

I. Family 361

Chapter 361: True Yang Five Elements Sword, Everyone is a Robber Cultivator!_1

As Lu Changsheng lost himself in thought, the auction officially began.

“The first item up for auction at this auction is a ‘Breakthrough Elixir.’

“This Breakthrough Elixir is used for overcoming the mid-stage bottlenecks of Energy Refining cultivators and is suitable for practitioners of various cultivation techniques. Today we are auctioning off ten pills, with starting bids at a hundred Lower Grade Spirit Stones each...”

A graceful maid walked up, carrying a tray, as Yu Ningjun picked up a porcelain bottle to begin the introduction.

Many present already knew the effects of this Breakthrough Elixir.

But he still gave a very detailed introduction.

...

He explained the ingredients, effects, circumstances, and even identified the Alchemist who concocted it.

And he did so smoothly and without awkwardness, with humor and wit.

“Breakthrough Elixir!”

“I didn’t expect the first item to be a Breakthrough Elixir.”

“I wonder if there will be any High Grade Breakthrough Elixirs later on.”

Many Cultivators in the venue were excited, not expecting such good items from the start.

Breakthrough Elixirs like these are considered cure-all remedies.

Practically every cultivator and family power has a need for them, for use by their younger generations.

“One hundred and ten Spirit Stones!”

“One hundred and twenty!”

“One hundred and fifty!”

Voices continuously called out bids.

But these bidders were well aware not to exceed the market price.

In no time, the ten Breakthrough Elixirs were fiercely claimed.

“First Grade premium Defense Talisman—the Golden Light Bodyguard Charm, can withstand the full-force strike of an Energy Refining cultivator at the Perfection stage...”

“First Grade Lifespan Extension Pill, capable of extending life by five to ten years, although such pills from the same grade will only be effective with the first pill taken...”

“White Spirit Jade Bird, a lower high-quality bloodline spirit bird, capable of traveling three thousand miles a day, can automatically navigate back and forth, making it very convenient for sending messages...”

“Golden Fufly Blade and its subsidiary blades, a matched set of Advanced Level Magic Artifacts, with one main blade and eight subsidiary blades... By simply holding the main blade, you can control the eight subsidiary blades to attack opponents unexpectedly and with relentless sharpness...”

...

The auction proceeded in an orderly fashion.

Since this was Red Leaf Valley Market's first auction,

one could say that all these items were rare finds.

However, Lu Changsheng didn't participate in the bidding throughout the event.

For one thing, he wasn't interested in the items.

And he also didn't want to reveal too much of his financial capacity.

After all, in the eyes of the Lu Family, he was simply a moonlighter when it came to income and expenses.

Coming here with his wife this time was just to join in the excitement and broaden their horizons.

"Second Rank Lower Grade Talisman—the Thunder Fire Talisman, comparable to an attack from a Foundation Establishment Great Cultivator. As evaluated by our Yu Family appraisers, these talismans are all Premium Talisman with almost ten to twenty percent more power, starting at a bid of three hundred Spirit Stones, and there are ten in total..."

At that moment, the maid brought another auction item to the stage, and Yu Ningjun introduced it aloud.

"Second Rank talismans, and they're Premium Talismans?"

"It looks like the Yu, Lu, Bai, and Zheng families have all invested a lot in this auction."

"These Premium Talismans, not only pack more punch, but are also ideal for Talisman Masters to copy, which might be worth acquiring one to take back."

Many people in the crowd, hearing the introduction and looking at the talismans on stage, couldn't help but discuss and feel tempted.

It's exceptionally challenging for ordinary cultivators to purchase Advanced Level talismans.

One must venture to a large marketplace to seek them out.

And often, one needs to reserve and wait.

Even more so for Advanced Level talismans.

Now with ten Second Rank talismans up for auction, all being Premium Talismans, it naturally stirred interest.

"It looks like these talismans should fetch a nice price."

Lu Changsheng, observing the notably more enthusiastic atmosphere in the room, couldn't help but grin.

Knowing the twenty talismans he had Xiao Xiyue auction should bring in a significant profit.

"Four hundred Spirit Stones!"

A bid was immediately placed by an Energy Refining Cultivator, adding a hundred Spirit Stones right off the bat.

Since the starting prices at the auction are always below market value to allow for bidding room.

This cultivator clearly aimed to outbid others in one fell swoop to dissuade competition.

But the rest weren't fools either.

They knew that ordinary Second Rank Lower Grade talismans were priced just so, therefore the Premium ones would naturally fetch a higher price.

"Four hundred and ten!"

“Four hundred and twenty!”

“Four hundred and fifty!”

In a short while, the bidding for that single talisman soared by half over the starting price.

“Four hundred and seventy!”

“Five hundred!”

Lu Changsheng, watching the price rise, couldn’t help but feel elated.

He hadn’t expected his Second Rank talismans to be so popular.

With these twenty talismans all auctioned off, he’d directly pocket ten thousand Spirit Stones.

Sometimes, making money can be that simple.

“Five hundred and fifty!”

Just then, Lu Yuanding, sitting beside him, spoke up in an indifferent voice, stating a price.

“Father-in-law?”

“Dad?”

Lu Changsheng and others turned to look at Lu Yuanding with some surprise.

They didn’t know why he suddenly placed a bid.

The others at the venue, seeing Lu Yuanding bid, chose not to continue bidding.

Aside from the price of five hundred and fifty Spirit Stones already being quite high,

they also didn't compete out of respect for the Lu Family, since there were still nine more to go.

“Hehe, I’ve heard from the Fourth Elder that Premium Talismans are particularly well-suited for Talisman Masters to practice copying.”

“Changsheng, Miaoge, you are both Top-Level Talisman Masters now. You can use this talisman for practice, which might help you advance to Second Grade Talisman Masters,” Lu Yuanding chuckled and explained to Lu Changsheng and Lu Miaoge.

Usually, during this kind of auction, the four major families would try not to compete with others.

But for his daughter and son-in-law, he had nonetheless spoken up and made a bid.

And his final bid did not have the sense of intimidation.

“Thank you, father-in-law, for the generous gesture.”

Lu Changsheng, upon hearing this, had mixed feelings of amusement and gratitude.

“Hehe, there’s no need for thanks among family,” Lu Yuanding waved his hand dismissively.

After the first Thunder Fire Talisman was sold, the remaining nine were successively auctioned off.

Chapter 362: True Yang Five Elements Sword, Everyone is a Robber Cultivator!_2

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Each fetched a price of over five hundred Spirit Stones.

The last two even fetched the high price of nearly six hundred Spirit Stones.

These people probably had the same idea as Lu Yuanding.

Thinking of buying the Talismans to copy, not for self-defense.

If it were for self-defense, the price would seem unworthy.

...

After auctioning off ten Thunder Fire Talismans, Lu Changsheng's other ten Second Rank Vajra Talismans were not immediately auctioned off.

The auction items were not one better than the next, varying in quality to stir the atmosphere in the venue.

"Senior, here are the Second Rank Thunder Fire Talismans you bid for."

Before long, a Law Enforcement Cultivator escorted a maid, delivering the Talismans inside a talisman box to the VIP platform.

Lu Yuanding had Lu Changsheng and Lu Miaoge check the Talismans to make sure there were no problems, and then paid five hundred and fifty Spirit Stones.

Then he handed the Talismans over to Lu Changsheng.

Telling the two of them to ponder over them often, to study the patterns and flows of Spiritual Power in them.

They could also take them back to ask the Fourth Elder for guidance when the time came.

"Ladies and gentlemen, next up for auction are the high-level spiritual birds reared by the Hundred Birds Lake Bai Family..."

At this moment, Yu Ningjun started to introduce several spiritual birds taken out from a Spiritual Pet Bag.

Seeing this, Lu Changsheng, who had been sitting leisurely, also took an interest.

