

I. Family 971

Chapter 971: Demon Tree Seed, Your First Love Has Been Attacked!_3 “Seed, are you talking about that purple, crystalline object?”

Lu Ping'an said in astonishment.

“Um, I suspect that it's the seed of a Tree Demon...”

“Father has a cultivation technique named the Heavenly Longevity Technique, which can refine a Heaven-and-Earth Spirit Plant into a ‘Life-bound Spiritual Root’...”

Lu Quanzhen's eyes narrowed slightly as he spoke softly.

“Quanzhen, you mean...”

Lu Ping'an immediately understood what his brother meant.

Upon hearing the effects of the Heavenly Longevity Technique, he too felt a surge of astonishment and thought the cultivation technique was quite miraculous.

“Whether it's the Tree Demon's seed or not, I think we should grab a few and take a look.”

“Didn't Father instruct us before, that if we come across any rare Spiritual Medicines or Heaven-and-Earth Spirit Plants, we should bring them back?”

“If that purple seed really is the Tree Demon's seed, it would definitely be a huge gain.”

Lu Quanzhen said lowly, looking at the situation ahead.

“Alright.”

Lu Ping'an looked at the several bizarre Demon Beasts fighting ahead, preparing to make a move.

With his current combat prowess, seizing a few Demon Beasts from the fray would not be difficult.

But perhaps because his first love was on the battlefield, he felt somewhat embarrassed to make a move and reluctant to raise his hand.

“Sha sha sha!!!”

The Purple Demon Tree suddenly shook, its canopy rustling loudly, and mist swirling. Numerous purple leaves fluttered down, slashing towards the people of the Heavenly Sword Sect.

“Xiu xiu xiu!”

The leaves whirled chaotically, brimming with intent to kill.

The trunk of the Tree Demon had already been completely set ablaze, and at this moment, it appeared to be in its death throes.

Facing the flurry of purple leaves, Qin Yi moved her Flying Sword, creating a net of Sword Qi.

But her Demon Beast opponent’s body suddenly exploded, countless tendrils appearing and whipping towards her, sending her flying with coughed blood from her mouth.

“Big brother, stop hesitating.”

Lu Quanzhen called out, urging him to stop being indecisive — your first love is getting beaten up!

Upon hearing his brother’s urging, Lu Ping’an hesitated no longer. His footing spurred him forward, his entire being like a streak of golden light, bursting forth and appearing in front of Qin Yi in an instant.

Following that, his blood surged, and he raised his right arm and delivered a powerful punch onto the bizarre Demon Beast, completely exploding its body.

“Eh!?”

“Who is this man!?”

This scene left Qin Yi and several other disciples from the Heavenly Sword Sect shocked.

They had taken notice of Lu Ping'an and Lu Quanzhen earlier.

But in such a situation, they couldn't spare the attention to care for others.

Moreover, they were confident that these two couldn't interfere with them.

But now, seeing Lu Ping'an punch a Demon Beast to death, they couldn't help but be dumbfounded.

They secretly thought, 'Where did this Loose Cultivator come from, with such astonishing fighting strength!'

“I'm only interested in the seeds within the body of these Demon Beasts and won't vie for your other spoils.”

Lu Ping'an said to everyone.

As he spoke, he seemed to feel that it wasn't quite right and worried they wouldn't believe him, so he continued, “As a reward, I can help you deal with this Tree Demon.”

“Thank you!”

At that moment, Qin Yi got up from the ground, wiping the fresh blood from her lips, and expressed her gratitude to Lu Ping'an.

“It's no trouble at all, no need to thank me.”

Lu Ping'an said, somewhat awkwardly.

He then searched the crushed body of the Demon Beast in front of him and found an oval seed about the size of a thumb, emanating a purple, crystalline luster.

He pocketed the seed and once again took a step, his entire body shooting out like a cannonball and striking another Demon Beast, his punch shattering its body into pieces, astonishing the Sword Cultivators on the field.

It was known that Sword Cultivators were famous for their attacking prowess, claiming to be second to none in terms of aggression!

Yet the Demon Beasts they had been struggling to slay were now effortlessly pulverized by Lu Ping'an's mere punch.

After annihilating several Demon Beasts, Lu Ping'an directly launched himself towards the Tree Demon.

“Boom, boom, boom!”

Punches like the drums of gods and demons pounded against the demon tree, thundering loudly and causing wood chips to explode.

Facing such an onslaught, the demon tree swayed rustlingly, the ground trembled, and thick root tendrils like that of an earth dragon appeared, whipping through the air and smashing towards Lu Ping'an.

Yet, Lu Ping'an, faced with this aggressive attack, neither dodged nor evaded, meeting it head-on, swinging his fists, causing those roots to burst apart.

The already crumbling demon tree soon fell silent under Lu Ping'an's assault.

Adjacent to the action, Qin Yi, with her expression cold, watched Lu Ping'an's silhouette; the more she watched his way of fighting, the more familiar it seemed. Frowning, she felt an increasing sense of familiarity.

She once knew someone who fought just like this.

Moreover, the movements, gestures, and silhouettes of the two shared seemed remarkably alike.

“Many thanks to this Daoist for the assistance.”

At that moment, a cultivator from the Heavenly Sword Sect bowed in thanks towards Lu Ping’an.

Although the disciples of the Immortal Sects were arrogant and looked down on loose cultivators...

The main reason was still strength!

Someone like Lu Ping’an, who could explode demon beasts with a punch and burst demon trees with his fists, did not fall into the category they disdained.

In fact, some semblance of respect could be seen in their eyes when they looked towards Lu Ping’an!

“Everyone’s too kind.”

Lu Ping’an bowed in return.

“We have yet to ask for your name, Daoist, and where you come from?”

A Heavenly Sword Sect disciple curiously inquired, wanting to know Lu Ping’an’s identity and origin.

“An Ping, just a loose cultivator.”

Lu Ping’an reported the alias he was using for this trip.

Hearing the name, Qin Yi slightly furrowed her brows, her expression turning somewhat peculiar as she looked towards Lu Ping’an.

That's because the name bore a resemblance to that of an old acquaintance of hers.

She stepped forward towards Lu Ping'an to express her gratitude again, "Thank you for your assistance just now."

"The lady is too polite."

Lu Ping'an said with a smile.

Noticing her poor complexion, he took out a bottle of healing pills from his storage bag and handed it to her, "I have some healing pills here."

"Lady?"

Qin Yi, upon hearing Lu Ping'an's address and this gesture, didn't reach out to take the pills but instead looked at him with a furrowed brow, saying, "I feel like you're somewhat familiar."

"Have we met before?"

Lu Ping'an's heart skipped a beat, not expecting Qin Yi to be so perceptive.

He immediately explained that he had been cultivating in the mountains all along, fighting with demon beasts day in and day out, and seldom went out.

"It's just a feeling that you seem familiar, as if I've seen you before."

Qin Yi continued to look directly at Lu Ping'an as if trying to discern something from his face.

"I see."

Lu Ping'an was slightly taken aback, then smiled and nodded his head, bowing to everyone present, "Since the matter is resolved, I bid you all farewell."

