)
[Chapter 694: A Soul!](#)
[Chapter 695: Crushing Everyone!](#)
[Chapter 696: Undying Emperor's Fist!](#)
[Chapter 697: Get Back Here, Bai Hao](#)
[Chapter 698: Secret Magic Of The Imperial Clan](#)
[Chapter 699: Whos The Grindstone!?](#)
[Chapter 700: I Can Still Break Through!](#)
[Chapter 701: Putting A Half-Deva In His Place!](#)
[Chapter 702: Dropped Onto The Ground....](#)
[Chapter 703: RUN!](#)
[Chapter 704: I'm Back!](#)
[Chapter 705: What Exactly Did You Do...?](#)
[Chapter 706: Stupefied Giant Ghost King](#)
[Chapter 707: Destiny Brought Us Together....](#)
[Chapter 708: I'm Your Master!](#)
[Chapter 709: Masters Name](#)
[Chapter 710: Playing Dumb](#)
[Chapter 711: Xiaochun Erupts....](#)
[Chapter 712: Huh? Whats The Rush...?](#)

[Chapter 713: Arch-Emperor City!](#)

[Chapter 714: Red Dust Blows Upon My Face As I Walk The Road To The Capital](#)

[Chapter 715: I'm Your Fiance....](#)

[Chapter 716: A Wise Man Knows To Back Down When The Odds Are Against Him](#)

[Chapter 717: Master Has A Lot Of Experience?](#)

[Chapter 718: Dont Do Something Youll Regret](#)

[Chapter 719: Master, Look Up There....](#)

[Chapter 720: Hell-Emperors Fist](#)

[Chapter 721: A Spirit Enhancement Shop](#)

[Chapter 722: Sticking Together To Survive](#)

[Chapter 723: Bring In A Skill...?](#)

[Chapter 724: The Tree Might Long For Peace, But The Wind Will Never Cease](#)

[Chapter 725: Get Him The Hell Out Of Arch-Emperor City](#)

[Chapter 726: Calculating The Bill Wrong](#)

[Chapter 727: I Absolutely Detest Cheaters](#)

[Chapter 728: Who Gives A Crap About Heavenly Dukes?!](#)

[Chapter 729: Cant Get You To Submit?](#)

[Chapter 730: The Princes Make A Move](#)

[Chapter 731: Stuck In The Middle](#)

[Chapter 732: Nothing But Business Warfare](#)

[Chapter 733: Poison....](#)

[Chapter 734: Keep Your Voice Down!](#)

[Chapter 735: Stop, All Of You!](#)

[Chapter 736: Controlling The Rhythm Of Things](#)

[Chapter 737: Good People Go The Extra Mile](#)

[Chapter 738: I Challenge You To A Duel!](#)

[Chapter 739: A Wager!](#)

[Chapter 740: Evenly Matched](#)

[Chapter 741: Flame Harmony!](#)

[Chapter 742: Breaking New Ground](#)

[Chapter 743: Shaking The Whole City!](#)

[Chapter 744: Grandmaster Bai!](#)

[Chapter 745: Back Again....](#)

[Chapter 746: Whos Blackie?](#)

[Chapter 747: Get Rid Of The Evil Scourge!](#)

[Chapter 748: Xiaochun Gets Pissed Off!](#)

[Chapter 749: Like A Hot Knife Through Butter!](#)

[Chapter 750: Ninth Stratum!](#)

[Chapter 751: Imperial Clan Secret Spell Formation](#)

[Chapter 752: Deva-Level Fist Strike!!](#)
[Chapter 753: The Wildlands Beat Me!](#)
[Chapter 754: Deva Shapes Heavenly Will](#)
[Chapter 755: I'm Not Bai Hao....](#)
[Chapter 756: I'm... The Inspections Commissioner?](#)
[Chapter 757: Do You Or Do You Not Dare?!](#)
[Chapter 758: Dont Tell Me This Place Is Haunted?!](#)
[Chapter 759: We're All On The Same Team](#)
[Chapter 760: The Powers Of The Inspections Commissioner!](#)
[Chapter 761: Recognize Me?](#)
[Chapter 762: I Heard Youre Good At Shakedowns!](#)
[Chapter 763: Do You Admit To Your Crimes?](#)
[Chapter 764: Fighting In The Li Clan!](#)
[Chapter 765: I Very, Very, Very, Very Much Like To Grow Flowers](#)
[Chapter 766: A Howl From The Rear Courtyard](#)
[Chapter 767: Do You Know Who My Uncle Is?!?!](#)
[Chapter 768: Pit Of 10,000!](#)
[Chapter 769: I Dare You To Try That Again, Heavenly Duke Chen](#)
[Chapter 770: Your Humble Servant Has A Plan](#)
[Chapter 771: Ancestral Sacrifices](#)
[Chapter 772: If Youve Got What It Takes, Fight!](#)
[Chapter 773: The Reigning Arch-Emperor](#)
[Chapter 774: Your Majesty, I Snatched A Deva Soul!](#)
[Chapter 775: This Bai Hao Is A Good-For-Nothing Wretch....](#)
[Chapter 776: Youre Screwed....](#)
[Chapter 777: The Formula For Eighteen-Colored Flame!](#)
[Chapter 778: Seizing Every Opportunity](#)
[Chapter 779: Poor Child](#)
[Chapter 780: Shakedown Addiction](#)
[Chapter 781: Dark Undercurrents Appear](#)
[Chapter 782: Conjuring Eighteen-Colored Flame](#)
[Chapter 783: Dramatic Events!](#)
[Chapter 784: Raging Murderous Aura](#)
[Chapter 785: Warmth From The Giant Ghost King](#)
[Chapter 786: Grand Heavenmaster, Your Humble Servant Has A Plan!](#)
[Chapter 787: Vicious Plan Of The Bastards!](#)
[Chapter 788: Proclamation of Universal Grace!](#)
[Chapter 789: Silver-Armored Corpse Trooper](#)
[Chapter 790: Universal Grace Begins!](#)