He had long wanted to replace his Iron Feather Eagle with a flying mount.

But he had no way to do so.

The flying mounts available on the market, nearly all of them were about the level of the Iron Feather Eagle.

And were not significantly better.

Although he had obtained an egg of the Green Jade Luan Bird,

This thing was after all stolen goods.

Who knew when it would hatch and grow big enough to serve as a mount.

“Purple Scaled Eagle, middle grade middle stage bloodline with the strength of a First Grade, Middle Stage creature, whether for combat or as a flying mount, both make it a decent choice. Starting bid three hundred Spirit Stones....”

“Golden Crowned Crane, middle grade high-quality bloodline with the strength of a First Grade, Middle Stage creature, starting bid five hundred Spirit Stones...”

“Black Winged Eagle, high rank low-quality bloodline with the strength of a First Grade, Middle Stage peak creature, starting bid one thousand Spirit Stones...”

Yu Ningjun introduced the three types of birds.

“Father-in-law, are there any other flying spiritual birds coming?”

Lu Changsheng, looking at the Golden Crowned Crane and Black Winged Eagle on the stage, inquired of Lu Yuanding.

He remembered that some items for auction had been announced earlier in the venue.

However, he had not looked closely.

If there were no other fine spiritual birds later on, he thought the Black Winged Eagle seemed acceptable and could make do.

“There seems to be another Black Winged Eagle, later on, in the late First Grade.”

Lu Yuanding replied upon hearing this.

Then he turned to Lu Changsheng to inquire, “What, you want to buy a spiritual bird?”

“I often run back and forth, and I feel it would be more convenient to have a better flying mount.”

Lu Changsheng nodded and spoke truthfully.

“Changsheng, there’s no need to waste money in this regard.”

“The Iron Feather Eagle is already considered a decent flying mount.”

“This Golden Crowned Crane and Black Winged Eagle, although faster than the Iron Feather Eagle, aren’t significantly faster.”

“It would not only be a waste of Spirit Stones but the cost of upkeep is also much higher than that of the Iron Feather Eagle.”

“Just for the sake of travel, it’s not worth wasting this money.”

Lu Yuanding spoke out, persuading Lu Changsheng not to waste money.

The Iron Feather Eagle was a flying mount the Lu Family got through their cooperation with the Bai Family.

Not only was it affordable, but it was also good in terms of flying speed and daily expenses, making it the first choice for value for money.

“Alright.”

Upon hearing this, Lu Changsheng thought it over and decided to give up on changing his flying mount.

He disdained the Iron Feather Eagle, not for its slow speed but because every time it encountered an enemy, it would tremble with fear.

Yet, given his own situation, the Black Winged Eagle would tremble just as much if he encountered a Foundation Establishment Cultivator.

If he ran into a minor Qi Refinement practitioner, he could annihilate them single-handedly without needing to worry about his mount.

“It seems I need to go all out in one step; otherwise, the late First Grade Black Winged Eagle doesn’t mean much to me.”

“And spending thousands of Spirit Stones on a flying mount would make me seem too extravagant.”

Lu Changsheng mused to himself.

After watching the auction for so long, he also felt his usual spending seemed a bit high.

Or rather, Spirit Stones came too easily to him, leading to a habit of spending lavishly.

In this auction, items worth over a thousand Spirit Stones were already considered very expensive.

Many people might have just a few hundred Spirit Stones on them.

The auction continued in an orderly manner.

Talismans, Elixir Medicines, Magic Artifacts, Spiritual Beasts, secret techniques, Cultivation legacies, and more all appeared.

The remaining ten Second Rank Talismans that Xiao Xiyue had consigned were also auctioned during this time.

But seeing that Lu Yuanding was ready to bid again, Lu Changsheng proactively made a bid himself.

After all, as a Talisman Master, bidding for a Talisman in such a situation was also justifiable.

He also didn't have the heart to let Lu Yuanding spend more on his account.

Over five hundred Spirit Stones was not a small expense for Lu Yuanding either.

As time ticked by, the auction finally came to a climax.

"Next, we come to the last and final highlight of this auction."

"I'm sure all the guests here have been eagerly awaiting this..."

Yu Ningjun spoke solemnly, causing everyone in the venue to perk up.

Many came just for these climax auction items.

Soon, maids holding trays covered with red cloth appeared on stage.

"Our first climactic auction item is a Foundation Establishment Spirit Object—the Earth Fire Spiritual Liquid."

“Helpful for dealing with the Mana Barrier among the three obstacles of Foundation Establishment, especially for cultivators with a Fire Attribute Technique... The starting price is one thousand five hundred Spirit Stones.”

Yu Ningjun lifted the red silk from the first tray, revealing a crystal-clear glass bottle on a white jade tray.

Through the glass bottle, one could see a flowing red liquid inside.

“Foundation Establishment Spirit Object!”

“Earth Fire Spiritual Liquid!”

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Chapter 363: True Yang Five Elements Sword, Everyone is a Robber Cultivator!_3

In the venue, countless pairs of eyes burned with desire as they gazed at the Foundation Establishment Spirit Object.

Even the Energy Refining Cultivators who couldn’t afford it were filled with longing as they looked at the object.

After all, this was a spirit object related to Foundation Establishment.

“Foundation Establishment Spirit Objects, I wonder what price it will fetch,” Lu Changsheng mused calmly to himself.

The market price for a Foundation Establishment Spirit Object was between two to three thousand Spirit Stones.

But the final transaction price typically exceeded this amount.

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After all, such objects were considered cure-alls and highly sought after.

Whether one was an Energy Refining Cultivator or a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, a Loose Cultivator, or from a Family power, there was demand.

However, he wasn't interested.

He still had four Foundation Establishment Spirit Objects on him, after all.

"Two thousand Spirit Stones!"

Those who could afford to bid for this item were no fools. Knowing what it meant to raise the bid by just a hundred or two hundred Spirit Stones, they directly bid two thousand, which also demonstrated their resolve.

"Two thousand one hundred!"

"Two thousand five hundred!"

"Two thousand eight hundred!"

Before long, the Foundation Establishment Spirit Object sold for the high price of three thousand nine hundred Spirit Stones.

Although the price was inflated,

Foundation Establishment Spirit Objects were, after all, hard to come by.

Especially for those who cultivated Fire Attribute Techniques, spending more Spirit Stones didn't matter.

"Second Rank Spirit Pill—Three Suns Elixir!"

“This Elixir Medicine does not need much introduction from me. Named after the concept of ‘Three Yang heralding prosperity,’ consuming it ensures that all hidden illnesses and underlying issues vanish as if bathed in sunlight. It is therefore somewhat miraculous in assisting the progression from Energy Refining to Foundation Establishment...”

Yu Ningjun lifted the red silk cloth and introduced the object, holding a glazed jade bottle.

“Three Suns Elixir.”

Lu Changsheng noticed his wife, Lu Miaoge, looking at him with eyes full of tenderness.

He chuckled softly without saying a word.

In the end, the Three Suns Elixir was sold at the price of three thousand eight hundred Spirit Stones.

The same price that Lu Changsheng had paid when he purchased it at the Elixir Cauldron Pavilion.

But this was to be expected.

Buying Elixir Medicines from a place like the Elixir Cauldron Pavilion was intrinsically more expensive.

And at an auction, unless faced with competition, the prices generally would not go much higher than the market value.

One after another, the star auction items appeared.

These items were mostly bid on by the powers of Foundation Establishment Families or Great Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

Ordinary Energy Refining Loose Cultivators simply didn’t have the financial capacity to participate.

“Middle Grade Spiritual Artifact—True Yang Five Elements Sword.”

“This is a meticulous work by Master Ou Zhi, forged from True Yang Phoenix Tree wood and Five Elements Primordial Gold, with the aid of three Foundation Establishment Great Cultivators, taking seven days and nights for refinement... harnessing the power of the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth... with a starting price of three thousand Spirit Stones!”