“Lu Ping’an.”

Qin Yi, witnessing Lu Ping’an’s jianghu-like demeanor and actions, felt an increasing sense of recognition and directly called out loud.

“Hm?”

The nearby Heavenly Sword Sect cultivators were taken aback by this, as if recognizing something different in the situation.

Lu Ping’an, feeling as if he had been struck by heavenly thunder, stiffened.

Then he turned back and said, “My name is An Ping, the lady must have mistaken me for someone else.”

Upon hearing this, Qin Yi’s eyebrows raised, her eyes clear and incisive, she looked at Lu Ping’an’s retreating back and said directly, “Whether you’re Lu Ping’an or not, if you happen to meet him, you can tell him that Qin Yi has joined the Heavenly Sword Sect and he can write to her if there’s anything.”

Although Lu Ping’an had no Spiritual Root and was unable to cultivate...

Her instincts told her that this person was Lu Ping’an.

“Ah...”

Lu Ping’an sighed inwardly upon hearing this, not sure of how to respond.

But with the thought of his own Spiritual Root or the lack thereof, he eventually stepped forward, leapt up, and returned to Lu Quanzhen’s side at the cave entrance, whispering softly, “Let’s go.”

Chapter 972: The Secret Realm Ends, Come to the Heavenly Sword Sect Within 10 Years! “Big brother, it appears that Miss Qin has always remembered you.”

Lu Quanzhen and Lu Ping'an walked out of the cave and he spoke up.

Although he hadn't come forward just now, he had overheard their conversation.

He knew that the woman named Qin Yi had recognized his elder brother.

Although his brother's disguise techniques were only average, making it easy for flaws to be spotted,

the fact that they hadn't seen each other for many years and she could still recognize him immediately under these circumstances meant the memory was deep and the affection extraordinary.

"Mm."

Lu Ping'an nodded.

He naturally knew he had been recognized.

He guessed it was probably his fighting style, the way he addressed the lady, and the act of giving her Elixir Medicines that felt familiar to her and made her spot the flaws, thus prompting her to speak out and test him.

Then came the moment she called out his name, and his Mental Spirit faltered, effectively an indirect admission.

"Sigh..."

Thinking about these things, Lu Ping'an sighed deeply, feeling he had been far too careless and his state of mind was still lacking.

"Since that's the case, why didn't big brother admit it?"

Lu Quanzhen said so.

Lu Ping'an shook his head, but didn't reply.

"Is big brother worried he might bring trouble to our family?"

Lu Quanzhen narrowed his eyes and continued.

Although Lu Ping'an had attained such prowess only after over ten years of cultivation, which was astonishing and could potentially bring trouble to Bi Lake Mountain,

he felt the reason was not so simple.

"Didn't father say sometimes we ought to be bold?"

"And this Miss Qin probably doesn't know about our family situation, right?"

Lu Quanzhen said so.

"Forget it, Quanzhen."

Lu Ping'an patted his hand, signaling him to stop.

"I'm sorry, big brother."

Lu Quanzhen nodded, understanding that his elder brother might have other serious matters difficult to discuss, which made it inappropriate to recognize each other.

"The reasons are something father probably understands."

Lu Quanzhen narrowed his eyes, thinking of the words outside the secret realm where their father had encouraged Lu Ping'an to boldly pursue, as if he had anticipated all this.

He didn't think much about this aspect and planned to discuss it later with their father.

After all, having spent time with Lu Ping'an these days, he had grown to appreciate his responsible and committed big brother.

He didn't want his brother to harbor any regrets in his long life.

...

Lu Ping'an and Lu Quanzhen continued to search Purple Shadow Mountain for Heaven and Earth Spiritual Materials.

It might've been that many people had already visited the summit at this time and the more conspicuous Spiritual Medicines had been picked, so they didn't harvest much.

Thus, as their time in the secret realm neared its end, Lu Quanzhen took out the Family Token from the Storage Bag, infused it with Spiritual Power, and sent a message to Lu Qingshan, preparing to rendezvous and hand over the Spiritual Medicines.

After a moment, the token responded, and the two tokens formed an invisible force, resonating from a distance.

"Let's go, big brother, to meet with Qingshan."

Lu Quanzhen said to his elder brother.

"Alright."

Lu Ping'an nodded in response, very curious about this sibling he had never met.

After all, he had asked Lu Quanzhen several times whether they should meet with Lu Qingshan.

But Lu Quanzhen had said that this brother, despite seeming easy-going, was actually quite proud.

The purpose of this trip to Purple Shadow Secret Realm was for self-improvement.

Together, they might hinder and delay each other's progress.

So, Lu Ping'an had not contacted him until now.

Using the tokens, they spent about a day before they saw Lu Qingshan, who had starry brows and a grand demeanor, dressed in a Jinyang Sect Magical Robe, and holding a golden Magical Sword.

"Seventeenth brother?"

Lu Qingshan looked toward Lu Quanzhen, raising his brows as he greeted him.

Then his eyes shifted toward Lu Ping'an, wanting to know who he was.

As a Sword Cultivator and due to his mastery of Sword Heart Clarity from training in Sword Charging Bull's Might, his insight was sharply honed.

He could faintly sense that Lu Ping'an embodied a fierce beast-like physique.

Just standing in front of him felt like facing a brewing volcano, ready to erupt at any moment, giving him an inexplicable sense of danger.

"Qingshan."

Lu Quanzhen nodded and greeted, his hand gently brushing his face, removing the disguise.

Then pointing to Lu Ping'an beside him, he smiled and said, "This is our big brother, Lu Ping'an, whom you've not met since you've been away."

"Qingshan, hello."

Lu Ping'an also removed his disguise and smiled as he introduced himself.

Then he sized up Lu Qingshan before him.

He had glimpsed this younger brother from a distance outside the secret realm before.

But now, in close proximity, seeing the sharp and unparalleled spirit of Lu Qingshan was still a bit surprising.

Because previously, among the disciples of the Heavenly Sword Sect, he had not sensed such a fierce and soaring Sword Qi.

This Sword Qi, seemingly emanating from his very bones, made him understand what a true Sword Cultivator was!

His brother, it seems, would be recognized as an extraordinary Sword Cultivator wherever he went!

“Big brother, Lu Ping’an?”

Although Lu Qingshan had never met Lu Ping’an, he still knew of this elder brother.

He hadn’t expected that the person before him, who gave him a sense of danger, was actually his own big brother.

Wasn’t his big brother without a Spiritual Root, sent away in the mundane world since young?

Lu Qingshan didn’t think further and looked at the Lu Ping’an before him, his lips curving up slightly into a smile, he bowed and said, “Big brother, nice to finally meet.”

After briefly catching up, Lu Quanzhen took out a prepared Spirit Plant Bag, saying, “Qingshan, as the secret realm is about to end, I’m going to take this batch of Spiritual Medicines and give them to you to take out.”

“Otherwise, big brother and I going out might draw attention and cause trouble.”

Lu Quanzhen spoke thus.

This matter had already been discussed at home between the two.