[Chapter 791: This Bai Hao Is A Madman](#)
[Chapter 792: The Talk Of The Town](#)
[Chapter 793: Heavenly Duke Clan](#)
[Chapter 794: Even The Heavenly Duke Bites His Tongue!](#)
[Chapter 795: A Clue!](#)
[Chapter 796: Fighting Into The Zhou Clan!](#)
[Chapter 797: Killing And Crushing!](#)
[Chapter 798: Ill Give You Ten Breaths Of Time!](#)
[Chapter 799: You Tricked Me, Bai Hao!](#)
[Chapter 800: Master And Apprentice Reunited](#)
[Chapter 801: Is This Some Kind Of Joke?](#)
[Chapter 802: Summons From The Grand Heavenmaster](#)
[Chapter 803: Think You Can Take Me On?](#)
[Chapter 804: Ganging Up](#)
[Chapter 805: Conjuring Flame In The Hall!](#)
[Chapter 806: Shaking The Dukes And Marquises!](#)
[Chapter 807: Earthly Soul Flame Tribulation](#)
[Chapter 808: If Youve Got What It Takes, Bring It On!](#)
[Chapter 809: Were Both Fellow Masters](#)
[Chapter 810: I'm Going To Miss You All!](#)
[Chapter 811: A Pet....](#)
[Chapter 812: Theres... Someone There!](#)
[Chapter 813: Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper....](#)
[Chapter 814: If You Have Any Questions....](#)
[Chapter 815: Advancing By Leaps And Bounds](#)
[Chapter 816: Nineteen-Colored Flame](#)
[Chapter 817: Bai Xiaochun?!](#)
[Chapter 818: Its Her!](#)
[Chapter 819: Fishing!](#)
[Chapter 820: Intense Fighting](#)
[Chapter 821: Cant See Me....](#)
[Chapter 822: Xiaochun Makes A Move!](#)
[Chapter 823: Sweetie](#)
[Chapter 824: Full Scale Retreat!](#)
[Chapter 825: Risking It All!](#)
[Chapter 826: Late Nascent Soul Stage](#)
[Chapter 827: You Broke My Teddy Bear](#)
[Chapter 828: Save Me, Father-In-Law!](#)
[Chapter 829: Ghostform Lifiedrain](#)

[Chapter 830: Thats Not Bai Xiaochun!](#)
[Chapter 831: Experts Unite!](#)
[Chapter 832: Second Deadly Blow!](#)
[Chapter 833: Ow... Oww....](#)
[Chapter 834: The Hell-Emperor Cometh!](#)
[Chapter 835: Cause And Effect](#)
[Chapter 836: Daoist Magic Of Heaven And Earth!](#)
[Chapter 837: The Celestial Cometh!](#)
[Chapter 838: What Right Do You Have To Withhold Your Approval!?](#)
[Chapter 839: Unmatchable Battle!](#)
[Chapter 840: Lock Of Blood Hair!](#)
[Chapter 841: Master, Save Me!](#)
[Chapter 842: I'm Not Really That Outstanding....](#)
[Chapter 843: The Celestials Blood-Hair](#)
[Chapter 844: Undying Bones Skyrocket](#)
[Chapter 845: Shaking The Wildlands](#)
[Chapter 846: The Hell-Emperors Successor](#)
[Chapter 847: Taking Off The Mask](#)
[Chapter 848: Farewells](#)
[Chapter 849: Is This Some Sort Of Mistake...?](#)
[Chapter 850: Calm Down, Que'er....](#)
[Chapter 851: Why Wont You Accept It, Song Que?](#)
[Chapter 852: You Owe Me An Explanation, Bai Xiaochun!](#)
[Chapter 853: You Absolutely, Positively Must Not Crush That!!!](#)
[Chapter 854: Is That?](#)