At that moment, Yu Ningjun unveiled the item by lifting the red silk cloth to reveal a cinnabar-red sword with spiritual light flowing, and introduced it out loud.

“The True Yang Five Elements Sword?! Combining the power of the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth?”

Lu Changsheng, who was appearing leisurely, narrowed his eyes slightly when he heard the description.

Although he had cultivated the Seven Luminaries Heart Lamp as his Life-bound Spiritual Artifact, he still lacked a suitable spirit sword.

But fabricating a well-suited spirit sword incorporating all five elements and both yin and yang was no easy task.

He would have to seek out a Second Rank Artifact Refining Master for that.

Currently, he didn’t know any masters of that caliber, so he had put the matter aside for the time being.

“Although this True Yang Five Elements Sword doesn’t incorporate both yin and yang, it’s quite suitable for me,” Lu Changsheng thought to himself, preparing to acquire the sword.

It was true that a Middle Grade Spiritual Artifact was usually mastered by Cultivators in the Middle Stage of Foundation Establishment.

But with the Profound Origin Bead at his side, he was by no means weaker than those in the Middle Stage of Foundation Establishment.

In fact, his mana was even more profound than many of them.

However, in such a setting, it was inconvenient for him to bid, so he could only trouble Xiao Xiyue.

Given that his Divine Sense was a weak point and could be detected by others, Lu Changsheng opted not to transmit to Xiao Xiyue via Divine Sense.

Instead, he discreetly took out a Transmission Talisman belonging to Xiao Xiyue.

“Hmm?”

Xiao Xiyue, who wasn't far away, looked perplexed upon receiving a message from Lu Changsheng.

But, after seeing Lu Changsheng's glance and looking toward the auction stage, she quickly grasped his intention.

“Five thousand Spirit Stones!”

Xiao Xiyue immediately called out her bid.

If it were before, she would have worried about not having enough Spirit Stones.

But with twenty Second Rank Talismans from a previous auction, she had no concerns about having enough Spirit Stones.

“Five thousand five hundred!”

“Five thousand eight hundred!”

“Six thousand!”

“Six thousand five hundred!”

“Seven thousand!”

When the bid reached seven thousand, Xiao Xiyue glanced at Lu Changsheng.

The price of a Middle Grade Spiritual Artifact was typically around five to six thousand Spirit Stones.

Although the True Yang Five Elements Sword, being an exceptional piece, would be a good deal more expensive, seven thousand Spirit Stones seemed about right.

“Continue,”

Lu Changsheng gave a slight nod, signaling Xiao Xiyue to keep bidding.

The sword was perfectly suitable for him, and he was not inclined to skimp on these Spirit Stones.

There were a few Foundation Establishment Cultivators bidding, but after crossing seven thousand Spirit Stones, only an imposing middle-aged man remained in competition with Xiao Xiyue.

However, when Xiao Xiyue made a bid of seven thousand nine hundred Spirit Stones, the Great Foundation Establishment Cultivator could only grimace and snort coldly as he gave up.

When he snorted, he turned to look at Xiao Xiyue.

It was as if he wanted to see who had dared not to give him face.

Lu Changsheng watched this scene intently, making a note of what the Foundation Establishment Cultivator looked like.

He wouldn't mind stepping out of the Marketplace with Xiao Xiyue to resolve any grievances with the man.

After the Middle Grade Spiritual Sword, an item of Spiritual Armor and a rare Spirit Pill were auctioned, and the auction came to an end.

However, after the auction, the Patriarch of the Yu Family and Lu Yuanzhong took to the stage to announce that the venue was available for free trading among attendees.

They even offered to provide private boxes or secret chambers to facilitate transactions.

Lu Changsheng had no interest in this, nor was it convenient for him to participate.

Moreover, the auction had lasted almost a day, and his four wives seemed somewhat tired.

Chapter 364: True Yang Five Elements Sword, Everyone is a Robber Cultivator!_4

He said a few words to Lu Yuanding and then left with his four wives.

....

“Jun’er, you’ve worked hard for this auction.”

In a private room of the auction, Patriarch Yu Yuanshan of the Yu Family looked at his grandson Yu Ningjun with satisfaction.

He was very pleased with his grandson’s performance throughout the auction.

“Grandfather, this is my duty,” Yu Ningjun replied, looking at his ancestor with respect.

...

“Jun’er, I know you must be dissatisfied that the old patriarch gave the Foundation Establishment Elixir to Ning Hu and auctioned off the ‘Earth Fire Spiritual Liquid’ that was originally for you,”

“But rest assured, if you perform well in the Marketplace for the next ten years, I will surely fight for the next Foundation Establishment Elixir for you,”

“And then, grandfather will also seek out a suitable Foundation Establishment Spirit Object for you,”

Patriarch Yu Yuanshan said solemnly to his grandson.

“How could I be dissatisfied when my elder brother successfully achieved Foundation Establishment with the Elixir? As for the ‘Earth Fire Spiritual Liquid,’ it never suited me. Even with it, my chances of Establishment would be slim. It’s better to auction it off and contribute to the family,”

“This was also my voluntary idea,” Yu Ningjun said with a candid expression.

The Yu Family currently appeared to only have two Foundation Establishment Great Cultivators.

However, last year, Patriarch Yu Jinyang of the Yu Family spent a great deal of money to acquire a Foundation Establishment Elixir at Jiuxiao Immortal City,

And allowed his great-grandson, Yu Ninghu, to successfully achieve Foundation Establishment in Jiuxiao Immortal City.

This news was only known to the core members of the Yu Family.

“Good, if you can think this way, grandfather is also relieved,”

“Now that we have the Red Leaf Valley Market, as long as we can get this Marketplace running and steadily developed, then take over the Zheng, Lu, and Bai families, our Yu Family might be able to take it a step further...”

Patriarch Yu Yuanshan looked at his sensible grandson and felt very comforted, his eyes filled with longing.

Yu Ningjun also showed a look of longing when he heard this.

Meanwhile, dozens of miles away from the Red Leaf Valley Market,

“Pfft! Pfft! Pfft!”

Two Robber Cultivators killed a pair of cultivators who had just left the Red Leaf Valley Market.

Their techniques were skilled, and they acted decisively.

After dealing with the bodies and the environment, they immediately activated a formation device to hide their figures and auras.

Whenever they encountered any lone Qi Refinement Loose Cultivators, the two would strike with the force of thunder and continue this behavior.

“Hmm? Isn’t someone taking the opportunity to attempt Foundation Establishment after the Red Leaf Valley Market auction?”

At this moment, one of the two, a burly man dressed in a gray vestment robe and wearing a bamboo hat, checked a Transmission Talisman.

“This Red Leaf Valley Market only has a Middle Grade Spirit Vein, and they dare to let someone attempt Foundation Establishment here? Aren’t they afraid it will affect the Formation’s operation?”

The other, a young Robber Cultivator also wearing a gray vestment robe and a bamboo hat, said upon hearing this.

“It must be that the Red Leaf Market wants to curry favor and attract this person.”

“And they want to use this opportunity to attract Loose Cultivators to come here for Foundation Establishment.”

“After all, this Marketplace doesn’t have any major backing; it’s just established by four Foundation Establishment Families.”

“The strongest among them, the Yu Family, with Patriarch Yu Jinyang, is only at the Middle Stage of Foundation Establishment.”

“And normally, there’s only one Cultivator at the Initial Stage of Foundation Establishment stationed in the Market.”

The burly man spoke disdainfully.

After speaking, he looked at the young Robber Cultivator and said, “Your mother sent a message to me, she probably also wants to stir up a big scheme.”

“Now that we’re wanted by the Heavenly Sword Sect, why not take this opportunity of the Red Leaf Valley Market auction to plunder, and then directly flee Jiang Country, head to Yue Country.”