Chapter 973: The End of the Secret Realm, Come to Heavenly Sword Sect Within 10 Years!_2 He had not anticipated that this journey into the secret realm would yield such riches.

“Good.”

Lu Qingshan nodded in agreement, accepted the Spirit Plant Bag, and with a cursory sweep from his Divine Sense, his eyebrows suddenly rose in surprise and bewilderment, “Seventh Brother, it seems like you and our eldest brother have made quite a haul this time.”

The loot inside was not much less than his own.

Moreover, this was just part of the spoils for Lu Quanzhen and Lu Ping’an.

However, considering Lu Quanzhen’s strength and having such an elder brother who gave him a sense of danger, such achievements seemed reasonable.

After all, with their strength, as long as they did not encounter groups of Immortal Sects disciples, they were practically unrivaled.

“Hehe, just a bit of luck.”

Lu Quanzhen said with a laugh, sharing some of the situations inside the secret realm with Lu Qingshan.

Before this, he had regarded the Purple Shadow Secret Realm as a very dangerous place.

But it was only after truly entering that he realized the realm was indeed dangerous, but the danger was limited.

Or rather, when your combat power reaches a certain level and you do not fear the slaughter between cultivators, then the danger of the secret realm becomes quite low.

For example, for him, there was a certain danger.

But for someone like Lu Ping'an with his combat power, as long as he did not court death, there was hardly any danger.

One could only say that, no matter what, the Purple Shadow Secret Realm was still just a realm for Energy Refining Cultivators.

After chatting casually for a while, the three of them found a place to wait for the end of the secret realm.

After all, to continue exploring at this time was unlikely to yield any major discoveries.

To hope for a major discovery, one would have to snatch it from somebody else's hands.

But at this point, most loose cultivators and small family clans already hid in the outer regions, waiting for the secret realm to end, avoiding the last bit of greed.

...

Outside the Purple Shadow Secret Realm.

"The secret realm is almost at an end."

Lu Changsheng opened his eyes and looked toward the altar's center, a calm void portal.

A month had gone by since the secret realm had opened.

Through the system, he knew that all his three sons were safe and sound.

And his eldest son, Lu Ping'an, had broken through to the Ninth Level of Energy Refinement.

This pleasantly surprised him, and he was eager to know what fortuitous encounters his son had had in the secret realm.

At this moment, besides Lu Changsheng, many cultivators waiting outside turned their eyes to the void portal in the center of the altar, the Nascent Soul Immortals of the Four Great Immortal Sects.

Everyone was eager to know the state of their own family members, what gains they had made.

An hour later.

“Open!”

The Nascent Soul Immortals from the Four Great Immortal Sects came to the central altar with dignified expressions, took out their Purple-Gold Tokens in front of the portal, and infused their Nascent Soul Level mana into them.

“Hum hum hum—”

In an instant, the previously unrippled void portal suddenly filled with an ancient and time-worn aura, forming a black hole vortex in the middle.

“Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!”

In no time, figures began flying out of the portal from the secret realm.

Lu Changsheng immediately saw his son, Lu Qingshan, emerging from the portal on a Flying Sword.

His face was stern, his figure erect, and he stood proudly upon the Flying Sword, unscathed, which made Lu Changsheng inwardly nod with approval.

As time passed, more and more cultivators came out of the secret realm.

It was noticeable that most loose cultivators were not faring well.

They were either seriously injured or in a state of mental and physical collapse, with pale faces and chaotic auras.

As for the disciples of large family forces and Immortal Sects, most were in much better condition.

However, there were still quite a few in poor shape.

Lu Changsheng even saw a few cultivators faint on the spot as soon as they left the secret realm, barely clinging to life.

Meanwhile, the Four Great Immortal Sects began to collect Spiritual Medicines.

The four Nascent Soul Immortals had their disciples bring Smell Spirit Beasts to inspect everyone's Storage Bags to ensure no private hoarding of Spiritual Medicines had taken place.

“Lu Qingshan, as long as you agree to one thing for me, I'll waive your contribution from this trip to the secret realm.”

At this moment, Yujian Zhenren, seeing Lu Qingshan stepping forward to deposit his Spiritual Medicines, spoke out.

His Smell Spirit Beast had detected a bountiful supply of Spiritual Medicines in Lu Qingshan's Storage Bag and Spirit Plant Bag.

But compared to these medicines, he valued Lu Qingshan as a person more.

He wanted to use Lu Qingshan as a whetstone to sharpen his own Sect's disciples.

“Hmm?”

Lu Qingshan looked surprised, thinking to himself if such a good deal existed.

He then bowed and asked, “May I ask, what does the Immortal wish?”

His Storage Bag and Spirit Plant Bag contained no ordinary loot.

If he could avoid making a deposit, it would be a fortune!

“Just promise to come to my Heavenly Sword Sect for a competition after you’ve achieved Foundation Establishment within the next ten years,” said Yujian Zhenren, dressed in a simple white robe, his face stern, speaking plainly.

“Is it that simple?”

Lu Qingshan was momentarily taken aback.

He had already been considering challenging the Heavenly Sword Sect.

And now, Yujian Zhenren was willing to waive his secret realm contributions for such a small matter.

He did not agree immediately.

Looking up at his master, he wanted to know if the true words of this Immortal had any other implications.

“This matter is for you to decide,” said Tianyuan True Immortal with a slight nod.

Hearing this, Lu Qingshan immediately bowed, “Thank you, Immortal. Once I achieve Foundation Establishment, I will surely come to the Heavenly Sword Sect to fulfill our agreement within the next ten years!”

“Good.”

Yujian Zhenren nodded and didn't require him to swear an oath against the Heart Demon, simply signaling that he could leave.

"Thank you, Immortal!"

Lu Qingshan once again bowed his thanks, then controlled his sword to his master's side.

The Nascent Soul Immortals from Qingyun Sect, Luoxia Sect, and Spirit Taming Sect, witnessing this scene, said nothing.

After all, since Yujian Zhenren had spoken, they naturally did not dare to offend him.

Besides, Tianyuan True Immortal was watching.

For them to speak out at this time would appear petty.

Naturally, they would not do something that would offend someone for no reason, deciding instead to be gracious.

Chapter 974: The End of the Secret Realm, Come to Heavenly Sword Sect Within 10 Years!_3

"Yujian Zhenren, other True Immortals, Tian Yuan bids farewell!"

After speaking a few words with Lu Qingshan, Tianyuan True Immortal bowed to Yujian Zhenren and the others.

He then placed Lu Qingshan on his gourd, transformed into a divine rainbow, and skyrocketed into the Nine Heavens Gang Wind.

"Damn it, who exactly is it?"

At this moment, on the huge Divine Vessel pulled by the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed, the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family watched the cultivators continuously emerging from the Secret Realm, his expression gloomy and ugly.

Since all the Soul Plates in his family's Storage Bags had shattered and his own descendants had all died in the Secret Realm, he had been observing the Four Great Immortal Sects and other major Nascent Soul Family Forces.

But through his observation, he noticed that although other families had suffered casualties, they were not severe and were similar to previous years.

This puzzled him greatly.

He didn't know who had killed his family's descendants!

It should be noted that the descendants of their Beast Taming Xu Family were always accompanied by Spiritual Beasts, had combat power far superior to others of their level, and were not much worse than the disciples of the Immortal Sects.

Thus, regardless of which power made a move against his family, a fight to the death on both sides would inevitably result in significant losses.

Yet among these top-tier powers, the Spirit Taming Sect, which suffered the most, had only seven deaths.

"The Spirit Taming Sect and my Xu Family have always had good relations; even if they are reluctant to see my Xu Family rise, they would definitely not be the first to strike against us."

Patriarch Xu pondered in his heart, dismissing the possibilities one by one.

"Patriarch Xu, how come I haven't seen any of your family's disciples, could they all have perished in this Secret Realm?"

At that moment, the Family Patriarch from the Shangguan Family looked at Patriarch Xu and jokingly said.

However, as much as he spoke in jest, he was quite surprised to see that not a single descendant of the Xu Family had emerged from the Secret Realm.

Because among these top-tier powers, such a situation had not occurred for many years.

“Hmph!”

Patriarch Xu’s face darkened as he snorted coldly and remained silent.

Seeing this, the False Core Patriarch of the Shangguan Family immediately stopped teasing.

After all, if the descendants of the Xu Family had truly all died in the Secret Realm, a few provocative words might actually provoke Patriarch Xu into a fight.

And if they started fighting, he was really no match for Patriarch Xu.

“Could it be that it wasn’t the Immortal Sect forces who acted? Was it simply danger within the Secret Realm itself?”

Patriarch Xu frowned deeply, pondering in his heart, feeling that this was the only explanation.

But he himself didn’t believe in this explanation!

Because the Purple Shadow Secret Realm, having been open for nearly a thousand years, was now used as a training ground, and there was supposedly nothing particularly dangerous left inside.

“Could it be Loose Cultivators?”

A ridiculous thought crossed Patriarch Xu’s mind.

He immediately shook his head, dismissing the idea.

After all, how could a Loose Cultivator possibly have the ability to kill off all his family’s descendants?

“Dammit!”

Patriarch Xu felt irritable and annoyed, then out of sight, out of mind, he rode away on the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed.

At the same time, Lu Ping'an and Lu Quanzhen emerged from the Secret Realm.

The two queued up to hand over the Spiritual Medicine.

With the Smell Spirit Beast present, no one dared to secretly keep any Spiritual Medicine; everyone adhered to the rules.

If anyone was found to be hiding rare Spiritual Medicine, they wouldn't be executed on the spot as a warning, but they would be reduced to mining slaves.

"Hmm, so much?"

"Two Loose Cultivators actually had such a harvest."

The supervising disciple from the Luoxia Sect was somewhat surprised and puzzled when he saw the pile of Spiritual Medicine.

Although Lu Quanzhen had given most of the Spiritual Medicine to Lu Qingshan.

But the remaining Spiritual Medicine was still considered exceptional among Loose Cultivators.

However, they didn't say much about this; after collecting half and checking that there was no must-trade Spiritual Medicine, they let the two men go.

"Father."

Lu Ping'an and Lu Quanzhen approached Lu Changsheng.

Although his two sons had changed their appearances with Disguise and Camouflage, Lu Changsheng still recognized them at a glance.

He patted their shoulders, smiling and said, “It seems that you both had a good harvest this trip.”

“Indeed, not bad.”

Lu Quanzhen said with a smile.

“Alright, let’s talk about the details of the harvest when we get back.”

Lu Changsheng spoke, taking out a Spirit Boat from the Storage Ring.

The palm-sized Spirit Boat surged with green light and instantly transformed into a small boat more than a yard long, taking his two sons back with him.

As for Lu Qingshan, he had just spotted him returning with Tianyuan True Immortal.

And he had also seen that Lu Qingshan had apparently said something to the True Immortal of the Heavenly Sword Sect, as he didn’t hand over any Spiritual Medicine.

He couldn’t help but marvel internally at the power—the Nascent Soul Immortal had personally delivered him, earning some respect even from the Four Great Immortal Sects.

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Just as Lu Changsheng was piloting the Spirit Boat, taking his two sons home, Patriarch Xu felt more and more aggrieved, feeling utterly humiliated.

And to return in such a manner without any explanation.

“Wait a minute...”

At that moment, Patriarch Xu remembered that on his trip here, he had bestowed a Spiritual Artifact, the Black Dragon Shears.

This Black Dragon Shears was forged from his early years of slaying a Black Jiao, forming an entire set of Spiritual Artifacts.

Although this set had already been bestowed one by one, he still had the Black Jiao Demon Core refined into a Black Jiao Bead left in his hands!

As long as the Black Dragon Shears were not far from him, and not lost within the Purple Shadow Secret Realm, he could sense their location through the Black Jiao Bead.

“If it’s in the hands of an Immortal Sect disciple, I could just claim the Spiritual Artifact back.”

Patriarch Xu’s eyes gleamed, murmuring to himself.

At this point, he didn’t care about losing face anymore.

Because this incident had already caused him to lose face completely.

Soon, when this matter would spread, even the other families would ridicule his Beast Taming Xu Family!

Thus, this matter must be resolved!

Patriarch Xu held a fist-sized, pitch-black Treasure Bead in his hand.

He made a Gesture Incantation with his hands on the Black Jiao Bead and then spat a mouthful of Essence Blood on it, attempting to sense the location of the Black Dragon Shears.

“Hmm!?”

Patriarch Xu’s eyes emitted a sharp light as he looked towards the southwest direction.

He not only sensed the location of the Black Dragon Shears, but also noticed that they were moving rapidly.

“Isn’t it the Four Great Immortal Sects? Then, who is it!?”

Patriarch Xu’s expression turned cold.

Immediately, he rode the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed as swiftly as lightning, rolling towards the direction where the Black Dragon Shears were located.

Chapter 975: False Core Immortal, Nothing Special! A spirit boat emanating an azure radiance passed through Ziyun Gorge.

Atop the spirit boat, Lu Changsheng, clad in a mystic robe, stood tall and slender as he listened to his son, Lu Quanzhen, recount the journey through the secret realm.

He knew not only had Lu Ping’an gained a promotion, but Lu Quanzhen also reaped no small rewards.

With a now far more solid foundation, he could return and consolidate his gains, preparing to tackle Foundation Establishment.

“Quanzhen, did you encounter monks from the Jin Family?”

Lu Changsheng asked aloud.

He had seen Foundation Establishment Cultivators from Golden Dragon Ridge leave in a huff and knew that all six Jin family members had perished in the secret realm, suspecting his sons were involved.

“This wasn’t our doing, brother and I,” Lu Qingshan was the one who encountered the Jin family—

Lu Quanzhen said.

They had discussed it with Lu Qingshan earlier and learned of the Jin family’s misfortune.

Thinking to himself that the Jin family was indeed unlucky.

Otherwise, he and Lu Ping'an might not have run into the Jin Family's monks at all.

"Qingshan."

Lu Changsheng's brow rose in surprise, not expecting that it was his son, Lu Qingshan, who had single-handedly slain the monks from the Jin Family.