“That way you’ll have your Foundation Establishment resources as well.”

The burly man suggested.

“Dad, isn’t that too risky?”

The young Robber Cultivator said with some concern after hearing this.

“What’s the risk in that? Your dad has come this far from a nobody Loose Cultivator; I’ve seen all kinds of storms,”

“This Red Leaf Valley Market doesn’t have a big backing. During this auction, it’s not just us who came to rob travelers; there are many others here to muddy the waters, hoping to pick up some advantages,”

“Besides, as long as the Market becomes chaotic at the time, everyone will be Robber Cultivators.”

The burly man spoke, clearly accustomed to such undertakings.

Chapter 365: Marketplace Mayhem, Four Robber Cultivators Emerge!_1

As the auction concluded, the crowd in the marketplace quickly dwindled.

After all, the surge in visitors was mostly due to the auction, or those looking to trade amidst the excitement.

Only a small portion of the crowd would choose to settle in Red Leaf Valley Market.

Lu Miaohuan, Lu Miaoyun, and Qu Zhenzhen, along with Lu Yuanding and Lu Yuanzhong, returned to Qingzhu Mountain.

Lu Changsheng, however, did not go back with them.

He planned to return after some time.

...

He made his way to the small courtyard he rented with Xiao Xiyue.

“Changsheng.”

Xiao Xiyue revealed a gentle expression on her usually cold face when she saw Lu Changsheng.

She handed over the Spirit Stones and the True Yang Five Elements Sword that had been auctioned to Lu Changsheng.

“You’ve worked hard, Xi Yue.”

Lu Changsheng took the Spirit Stones and the spiritual sword from Xiao Xiyue’s hands.

He then examined the True Yang Five Elements Sword.

The spiritual sword was three feet long and one inch wide, with both hilt and blade gleaming in red-gold color.

The hilt bore a wooden pattern, while the blade was etched with a pattern of the five elements, enveloped by a faint golden halo.

Merely looking at it brought forth an aura of sharpness.

Even without having refined it yet, Lu Changsheng felt the spiritual sword was impressive and very suitable for him.

“Changsheng, this True Yang Five Elements Sword comes with a special Sacrificial Refinement Technique.”

Xiao Xiyue took out a Jade Slip and passed it to Lu Changsheng.

The biggest difference between Spiritual Artifacts and Magic Artifacts is that Spiritual Artifacts can be refined and acknowledged by their master, allowing seamless control and enhancing power during combat.

Even if an enemy seizes them, it would be difficult to refine them quickly.

“Oh, there’s even a matching Sacrificial Refinement Technique.”

Lu Changsheng raised an eyebrow as he received the Jade Slip.

He had long heard that some excellent Magic Artifacts and Spiritual Artifacts come with their own ‘control spells’ and ‘Sacrificial Refinement Techniques’.

He scanned the Sacrificial Refinement Technique contained within the Jade Slip with his Divine Sense.

Inside was a ‘Blood Refinement Method.’

By using blood to refine the Spiritual Artifact, its power could be maximized in the hands of the first master.

Even if the spiritual sword was snatched away, without the corresponding Sacrificial Refinement Technique, forcible refinement would greatly diminish its power.

While there are benefits to having a Spiritual Artifact with a special refinement method, there are also downsides.

The advantage is that its power is stronger than that of a regular Spiritual Artifact.

The downside is that if resold, the devaluation and discount are quite severe.

After a brief look, Lu Changsheng put away the True Yang Five Elements Sword without starting the refinement process right away.

After all, there were more pressing matters to attend to.

A few days later...

Having dealt with urgent business, Lu Changsheng began the refinement process of the True Yang Five Elements Sword.

Refining a Spiritual Artifact is not difficult, especially when it has no owner.

In just half a day, Lu Changsheng had successfully refined the True Yang Five Elements Sword.

“Go!”

Stepping into the courtyard, Lu Changsheng’s Mental Spirit stirred slightly, and the True Yang Five Elements Sword flew out from his hand.

The spiritual sword, like a graceful swan or a roaming dragon, gave a light hum, bursting with the sharp energy of Geng metal, its Sword Qi crisscrossing the air.

The next moment, the sword’s sharp Geng metal energy transformed into a shockwave as powerful as tumultuous waves, with continuous azure patterns shimmering across it.

Then the sword changed again, its blade now suffused with a fiery red heat, roiling vigorously as if a fire dragon were roaring...

Xiao Xiyue, in her moon-white dress, her holy and graceful figure standing there, watched the scene unfold with surprise and amazement in her eyes.

Although Lu Changsheng was merely toying with the True Yang Five Elements Sword and had not displayed its full might,

such a deft display led her to recognize that his sword technique was extraordinary.

“Seven Luminaries Sword Scripture.”

Xiao Xiyue murmured to herself.

Previously, Lu Changsheng had told her that the Cultivation Technique he was studying was called the Seven Luminaries Sword Scripture.

But she had not witnessed Lu Changsheng employing this technique.

Now, she had gained some insight.

She somewhat understood the significance of the seven luminaries.

“Not bad, indeed this feels more suitable than the previous two spiritual swords I’ve used,” Lu Changsheng said, looking pleased as he retracted the sword’s glow.

In such a small courtyard, despite not being able to unleash its potential and test its might,

a simple experience was enough for him to roughly gauge the power of this spiritual sword.

It felt even more fitting in his hands than the white flying sword of the man in red and Meng Yibai’s golden flying sword.

It allowed him to utilize his Seven Luminaries Sword Qi more effectively.

As for the issues, this flying sword's primary power enhancement lay in the Five Elements.

The genuine yang catalpa tree served merely as a guide, having no enhancing effect on the attributes of yin and yang.

However, contentment is the key to happiness; to Lu Changsheng, this was already sufficient, and to spend seven thousand and nine hundred Spirit Stones was not a loss.

"It seems Lu Lang is quite satisfied with this spiritual sword."

"Should Lu Lang require it, once Xi Yue accumulates enough Contribution Value within our Sect, I could request an Artifact Refining Master to incorporate yin and yang Spiritual Materials, reforging the sword to elevate it to a superior or even an extreme quality Spiritual Artifact. Then, with both yin and yang, and the Five Elements complete, I imagine it would suit Lu Lang even better," Xiao Xiyue said softly with a smile, observing the contentment on Lu Changsheng's face.

From Lu Changsheng's demonstration, she understood the meaning of the Seven Luminaries and also comprehended why Lu Changsheng had her bid for this spiritual sword and where it was lacking for his use.

"Heh, if I have such a need in the future, I'll come to bother Xi Yue for it," Lu Changsheng replied with a smile.

"For now, this spiritual sword is quite enough for me."

Lu Changsheng felt quite convenient having Xiao Xiyue's connections. Requesting a Second Rank Master himself would be troublesome,

but for Xiao Xiyue, a disciple of the Immortal Sects, it was something that could be resolved within Qingyun Sect.

“Xi Yue, someone competed with you during the auction; they might bear a grudge against you. Do you want me to go and get rid of him to settle the score?” Lu Changsheng said, looking at Xiao Xiyue, who stood beside him, her figure ethereal and exquisite.

It wasn’t that he had become petty or vindictive.

If it were him, he would merely return a glare with a glare.

Unless someone truly troubled him, he wouldn’t bother holding a grudge.

Chapter 366: Marketplace Mayhem, Four Robber Cultivators Emerge!_2

But when it came to Xiao Xiyue, things were different.

Moreover, it was for her own sake that Xiao Xiyue had bought the True Yang Five Elements Sword and earned this person’s grudge, so naturally, he had to take a stance.

“For such a trifle, Xi Yue isn’t concerned at all, Lu Lang need not be like this,”

Upon hearing these words, Xiao Xiyue immediately blossomed into a smile like a young girl and said.

She was not one to fuss over minute details.

Especially since cultivating the Supreme Forgetful Love Technique, her emotions were mostly undisturbed by external matters; such trifling issues didn’t linger in her heart.

...

But Lu Changsheng’s words still stirred a trace of sweetness in her heart.

“Alright,”

Lu Changsheng agreed with a smile and nodded his head.

After chatting for a bit, the two of them changed their appearance and left, returning to their cave dwelling area with different identities.

Now that the auction had ended, there was no need to maintain their Foundation Establishment false identities.

Otherwise, two Foundation Establishment Cultivators with undisclosed backgrounds living in the marketplace would make the four great families uneasy and vigilant.

Upon returning to the cave dwelling area, Lu Changsheng found it to be much more crowded.

It turned out that someone was preparing to attempt Foundation Establishment, drawing many spectators.

Moreover, the Red Leaf Valley Market had introduced a new policy.

As long as certain conditions were met in the Red Leaf Market, the market would provide a dwelling for attempting Foundation Establishment.

“To quickly increase the foot traffic in the Red Leaf Valley Market, the four great families have really put a lot of effort into it,”

“But making such a move must also come with its share of risks,”

Lu Changsheng said softly as he shook his head upon seeing the announcement.

Generally, only large marketplaces and Immortal Cities provided resources for attempting Foundation Establishment.

Red Leaf Valley only had a Second Rank Middle Grade Spirit Vein, which wasn't expansive, making it only a medium-sized marketplace.

Just maintaining the internal Spiritual Energy of the marketplace and the operation of the Great Formation was already quite a task.

If someone were to make a breakthrough to Foundation Establishment, extensively drawing upon nature's Spiritual Energy would undoubtedly affect the operation of the Great Formation.

If they encountered an enemy attack during this time, it could render the Great Formation unable to operate at full capacity.

However, to develop the marketplace at its initial stage, advantages had to be extended as much as possible to attract people to settle and spend.

Moreover, the four great families dared to implement this policy because their own families were not far from the Red Leaf Valley Market.

Should any chaos ensue, they could arrive posthaste to suppress it.

...

In the blink of an eye, half a month had passed.

At the Lu Family's Spiritual Talisman Shop, on the third floor.

"Sister Miaoge, this step involves transitioning the flow, so you must control the Spiritual Power gently, like a trickling stream..."

On this day, Lu Changsheng was guiding Lu Miaoge in Talisman-Making.

In the past, he and Lu Miaoge exchanged insights on the Talisman Path, or he would give her subtle pointers.

Now, having broken through to Foundation Establishment and considered the foremost in the Lu Family's Talisman Path, he was more inclined to show off his knowledge and directly guide her.

After all, she was his wife-to-be.

And by teaching and guiding her more, Lu Miaoge could also advance to Second Grade Talisman Master in the shortest time possible.

“Come, let me guide you in drawing it once,”

After the instruction, Lu Changsheng held Lu Miaoge’s smooth and delicate hand, providing hands-on teaching and guiding her in drawing the Talisman.

Thus, after half an hour, the Talisman was successfully drawn.

“Changsheng, with your Talisman-Making Skill, it probably won’t take long before you can successfully draw Second Rank Talismans and become a Second Grade Talisman Master, right?”

As the Talisman was successfully drawn, Lu Miaoge looked at Lu Changsheng with soft, gentle eyes, brimming with beauty, and spoke.

As a Talisman Master, through such intimate teaching, she could clearly feel how exquisite Lu Changsheng’s level of Talisman-Making was.

Even if Lu Changsheng claimed to be a Second Grade Talisman Master, she would believe it.

Because both were Top-Level First Grade Talisman Masters, yet she felt as if she and Lu Changsheng were worlds apart.

“I estimate it’ll be another year or two,”

Lu Changsheng said with a smile.

Regarding this matter, he had always had a clear understanding.

He planned to reveal himself as a Second Grade Talisman Master in about a year and a half.

Ever since he announced his advancement to the Seventh Level Energy Refinement, he had begun to exchange for Second Rank Talisman-Making materials at the Lu Family, signaling to others that he was attempting to draw Second Rank Talismans.

“Two years,”

Lu Miaoge said on hearing this, her eyes filled with joy.

After so many years of companionship and as husband and wife, she naturally knew that if Lu Changsheng said so, it meant he was confident.

Within two years, he would surely become a Second Grade Talisman Master.

This filled her with immense happiness.

As a wife, who wouldn't want her husband to be powerful and accomplished?

A Second Grade Talisman Master might not be comparable to a Foundation Establishment Great Cultivator, but Foundation Establishment Cultivators would still have to show respect to a Second Grade Talisman Master.

Moreover, Lu Changsheng was only in his thirties.

Becoming a Second Grade Talisman Master at his age indicated a boundless future on the Talisman Path.

If he were willing to work for some major power and connect with Foundation Establishment Great Cultivators, he might even obtain a Foundation Establishment Elixir and attempt Foundation Establishment himself.

Lu Changsheng saw Lu Miaoge beaming with happiness as she looked at him.

In her soft, water-like beautiful eyes, there was not only the affection and attachment between husband and wife, but also a maternal radiance mingled with a young girl's adoration and admiration.

This gaze, even with a mere glance, softened one's heart and caused it to flutter.

There's nothing more gratifying than liking the features of someone's face.

"That's right, at most in two years, your husband will become a Second Grade Talisman Master,"

Lu Changsheng's own heart fluttered as he saw her gaze.

He remembered how tolerant Lu Miaoge had been over the years, her gentle and intelligent nature in his presence, and her understanding demeanour.

He felt as if having such a wife was all a man could ever wish for.

"Sister Miaoge, you should know that I've always concealed my Cultivation Level,"

"In fact, when I previously claimed to have broken through to the Seventh Level Energy Refinement, I had actually reached the Ninth Level."

Knowing that the news of his imminent advancement to Second Grade Talisman Master made Lu Miaoge so happy,

Lu Changsheng simply decided to share more news to make her happy.

Chapter 367: Marketplace Mayhem, Four Robber Cultivators Emerge!_3

After all, when they had used dual cultivation to save Lu Miaoge, she had found out that he was at the Energy Refinement Late Stage.

It's just that he didn't mention it, and Lu Miaoge never asked about it.

Now that he had made a breakthrough in Foundation Establishment, it was not a big deal to reveal a little about his cultivation level.

“Ninth Level Energy Refinement!”

“Changsheng, you’ve broken through to the Ninth Level of Energy Refinement!”

Upon hearing this, Lu Miaoge indeed couldn’t hide her immense surprise, her beautiful eyes rippling softly with happiness for him.

...

In the Cultivation World, breaking through to the Energy Refinement Late Stage before the age of forty meant there was hope for Foundation Establishment.

Now that Lu Changsheng had broken through to the Ninth Level of Energy Refinement at the age of thirty-three, it was not at all an overstatement to call him a genius.

Across all of Qingzhu Mountain, there were only a few people who could achieve the Ninth Level of Energy Refinement at such an age.

Although she didn’t understand how Lu Changsheng, with a Ninth Grade Spiritual Root, had achieved such a cultivation level in just over a decade, she did not ask further.

She knew that Lu Changsheng had his own secrets.

“Of course, when have I ever deceived you?”

Observing her reaction, Lu Changsheng couldn’t help but smile and spoke accordingly.

However, deep down he felt guilty for deceiving her again regarding his cultivation level.

“I always knew you were extraordinary, Changsheng.”

Lu Miaoge, with her clear and gentle demeanor, said with a heart full of joy, “Why did you suddenly bring this up today?”

She had long known that Lu Changsheng was at the Energy Refinement Late Stage, but she did not know the specifics of his cultivation level.

“Because I know Sister Miaoge, you’ve always wanted me to diligently pursue cultivation and aim for Foundation Establishment in the future.”