It seemed Lu Qingshan's abilities exceeded what he had known.

After all, repelling six people and killing six people were not the same concept.

"Father, I reckon it won't be long before people come to know of Qingshan's deeds, and the Jin Family might connect this to our family."

Lu Quanzhen looked towards Lu Changsheng and said.

Lu Qingshan's actions had been highly conspicuous, leading Lu Quanzhen to realize that sooner or later, his younger brother's information would gradually come to the knowledge of other family forces, and they would remember.

If the Jin Family learned that Lu Qingshan was a son of the Blue Lake Mountain Lu Family, they would surely suspect and speculate on this matter.

Yet what truly worried him was not this.

Another Lu Qingshan had now emerged in the family.

If, in a few years, Lu Ping'an came into his own,

then Lu Wangshu, or perhaps some younger siblings he didn't yet know about, began to rise, it was likely his family would entirely enter the public eye, attracting a lot of trouble.

Because no power would willingly watch a family with several geniuses exist.

Such a family, once allowed to grow and rise, would be truly terrifying!

“Heh heh, what could the Jin family possibly do even if they find out?”

Lu Changsheng said unconcernedly.

He had instructed his sons to act thus without fear of how the Jin Family might respond.

Already, the two families had been tripping each other up behind the scenes, just never bringing the struggle out into the open.

Even if the Jin Family came to know, they could only swallow their frustration!

As father and son conversed, Lu Changsheng suddenly felt a dreadful spiritual pressure approaching.

His brows knitted together, and he looked suddenly to the side.

“Father, what’s wrong?”

Lu Quanzhen, seeing his father’s expression, looked in the same direction.

But he saw nothing.

However, shortly after a few breaths, he saw rolling, surging mist up ahead, accompanied by the sounds of thundering wind.

As the commotion within the mist grew louder, Lu Quanzhen’s complexion drastically changed.

“Damn, that’s the Beast Taming Xu Family!”

Earlier, outside the secret realm, Lu Quanzhen had seen the commotion of several Nascent Soul-level family forces arriving.

Among them, the Beast Taming Xu Family made quite a spectacle; a divine vessel pulled by nine Second Rank Wind-Thunder Steeds, traversing with thunderous momentum and overwhelming the skies—a truly formidable display.

The commotion from afar was exactly like when the Xu Family had arrived at Purple Shadow Secret Realm!

Thus, Lu Quanzhen instantly realized that this was most likely the Beast Taming Xu Family coming to cause trouble for them!

“Why would the Beast Taming Xu Family come after us when I’ve destroyed every token, keepsake, and anything suspicious from the Xu family’s storage bags, throwing them off a cliff?”

“And I’ve even used a Second Rank Purification Talisman to inspect my whole body and found no trace of any marks!”

Lu Quanzhen was inwardly alarmed, utterly at a loss as to why the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family would track them down.

But in this moment, there was no time left to ponder.

The approaching figure of the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family was drawing ever nearer.

Pulled by the galloping Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steeds, a tsunami-like, terrifying spiritual pressure rolled in, churning mightily, making the air seem heavy and hard to breathe.

“Father, my brother and I have slain all of the Beast Taming Xu Family’s disciples in the Purple Shadow Secret Realm. This commotion is most likely from the Beast Taming Xu Family—the Family Patriarch must be coming after us!”

Lu Quanzhen had an ugly look on his face as he conveyed this through a transmission to his father.

Under such circumstances, he naturally did not dare to hide anything from his father.

Lu Ping'an, too, watching the cloud-engulfed and thunderous Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steeds charge towards them, had a grave expression.

He hadn't expected that they would attract the wrath of the False Core Patriarch of the Beast Taming Xu Family!

"Hmm, slain all of the Beast Taming Xu Family's disciples!?"

Lu Changsheng was taken aback when he heard this.

He thought to himself, what a wild turn of events.

He had been wondering why this Family Patriarch from the Xu Family was rushing toward them with such a menacing air.

So it turned out that the Xu Family's cultivators were all wiped out by his own sons, and now revenge was at hand!

"Father, this Family Patriarch from the Xu Family must have used some method to track down my brother and me, but you should be able to escape using talismans."

Several talismans appeared from Lu Quanzhen's sleeves as he spoke urgently.

Although rumors suggested that his father could slay False Core Immortals with talisman formations,

He knew those were messages spread by Golden Dragon Ridge, deliberately glorifying their family!

Therefore, facing the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family, he had not the slightest thought of resistance.

His first reaction was to scatter and escape with the use of talismans provided by Lu Changsheng.

Only in this way, there was a chance that all three of them would not die here.

He felt a pang of regret that Auntie Lu Miaoge wasn't here.

Otherwise, his father and aunt working together might be able to contend with the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family.

Chapter 976: False Core Immortal, Just That!_2 "Father!"

Lu Ping'an's Talisman also appeared in his hand, his face set in a resolute expression as if ready to face death.

"Hehe, it's okay, leave it to your father to handle."

Lu Changsheng looked at the expressions of his two sons, smiled, and patted their shoulders, signaling them to be calm.

This time, the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family's attack should serve as a lesson for his sons.

He wanted them to understand that there are always greater powers and more skilled individuals in the world.

Facing High-Rank Cultivators, especially those from powerful clans, one must be extremely cautious and careful!

Moreover, his two sons were now grown up and on the verge of attaining Foundation Establishment, so it was time they learned some of the family's secrets.

He handed the control of the Spirit Boat over to Lu Quanzhen.

Then he looked at the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steeds and the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family charging fiercely towards him, took a step forward, and stepped off the Spirit Boat to meet them.

“Father!”

Lu Quanzhen’s expression conveyed great shock as he cried out, thinking that Lu Changsheng was trying to buy time for the two of them.

“Quanzhen, believe in father.”

Lu Ping’an pressed down on his shoulder, speaking in a deep voice.

He had immense trust in his own father.

Believing that if his father dared to do so, he must certainly have confidence!

“Hmm!? How bold of you, seeking death!”

Standing on the majestic Divine Vessel, the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family saw Lu Changsheng standing in the void with a stern face and a composed aura, clad in a Mystic Robe, and immediately glared with anger, directing the Wind-Thunder Steed to charge straight at him.

This Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed was not just any beast bred by the Xu Family for pulling carts.

It was a beast he had carefully raised, capable of tremendous battle power, used for travel, and each of them was incredibly strong.

The leader of the beasts had been with him for hundreds of years, possessing the strength of a Second Rank Late Stage.

With such a charge, even a Cultivator at the peak of Foundation Establishment would be directly killed!

“Roar roar roar!”

The Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed immediately let out unison roars, surrounded by swirling winds and thunder, like a mighty army charging forward, carrying a sky full of wild wind and thunder, crushing through the heavens, and charging straight towards Lu Changsheng.

“Buzz buzz buzz!”

Just then, a clear sword whistling sounded throughout the heavens and the earth.

Suddenly, a giant sword, tens of meters long and shimmering with the light of the seven colors, appeared above Lu Changsheng’s head, bursting with endless fierce Sword Qi, threatening to obliterate everything as it slashed down ferociously.

“Boom boom boom!!!”

The violent storm of wind and thunder collided with the overwhelming giant sword descending from the sky, instantly creating an earth-shattering explosion.

Bright Mana light tore through the skies, and the waves of power from the battle’s epicenter spread like raging seas, sweeping in all directions and stirring up huge waves.

Such residual waves caused the nearby Spirit Boat, with Lu Quanzhen and Lu Ping’an aboard, to rock like a leaf in a tempest, nearly overturned and swallowed by the giant wave.

Fortunately, a majestic and gentle breeze of Mana came forth, dispelling the waves of power.

“What!?”

“Father’s strength?”

Lu Quanzhen and Lu Ping’an, witnessing this scene, were shocked and looked at each other in dismay, their eyes filled with disbelief.

They had never expected their father to be so powerful.

Especially Lu Quanzhen.

He had always known that his father concealed his true strength and was not as simple as he seemed!

But this was way beyond what he'd imagined!

He could actually face off against a False Core Immortal head-on!

Could it be that during the battle on White Tiger Mountain, when he faced the Great Elder of the Jin Family from Golden Dragon Ridge, was he merely toying with his opponent?

“Elder Xu, you come here with such aggression; may I inquire as to the reason?”

Lu Changsheng, in his Mystic Robe, stood with his hands behind his back in the void, looking at the approaching Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family and asked calmly.

“Who are you? You know of my Beast Taming Xu Family and yet dare to oppose us so!”

The Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family, although surprised by their brief clash, still had an aggressive demeanor as he shouted loudly.

“Me? I am simply a Loose Cultivator, sending my children to the Purple Shadow Secret Realm for training.”

Lu Changsheng responded thus.

“Very well, you won't tell me?!”

“A mere Foundation Establishment Cultivator dares to be so insolent before me; once I capture you, I will make you spill everything!”

The Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family glared with fury, his voice cold as he spoke.

He had already decided that Lu Changsheng was from some top-tier power, deliberately provoking to gauge his family's situation.

In the midst of his speech, his pupils flashed with purple-blue thunder light.

“Roar!!!”

A beast's roar echoed through the heavens and earth.

Strands of purple-blue thunder light spread from the Qi Ocean Core of the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family.

A ring-shaped Magic Artifact with swirling winds and thunder appeared above the Elder Ancestor's head.

This ring, called the ‘Thunderstorm Ring’, was the Life-bound Magic Treasure of the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family.

Although it was a Low Quality Magical Treasure,

after many years of his sacrifice, combined with the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steeds, its power was astonishing.

Even if Lu Changsheng before him seemed out of the ordinary, capable of being a False Core Immortal, he was utterly unafraid!

After all, as a member of the Beast Taming Xu Family who commanded Spiritual Beasts, he was already among the best in his own Rank!

“Boom!”

At the moment when the Elder Xu Ancestor brought out his Magical Treasure, Lu Changsheng had already taken the initiative to make a move.

He knew that today's matter could not end well, and he had to fight!

“Nine Treasures Ruyi Bone—Spirit, Qi, and Mind!”

Lu Changsheng immediately activated the three Divine Skills contained within his Life-bound Treasure Bone.

The Runes on his breastbone intertwined, bursting with brilliant light, enhancing his Physical Body, Mana, and Divine Sense intensely, roaring like a tsunami.

In an instant, his figure, as he shot forward, seemed to grow a few inches taller.

At the same time, countless purple-red fiery flames spread from his radiant body and charged ahead to confront the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family.

“Roar roar roar!”

The Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steeds howled towards the sky, emanating waves of wind and thunder, which filled the air.

But before Lu Changsheng's demon-god-like figure, the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steeds were directly sent flying by a brutal impact and screamed in pain as they were burned by the raging Dragon Flame.

“What!? No good!”

The Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family saw Lu Changsheng directly use brute force to knock away his Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steeds and approach him; his expression slightly changed.

Chapter 977: False Core Immortal, Nothing Special!_3 He hurriedly performed a gesture incantation, his life-bound magic treasure “Thunderstorm Ring” bursting with luster. It formed walls enveloped in wind and thunder, standing in front of him.

Yet, at this very moment, Lu Changsheng, bolstered by the Nine Treasures Ruyi Bone, seemed like a True Dragon awakening from his usual dormant state. It was like a primeval volcano erupting, an

oppressive presence at its most tyrannical, his vital energy shooting to the heavens, creating smokes and flames that threw the world into chaos.

“Pu pu pu!!!”

Under the god- and demon-like physical might, the Patriarch Xu’s nine wind and thunder walls were instantly fractured into pieces and dissipated like smoke.

“Patriarch Xu, as a False Core Immortal, I wonder if you can handle a few moves from Lu Someone!”

Lu Changsheng’s eyes, with purple-gold flames burning within his pupils, exuded a domineering and eerie aura. A sea of flames formed around his body, with a purple-red Thunder Dragon coiling around him, his voice resonating mightily.

“Not good, could this person be a Third Order Body Refiner!!!”

Patriarch Xu’s face was filled with horror. The idea of retreat surged in his heart as he quickly shouted, “Daoist, please stop!!!!”

However, Lu Changsheng had already made his move.

A golden fist, accompanied by a roaring purple-red Thunder Dragon, came straight at him, so bright that it filled Patriarch Xu’s eyes.

“Puchi!”

With the punch, as profound and abyssal as prison itself, accompanied by the hot and tyrannical Thunder Gang Dragon Flame, instantly shattered and melted Patriarch Xu’s body-protecting magic barrier.

Then, with a burst of golden light, the punch, overflowing with endless thunder flames, directly smashed the False Core Immortal’s physical body, leaving a gaping hole in his chest.

“You...”

Patriarch Xu, his expression filled with shock, looked at Lu Changsheng before him, a sense of unprecedented despair rising in his heart.

“Sizzling!”

The next moment, the raging and ferocious Thunder Gang Dragon Flame evaporated Patriarch Xu’s blood, reducing his physical body to charred remains.

“Is this it?”

Lu Changsheng eyed the easily dispatched Patriarch Xu with a sense of unreality.

Weak, too weak!

Truly too weak!

Such strength, even without the use of the Nine Treasures Ruyi Bone, he could have easily crushed his opponent.

However, it was precisely the blessing of the Nine Treasures Ruyi Bone that rendered the False Core Immortal powerless before him.

Whether it was the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed, the effects of magical treasures, or the body-protecting magic barriers, all seemed too fragile to withstand a single blow!

“False Core Immortal, is merely so.”

Lu Changsheng said indifferently.

He raised his hand and collected Patriarch Xu’s inner core, storage ring, and treasures into his pouch, then turned his gaze towards the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed.

“Roar roar roar!”

The Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed, seeing its master dead, roared furiously towards Lu Changsheng.

Upon seeing this, Lu Changsheng did not hold back, blasting all nine heads of the steed to their demise.

Indeed, the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed was quite remarkable.

Not only could it serve as a combat power but also as a means of transportation.

But the steed had clearly been kept by Patriarch Xu all along, making taming it quite troublesome.