“Seeing you so happy about the Second Grade Talisman Master, I didn’t want to hide, and I wanted to make you happier.”

Lu Changsheng hugged Lu Miaoge, resting his chin lightly on her silky hair, and spoke the honest truth.

“Mhm, I’m very happy.”

“I believe, Changsheng, that you will definitely become a Foundation Establishment Great Cultivator in the future.”

Lu Miaoge nestled in Lu Changsheng’s arms, her heart sweet and her eyes brimming with affection as she spoke softly.

Having spent so many years together, she was naturally aware that Lu Changsheng had many secrets.

Whether it was from the time he saved her, his current Ninth Level Energy Refinement, or the previous involvement with the Three Suns Elixir, among others.

Outsiders might not be able to figure it out, but as his closest companion, she could sense some of it.

The fact that Lu Changsheng was willing to reveal some to her also made her very happy.

“It’s not just me, it’s us.”

“In the future, we will both achieve Foundation Establishment.”

Lu Changsheng said warmly.

He had not only the Foundation Establishment Elixir but also four Foundation Establishment Spirit Objects.

He had not sold these Spiritual Objects; they were reserved for Lu Miaoge.

With these conditions, he did not believe that Lu Miaoge would fail to succeed in Foundation Establishment.

If she still failed, he would forcibly help Lu Miaoge condense her Dao Foundation using the dual cultivation Secret Technique from the Yin Yang Harmony Technique.

Even though it would only be a fractured Foundation Base, it could still be slowly repaired into a flawless Foundation Base using the Yin Yang Five Elements Foundation Base afterward.

“Mhm.”

Lu Miaoge softly replied, nestling in Lu Changsheng’s embrace, her tender and affection-filled eyes displaying a longing for what was to come.

She looked forward to that day truly coming.

But family members know their own difficulties.

She was very aware that without a Foundation Establishment Elixir, relying solely on a few Foundation Establishment Spirit Objects, her chances of achieving Foundation Establishment were at best two or three in ten.

The two of them just embraced each other quietly.

Before long, Lu Miaoge’s delicate body trembled slightly, her limbs felt soft, her cheeks blushed faintly, and her slender neck tilted back slightly.

“Mm~ Is this...someone is making a breakthrough to Foundation Establishment?”

At that moment, Lu Miaoge looked out the window and saw that in the dwelling area of Red Leaf Valley, a vortex of Spiritual Energy was slowly gathering, and she gently stopped Lu Changsheng's playful actions inside his robe.

Upon hearing this, Lu Changsheng also stopped and looked toward the window.

He immediately saw a vortex of Spiritual Energy several meters across steadily growing larger in the distance.

This step indicated that the person had already passed the three tests of Foundation Establishment and was starting to condense Spiritual Liquid, preparing to lift up their Dao Foundation.

“He must be the Cultivator who bought the ‘Earth Fire Spiritual Liquid’.”

“It seems he has already crossed the three tests of Foundation Establishment and is now at the critical stage of Foundation Establishment,” Lu Changsheng said out loud.

“I heard he only has the ‘Earth Fire Spiritual Liquid’ as a Foundation Establishment Spirit Object, it's uncertain whether he'll be successful or not,” Lu Miaoge murmured, her rosy cheeks tinged with a touch of sentimentality.

She wasn't worried about the other party.

She was seeing her own future path.

After all, for most Cultivators without a Foundation Establishment Elixir, attempting Foundation Establishment meant staking their lives.

Gambling on that ten to twenty percent chance.

The Lu Family would produce Foundation Establishment hopefuls every few generations.

But until the Lu Family Ancestor was near the end of his life and Lu Yuanzhong managed to achieve Foundation Establishment, it was known how difficult this life-risking chance was.

Furthermore, Lu Yuanzhong managed to break through only because Lu Yuanshan had obtained the ingredients for a Foundation Establishment Elixir in the Purple Shadow Secret Realm, partnered with others for Alchemy, and successfully used the Elixir to make the breakthrough.

“It’s hard to say, after all, the hardest part of Foundation Establishment is this step where eighty percent fail,” Lu Changsheng said while playfully touching the plump and smooth snow-white skin.

He had respect for someone who, without a Foundation Establishment Elixir and only ten to twenty percent chance, dared to gamble in such a way.

After all, these people who were willing to give it everything typically had good foundations.

Not only were their Spiritual Roots good, but they were also relatively young, only in their forties or fifties.

In that situation, they dared to forsake everything, risking their lives for that slim chance at Foundation Establishment.

“Sister Miaoge, it’s getting late.”

After watching for a while, Lu Changsheng lost interest and said warmly to the beauty in front of him.

After all, foundation-building phenomena weren’t as compelling as the lovely person before his eyes.

Moreover, such an event as Foundation Establishment wouldn’t yield results in just a moment or two; it required sustained time.

“Mm~”

Lu Miaoge looked at Lu Changsheng, who was acting childishly, and cooed, rolling her eyes at him with a playful scowl.

Chapter 368: Marketplace Mayhem, Four Robber Cultivators Emerge!_4

But being entangled by Lu Changsheng like this, she felt an indescribable sense of fulfillment pounding in her heart.

At this moment, around the cave-dwelling area, numerous cultivators were watching the vortex of nature's spiritual energy in the sky.

In large marketplaces and Immortal Cities, there are usually one or two people who attempt Foundation Establishment every year, so it's nothing out of the ordinary for everyone.

But in Red Leaf Valley Market, Foundation Establishment is a rare event. Since it was the first time, naturally many people came to watch.

Some also wanted to see if this person could succeed in their attempt.

If they did succeed, then to congratulate them and become acquainted could be beneficial; perhaps in a good mood, the successful cultivator might even bestow some rewards on them.

...

"The condensation of the gel has already begun, in another three days, it will be a good time to take action," someone said.

Within the crowd, a tall and burly middle-aged man and a slender woman in a blue robe glanced at each other, nodded slightly, and then walked away.

...

Three days later.

That night.

After the hustle and bustle of the daytime, the Red Leaf Valley Market fell into peace during the late hours.

Apart from the Law Enforcement Cultivators patrolling the airspace above the streets, only a few shops and inns still had their lights on.

After all, cultivators need to rest too.

Most cultivators would sleep at night, or meditate and practice cultivation.

“Creak—”

Inside an inn, three figures wearing grey vestment robes and bamboo hats walked out of their room.

They looked at each other and nodded, then quickly made their way to the first floor.

“Where are the spirit stones of the shop?” the lead burly man asked the shopkeeper, who was keeping vigil at the counter, in a deep voice.

“Spirit stones, what spirit stones?” the shopkeeper asked, baffled and slow to react.

But the next moment, a White Bone Crossbow Bolt, accompanied by a terrifying aura, locked onto him. He jolted in shock, as a chilling fear ran down his spine, instantly realizing what was happening.

Robber Cultivator!

The man before his eyes was a Robber Cultivator, a Foundation Establishment Robber Cultivator!

“Senior, all the spirit stones are here, they’re all here,” said the shopkeeper, his legs trembling uncontrollably as he quickly took out a Storage Bag, his face rigidly smiling as he begged for mercy.

Knowing the other party was a Foundation Establishment Cultivator and still dared to rob so boldly, he didn't dare to resist even the slightest bit.

He understood that the slightest dissatisfaction could cost him his life.

"Is there more?" the burly man asked hoarsely after scanning the Storage Bag.

Choosing to start from this inn was also the result of careful observation and planning; this inn did very good business.

"Senior, our inn settles accounts with spirit stones weekly, and the owner comes every week to clear the accounts. All the spirit stones are indeed here," explained the shopkeeper with a mournful face.

After speaking, somewhat painfully, he pulled out his own Storage Bag and said, "Senior, these are my own savings. If the senior fancies them, please take them, I only ask that—"

But before he could finish, a small White Bone Arrow shot out.