Even if it were tamed, he currently could not use it before others, only to be raised slowly.

Yet, the expenditure for keeping a Second Order Monster Beast was not a small overhead. It was better to just kill it.

Having accomplished this, Lu Changsheng collected the carcasses of the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed into his storage bag.

The flames around his body gradually dissipated, and the terrifying spiritual pressure receded like the tide, as he returned to his own Spirit Boat.

At this time, Lu Ping'an and Lu Quanzhen on the Spirit Boat were still dumbfounded, motionless.

It was too astounding!

The scene from just now was simply too shocking.

A single punch!

Defeated in an instant?

My father defeated a False Core Immortal with one punch!

The brothers were utterly bewildered, at a total loss for words to describe their current feelings.

It was beyond their wildest dreams!

They knew their father was formidable and usually kept his skill hidden.

But they never imagined it to this extent!

And wasn't their father's greatest strength supposed to be the Talisman Path?

How could he be so ferocious in body refinement?

And that intense, overbearing, and incredibly violent purple-red flame!

Even after the fight was over, they could still feel a wave of scorching heat in the air.

“As Cultivators, one should remain unfazed even if the sky dome collapses before them and remain calm even if dragons and phoenixes appear behind them. If you get worked up over such trivial matters, how will you achieve greatness in the future?”

Lu Changsheng looked at his two sons acting this way and calmly instructed them not to make a fuss.

“???”

The two brothers looked at their father.

You call this a trivial matter?

But upon reflection, what their father said didn't seem wrong.

After all, a battle resolved with a single punch was indeed a trivial matter.

Certainly, when Patriarch Xu had come to attack, their father had remained calm and assured, indicating that he was in control.

“What father says is true.”

Lu Ping'an immediately showed an embarrassed expression, accepting the lesson.

He believed his mindset was indeed insufficient.

During the confrontation with Qin Yi in the Purple Shadow Secret Realm, his mentality was shaken.

And just now, he had been stunned into inaction.

Such distractions could cost one their life in a fight to the death.

Lu Quanzhen was still a bit muddled and only nodded without speaking.

Because he truly did not know what to say.

The shock of the situation was too great for him, finding his father a bit unfamiliar.

It was hard to imagine that his father, with a Low Quality Spiritual Root and usually lazy demeanor, possessed such astonishing battle strength and force!

“After we return home, I will explain to you.”

Lu Changsheng, seeing that his sons were still troubled, patted their shoulders and spoke.

Then, he steered the Spirit Boat and transformed into a beam of Escape Light, flying swiftly into the mountain range on the right.

They had just left Ziyun Gorge not long ago, and it was easy to attract the attention of others with the recent noise.

Therefore, he had to find a place to reorganize and check the situation to avoid being targeted.

Shortly after Lu Changsheng left, several figures looked over in this direction.

“What just happened?”

“Such a formidable display of power, could it be Nascent Soul Immortals fighting?”

“Why did the battle end so quickly?”

“I think I saw Patriarch Xu just now.”

“Patriarch Xu left in a hurry earlier. It seems that all the Clan Cultivators died in the Secret Realm. Could it be related to this?”

“Beast Taming Xu Family is one of the top-tier forces in Jiang Country’s Cultivation Realm. How could such a thing happen? Could it be targeted by the Four Great Immortal Sects?”

“Daoist friend, you shouldn’t say such things.”

After a few whispers, several Foundation Establishment Cultivators did not dare to linger longer and quickly left.

After all, they had just exited Ziyun Gorge and felt a frightening pressure ahead. They passed by to take a look, not wanting to get overly involved.

Chapter 978: Men are inherently tough, but gentle as fathers! Dragon Head Mountain.

The mountain towered mightily, with a range of peaks stretching on and on, as if a real dragon lay coiled across them, gazing down over the vast land and leaving onlookers in dread.

At the foot of the mountain, an immense stone stele stood a hundred meters tall.

Carved into it were the forceful and vigorous characters “Beast Taming Xu Family,” exuding an air of grandeur and an ancient aura.

This was the main residence of one of the three great Cultivator Families of Jiang Country’s Cultivation Realm—the Beast Taming Xu Family!

For thousands of years, the Xu Family had not only a Core Formation Old Ancestor at its helm but also Third-Order Spirit Beasts to underpin its heritage, commanding the renowned Water Serpent Dao Soldiers and Fire Crow Dao Soldiers across the Cultivation World of Jiang Country!

Their strength was unquestionable and not something ordinary Family Forces could compare with.

At this moment, in the Xu Family Ancestral Hall.

“Pffft!!!”

An elder from the Xu Family, responsible for guarding the hall, was startled by a sudden sound of a flame being extinguished from within.

He entered the ancestral hall in a frantic state to investigate.

Direct members of the Xu Family, the core descendants, were each equipped with a Life-bound Plaque.

Once they broke through to Foundation Establishment and became part of the upper echelons of the family, their Life-bound Plaque would be upgraded to a Life-bound Lamp!

With this, not only could one ascertain if the lamp’s owner was alive or dead, but one could also sense their life force through the lamp.

A flickering lamp, like a candle in the wind, indicated that the person was in a state of crisis, and one could take the lamp to their aid.

The Xu Family elder entered the hall where the lamps were displayed and at first glance, did not see any extinguished lamps.

However, facing this situation, he felt no joy; his face turned pale as he slowly looked toward the high platform where the lamps were situated.

The first layer!

The second layer!

The third layer!

His face grew paler with each ascending layer he observed, and when he saw a lamp on the third layer extinguished, he felt as though struck by lightning, his face ashen, nearly collapsing to the ground.

“This is the Ancestor’s lamp, how, how, how could this be...”

The elder was overwhelmed, disbelief filling his eyes; thinking his vision failed him, he looked again and again.

Once sure the lamp was truly extinguished and their Elder Ancestor had perished abroad, he let out a pitiful cry, sounding the bell to notify the family.

...

In the depths of the Cangmang Mountain Range.

Lu Changsheng had finished cleaning out the Storage Bag of the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family.

Aside from Spirit Stones and several Top-Grade Spiritual Instruments, there weren’t many precious treasures.

“Well, it seems that this Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family had probably spent all his possessions on this Thunderstorm Ring and the Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed,” Lu Changsheng shook his head and sighed as he looked at the ‘Thunderstorm Ring’ in his hand.

A False Core Immortal like the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family wouldn’t possibly have afforded a Nine-Headed Wind-Thunder Steed if he hadn’t been born into the Beast Taming Xu Family.

After all, nurturing Spiritual Beasts was akin to burning money.

The Blackwater Jiaolong Dao Weapon, Nine Netherhound, and Six-Winged Golden Silkworm that he had asked Hong Lian to help him raise had all consumed vast amounts of resources.

Not to mention the Elder Ancestor’s nine Second-Rank Wind-Thunder Steeds!

Under these circumstances, unless the other party had just engaged in plundering and killing like Xiahou Wuwo had once done, they wouldn’t normally have much wealth on them.

Lu Changsheng dealt with all the suspicious items, pocketing the Magic Treasure ‘Thunderstorm Ring’ into his Storage Ring.