"Pfft!"

"Hehehe—"

The arrow pierced through the shopkeeper's head, making his eyes bulge with indignation as he died, unable to utter the words he wanted to say.

He then fell to the ground with a 'thump,' his body rapidly drained of blood by the White Bone Arrow, leaving a dried-up corpse.

"The agreed-upon time is almost upon us. You go first to interfere with the Great Formation; I'll handle matters here," the burly man said to the grey-robed female cultivator and the young man in grey beside him.

"Dad, be careful," the grey-robed young man said with concern.

“Stop dawdling,” the burly man replied impatiently, waving his hand dismissively.

Thereupon, the grey-robed woman quickly left, pulling the young man with her.

“Green Wolf,” the burly man patted his Spiritual Pet Bag.

A Green Wolf, one zhang tall, with dark green fur, gloomy eyes, and ferocious fangs, appeared at his side.

After the Green Wolf appeared, it opened its huge mouth and devoured the shopkeeper’s dried-up corpse.

It then went to the entrance of the inn, its eyes gleaming with a predatory light.

The burly man then took out a child-sized black gourd.

“Go!” he commanded, unsealing the gourd with hand seals.

Black flames, like Fire Serpents, rolled out of the mouth of the gourd.

Instantly, the inn was engulfed in flames, with thick black smoke billowing towards the sky.

Amidst the roaring black flames and the spreading smoke, cries of pain and screams began to rise from within the inn.

“What’s going on here?”

“It’s on fire!”

“No, this isn’t just a fire, this is evil flames with poison fire!”

Some cultivators inside the inn, realizing the danger, immediately fled through windows or by flying on artifacts.

But the burly man, along with a Green Giant Wolf, holding the black gourd in one hand and a White Bone Crossbow Bolt in the other, lay in ambush outside the inn.

Anyone who escaped from the inn was immediately targeted by him; a White Bone Arrow shot out swiftly, killing the person and snatching their Storage Bag with practiced ease.

“Audacious Robber Cultivator, daring to cause chaos in the marketplace!”

Soon, the Red Leaf Valley Market’s patrol Enforcement Team, upon noticing the situation and the rising black smoke, quickly arrived on the scene.

“Pfft!”

However, the burly man showed no fear facing this group of Law Enforcement Cultivators.

A White Bone Crossbow Bolt was released from his hand, instantly killing a Law Cultivator who was at the Energy Refinement Late Stage.

“Not good! It’s a Foundation Establishment Great Cultivator!”

“Quick, notify the ancestor!” the other Law Enforcement Cultivators exclaimed in shock as they took out their Transmission Jade Tokens.

At the same time, they activated a formation artifact, hoping to harness the power of the Marketplace’s Great Formation to resist the burly man.

But the burly man was prepared.

His expression was calm and indifferent beneath his bamboo hat as he performed hand seals, causing grey light pillars to surge from the ground.

They caused the black smoke, still billowing from the burning inn, to rapidly roll towards the Law Enforcement Cultivators, like dark clouds descending.

To prevent escapees or reinforcements, he had laid a trap ahead of time.

As the black smoke enveloped the Law Enforcement Cultivators, they felt the fire poison spreading through their bodies, stiffening their movements and slowing down their spiritual power.

Chapter 369: Marketplace Mayhem, Four Robber Cultivators Emerge!_5

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“Pu pu pu—”

The next moment, a continual barrage of white bone crossbow bolts shot out, turning into beams of soul-snatching streaks of deadly light that quickly annihilated several people.

“Roar!”

A Green Wolf roared beside them, devouring a few corpses.

“Let’s go.”

...

Seeing that the cleanup on this side was almost done, the burly man adjusted the straw hat on his head and quickly charged towards a Magical Artifact Shop.

He had been preparing for this robbery for nearly half a month.

He had naturally scoped out the place in the Marketplace to maximize his gains as much as possible.

Just as the burly man used a black gourd to break through the Shop’s Formation with black flames and plunder it bare, he sensed a Foundation Establishment aura rushing towards this area.

“They’re finally here.”

His eyes narrowed slightly, and he took out a Transmission Talisman and crushed it.

“How dare you, Robber Cultivator, to create such chaos in our Red Leaf Valley Market!”

A roar of anger echoed in the night sky.

Before the man arrived, a fiery crimson wheel surged towards them.

“Whoosh whoosh whoosh—”

The golden wheel spun rapidly in the air, resembling a blazing sun, bursting with scorching heat, its might overwhelming.

“Swoosh—”

Upon seeing this, the burly man’s white bone crossbow bolt was swathed in strands of dark, dense blood, and a blood-veined white bone arrow suddenly shot out.

“Clang—”

The white bone arrow collided with the fiery crimson wheel mid-air, producing a deafening metallic clang.

Subsequently, two currents of Mana surged, stirring up waves of air currents in the night sky.

“Hm, a Foundation Establishment Cultivator!?”

Yu Yuanshan looked at the burly man, his pupils contracted, showing a grave expression.

But when he saw the smoky ruin of the Magical Artifact Shop, his eyes immediately blazed with fury.

This shop was, in fact, owned by his Yu Family.

There were Magic Artifacts inside worth nearly ten thousand Spirit Stones.

Now that the shop had been plundered to emptiness, it was akin to losing nearly ten thousand Spirit Stones.

This amount of Spirit Stones was a considerable sum for their Yu Family.

“Dare to plunder in our Red Leaf Valley Market, die!”

He bellowed angrily, as another Ice Blue Crescent Wheel appeared around him.

The crescent wheel spun, emitting a bone-chilling coldness that lowered the surrounding air temperature by several degrees, and suddenly slashed towards the burly man.

Meanwhile, he produced an Array Plate in his hand, manipulating it to utilize the power of the Marketplace’s Great Formation to suppress the intruder.

But the next moment.

“Boom! Boom! Booming—”

Countless flashes of lightning struck the Red Leaf Valley Market’s Green Water Cloud Formation.

The Formation flickered, with spiritual light converging and lightning snakes wildly dancing in the night, accompanied by dull thunderous explosions that sounded one after another.

At this moment, the calmness inside the Market was completely shattered, and turmoil erupted.

Many hidden Robber Cultivators, as if they had received a signal, directly rushed into various shops and businesses with their Magic Artifacts, slaughtering their way in.

“What is this!?”

Yu Yuanshan’s complexion changed drastically at the sight of this.

He was unafraid of his opponent in the Market because of the Green Water Cloud Great Formation.

With the boost from this Great Formation, and the power of the Formation aiding him, he was confident he could kill Foundation Establishment Middle Stage Cultivators.

Even against Late Stage Foundation Establishment Cultivators, he would manage to delay until reinforcements arrived.

However, seeing this situation, he immediately realized that those who dared to plunder the Market so brazenly must have come prepared.

“Fellow Daoist, I don’t care who you are, if you’re willing to withdraw now, I am willing to let bygones be bygones and let the matter rest,”

Yu Yuanshan said to the burly man, suppressing the rage in his heart.

At present, because someone in the Red Leaf Valley Market was undergoing Foundation Establishment, the internal circulation of Spiritual Energy was insufficient, and the Great Formation couldn’t operate at full strength.

Now that the Formation was being bombarded and shaken like this, he realized that there was another Foundation Establishment Cultivator on the attacker’s side.

Even with two Foundation Establishment Cultivators, he could rely on the Formation to barely delay until support arrived.

But if the commotion continued, the entire Marketplace would descend into chaos.

If the Marketplace fell into chaos, all the effort and management of their four big Families over the years would be ruined.

“Leave now?”

The burly man laughed at Yu Yuanshan’s words, appearing to have heard some joke.

He looked at Yu Yuanshan with a hoarse voice and said, “How about this, as long as you do not interfere with me, I’ll try not to plunder your Yu Family’s shops.”

“Give me half an hour at most, and I will leave immediately. How about that?”

The burly man said.

He knew he had to leave after a quick plunder.

Otherwise, once the four big Families of Red Leaf Valley Market received the message and came to support, even he would struggle to fend them off.

“Fellow Daoist, are you joking? If you leave now, there’s still time,”

Yu Yuanshan said darkly.

In the Red Leaf Valley Market, besides their four big Families, there were also many other Foundation Establishment Families that had settled in.

If he allowed the robber to plunder, they would be held accountable for compensation later on.

Especially since he, Yu Yuanshan, was stationed in the Red Leaf Valley Market, his inability to prevent the incident would be inexcusable and he would struggle to explain himself.

“Since we can’t reach an agreement, let’s have a fight and see what you’ve got.”

The burly man formed hand seals, causing the black gourd to float above his head while the white bone crossbow turned into a reddish Spiritual Artifact longsword.

...

“What’s going on!?”

“My God, someone is attacking the Market!”

“This is bad, Robber Cultivators!”

“Robber Cultivators have breached the Market!”

As the Heavenly Cloud and Water Formation of the Market shook, countless people woke up from their sleep or meditation and looked outside.

Watching the roiling black smoke in the night sky that looked like dark clouds descending upon a city, with the Green Water Cloud Formation flashing irregularly and rumbling continuously, trembling non-stop, a wave of panic began to spread from within the Market.

Additionally, many Loose Cultivators seeing this situation couldn’t help but feel greed, wanting to take advantage of the chaos for profit.

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Chapter 370: Marketplace Mayhem, Four Robber Cultivators Emerge!_6

After all, the Cultivation World is a place where the strong prey on the weak, utterly unregulated.

In the marketplace, rules are adhered to because Foundation Establishment Great Cultivators are in charge, supported by Law Enforcement Cultivators.

Now that Robber Cultivators are attacking the marketplace, chaos reigns, order collapses, and under the temptation of immense profits, anyone could turn into a Robber Cultivator!

“Brothers, what are you waiting for, loot!”

Inside a certain inn, a Loose Cultivator saw the situation and immediately shouted, trying to incite more people to join the action.

“Lan’er, you stay at home and take care of the children, I’ll be right back.”

...

“Husband, don’t go, please don’t!”

“Fortune comes with risk, this may be my only chance in life, I can’t give it up. Just stay safe at home, I’ll be back soon.”

In a small courtyard, a tall man with a Magical Sword in hand, said to his wife.

“This old fool has lived a life of timidity, for the sake of our descendants, it’s worth a gamble!”

Within a narrow and simple dwelling, an old man with a face showing age and hair as white as frost, looking up at the sky, gritted his teeth.

He then took out a somewhat damaged Flying Sword and left the house.

For Loose Cultivators, the chaos in the marketplace is dangerous, but also an opportunity.

Dependent on stable jobs, they can never earn many Spirit Stones in their lifetime.

But if they can take advantage of the confusion to seize some Elixir Medicines, Magic Artifacts, or heavenly and earthly treasures, they could save countless years of effort.

In a moment, the entire marketplace was filled with the sounds of combat, cries for help, and weeping, all intermingling.

...

The Lu Family compound.

“Robber Cultivators are attacking the marketplace?”

Lu Changsheng, looking out the window at the distant commotion.

At the moment Yu Yuanshan took action and the two Foundation Establishment Cultivators clashed, he had sensed the disturbance and woken from his sleep.

Now he heard the Great Formation of Red Leaf Valley rumbling loudly.

Under the roaring thunder and erratic flashes of ominous, sinister purple light, he was nearly certain that Robber Cultivators were attacking the marketplace.

And they were striking from both inside and outside the marketplace.

Otherwise, such a commotion would have been impossible.

“Just when someone is attempting Foundation Establishment in the marketplace and the Great Formation can’t be fully powered, Robber Cultivators come... Clearly, they came prepared,” Lu Changsheng murmured calmly to himself.

He had previously sensed that allowing someone to undergo Foundation Establishment in the Red Leaf Valley Market would increase risks.

But he hadn’t expected such an incident to happen so soon and with such ferocity.

“Changsheng.”

At this moment, Lu Miaoge also woke up due to the noise and looked out the window, noticing the abnormal state of the Green Water Cloud Formation, her face showing shock.

“It seems Robber Cultivators are attacking the marketplace to loot.”

Lu Changsheng turned back and said to Lu Miaoge.

“Robber Cultivators raiding the marketplace!?”

Hearing this, Lu Miaoge was immediately startled.

Such incidents have occurred in the Cultivation World before.

There have even been Robber Cultivators who secretly wiped out some Cultivation Families.

However, these events were rare and very uncommon.

She hadn’t expected that the Red Leaf Valley Market would encounter such an ordeal now.

“Our shop might also be getting looted right now; I’ll go have a look.”

Lu Changsheng said to Lu Miaoge.

He could tell that the Robber Cultivators were mainly targeting the commercial district.

They wouldn’t come to the residential area.

After all, the residential area where the Lu Family compound was located was considered a more central part of Red Leaf Valley Market.

People who lived there were not ordinary in terms of status, identity, and strength.

It would be more trouble than it was worth to come here, so looting shops and stores was a quicker way to gain money.

“I’ll go with you.”

Lu Miaoge said immediately.

“Stay here in the compound, I have plenty of Talismans with me, and I’ll be fine,” Lu Changsheng told Lu Miaoge.

He planned to check not only the shop but also to see exactly what was happening in the marketplace.

After all, the Red Leaf Valley Market belonged to the four major Families and he had both a shop and a cave dwelling there.

If this chaos continued, the entire marketplace might suffer a crippling blow, taking a decade or more to recover.

“Uncle Yuan Ling is watching over the compound, Changsheng, I’ll go with you,” Lu Miaoge continued, her beautiful face showing determination.

The current situation was extremely chaotic and she truly didn’t feel comfortable letting Lu Changsheng go alone to investigate.

After all, if Robber Cultivators dared to raid the marketplace, there must be Foundation Establishment Cultivators leading them.

Otherwise, the commotion wouldn’t be as big.

“Alright, let’s go together then,” Lu Changsheng, seeing his wife’s firm expression, smiled and nodded his head.

Knowing that Lu Miaoge was also stubborn despite appearing tender, and seeing her looking so determined, he found it difficult to refuse.

Immediately, they both left the courtyard.

At this time, other members of the Lu Family also began to leave their houses.

“Changsheng, Miaoge.”

“Second Elder, Sister Miaoge.”

Seeing Lu Changsheng and Lu Miaoge, they all called out.

“Second Elder, with Robber Cultivators raiding the marketplace, Miaoge and I will go check our shop,” Lu Changsheng said to one of them.

This Lu Family Second Elder was no longer the same as the one from the Nine Dragons Market.

He was a newly-promoted elder from last year, named Lu Yuanling.

He was currently in charge of the Red Leaf Valley Marketplace for the Lu Family.

“Okay, Changsheng, Miaoge, be careful,” Lu Yuanling said after a moment’s thought, nodding his head.

He knew that Lu Changsheng had broken through to the Seventh Level Energy Refinement and Lu Miaoge possessed Ninth Level Energy Refinement strength. As Talisman Masters with Talismans at their sides, they shouldn’t run into much trouble.

“Yuan Qing, Miaofeng, Miaoyu, the rest of you follow me...”

He looked at several other Lu Family disciples and Executors, issuing orders.

With the marketplace in upheaval and the looting by Robber Cultivators, they needed to ensure the shops were secure and try to stabilize the situation as much as possible.

After all, the Lu Family still had the most invested in the marketplace and would suffer significant losses if the chaos continued.

“Understood!”

The others nodded and left the compound, rushing towards the commercial district.