Such Life-bound Magic Treasures would see their power decline by several folds once refined by others.

Moreover, if the attributes of the Cultivation Method did not match, they couldn’t unleash much power at all, making it very superfluous and only suitable as a gift for one’s children.

“As for the most precious thing, aside from the treasure, it’d be this inner core, right?”

Lu Changsheng examined the False Core he held in his hand, belonging to the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family.

He had not yet come across the inner core of a False Core Immortal.

By appearance, it should have been a Third-Order Demon Pill.

However, after being condensed into a False Core by the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family, the entire pill looked marred and discolored, with an aura completely different from the True Elixir of Nangong Mili.

“No wonder it’s called a False Core.”

“By the looks of it, unless it’s the same exact Cultivation Method used by the Xu Family Elder Ancestor, it’s probably unusable by anyone else.”

After inspecting it for a moment, Lu Changsheng put the core into his Storage Ring, planning to ask his walking encyclopedia—Hong Lian—for advice later.

Then, he turned to check on his two sons.

After a while, he identified the problem with the Black Dragon Shears.

“The Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family must have used this Spiritual Artifact as a primer to sense your presence,” Lu Changsheng spoke out.

He hadn’t found any markers on his sons but noted that the aura of this Black Dragon Shears resonated with the same source as a Flood Dragon Pearl from the Elder Ancestor’s Storage Bag.

Therefore, he deduced that the Elder Ancestor must have used some method to sense the location of the Spiritual Artifact and followed it to them.

“So does this mean we can’t casually keep any Spiritual Artifacts on us in the future?”

Hearing his father’s words, Lu Ping’an looked at the Black Dragon Shears before him and scratched his head.

“Ordinary Spiritual Artifacts should be fine.”

Lu Changsheng chuckled and continued, “This Spiritual Artifact was clearly forged by an Artifact Refining Master using rare materials, so remember to be extra careful when encountering such Top-Grade Spiritual Artifacts.”

“However, this time it was just that the Patriarch Xu happened to be outside the secret realm; usually, even if the Spiritual Artifacts can sense each other, there’s a distance limitation.”

“Most of the time, as long as you’re separated by thousands of miles, sensing them becomes quite difficult.”

Lu Changsheng slowly explained.

This kind of method was similar in principle to Sensing Talismans and Identity Tokens.

Once the distance exceeded a thousand miles, even if the other party was a Nascent Soul Immortal, it would be very difficult for them to sense anything unless they paid a great price.

“Dad, we understand.”

The two of them nodded, quickly grasping the concept.

“Furthermore, on some Magic Artifacts, Bloodline Spirit Bans will be refined in to prevent outsiders from refining them for use. If someone rashly tries to consecrate them, they’ll trigger the prohibitions and methods within.”

“So you must be extra careful with powerful artifacts you get from Clan Cultivators in the future.”

Chapter 979: Men are inherently tough, but gentle as fathers!_2 Lu Changsheng continued to instruct.

In the Cultivation World, snatching Magic Artifacts not only often led to ones that were ill-suited for oneself, but also could contain various dangerous traps.

Among the Spiritual Artifacts he had obtained previously at White Tiger Mountain, two of them contained Bloodline Spirit Bans.

However, the effects of the Bloodline Spirit Bans from White Tiger Mountain were quite mediocre.

It only made it difficult for others to unleash their full power, making them only suitable for members of the Zhao family.

“Dad, does this pair of scissors have a Bloodline Spirit Ban?”

Upon hearing this, Lu Ping’an immediately asked.

“This one doesn’t, Bloodline Spirit Bans, although they prevent outsiders from refining, can also impact the artifact’s full potential.”

“Moreover, as descendants’ bloodlines become diluted over time, the effectiveness of the Bloodline Spirit Bans would also be compromised, hence such bans are seldom applied except in family heirloom treasures.”

“If you encounter such artifacts in the future and aren’t sure about them, just find a black market to exchange them for money, but you must be very careful not to attract attention during the process.”

Lu Changsheng advised aloud.

After packing up everything and getting ready, Lu Changsheng didn’t continue to stay in the mountains. He switched to a Spirit Boat and said to his two sons, “Let’s go, regarding the matters of today, you should keep my cultivation level to yourselves, and absolutely not disclose it.”

“Dad, I understand.”

“Father, your son understands.”

Lu Ping’an and Lu Quanzhen nodded in response.

After the three of them boarded the Spirit Boat, Lu Quanzhen, watching his father’s tall figure, had numerous thoughts swirling in his head.

Still pondering what exactly his father’s situation was.

Was it a case of a Nascent Soul True Lord reborn through body snatching, or was it a reincarnation of some great being from legends?

Besides these reasons, he really couldn't think of any others for why his father, in his fifties, would possess such astonishing strength, able to kill a False Core Immortal with a single punch!

Moreover, he had also recalled something after coming to his senses.

His father had used a Sword Technique when facing the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family!

The aura of that Sword Technique was fierce and dominant, somewhat similar to that of his brother Lu Qingshan's Sword Dao.

Then regarding body refinement, it was exactly like his older brother Lu Ping'an's, only even more straightforward and dominant, returning to the basics!

"So, did big brother inherit father's body refinement? Did Qingshan inherit father's Sword Dao? Did Wangshu inherit father's Talisman Path?"

Lu Quanzhen thought to himself, quite confused.

The previous meeting with Uncle Qu Changge had broadened his horizons, making him think he had seen a more expansive world.

Yet now, his father's actions had completely baffled him.

"Quanzhen, if you have something to ask, just speak up, otherwise I see you holding back uncomfortably."

At this moment, Lu Changsheng turned back and smiled at his son Lu Quanzhen.

His Divine Sense was sharp, naturally noticing whenever his son glanced at him, clearly troubled.

“My child is just curious, Father, you possess such strength, why do you continue to hide it so deeply...”

Lu Quanzhen hesitated, not knowing where to start.

After thinking, he chose a simpler question to ask.

“Men should naturally be firm, but I choose to be gentle,”

Lu Changsheng smiled lightly, looking at the mountains below spread out like stars in the sky, and softly said, “In the Cultivation World, all beings are struggling. They fear neither heaven nor earth, only those who live differently from themselves.”

“If you are too weak or too evil, they will destroy you and trample you. If you are too good or too strong, they will bully and fear you. Only by being just like everyone else can you be accepted by the world and live peacefully.”

“If my strength were known to the world, endless troubles would surely find me. Even if I weren’t afraid, what about you?”

“So, to live peacefully and freely in the Cultivation World, one must disguise oneself just like everyone else.”

Lu Changsheng’s voice was gentle as he spoke slowly.

After finishing, he smiled, patted his son on the shoulder, and said, “You will gradually learn more about your father’s affairs in the future.”

“Just remember, I am always your father, the everlasting support behind you.”

“So if you have any problems, just discuss them directly with me.”

Although Lu Changsheng was disguised at that moment, his appearance much more imposing,

such words still conveyed a familiar gentle tone to the brothers.

“Father, I understand!”

Lu Quanzhen responded with a smile, no longer pondering or fretting.

After all, whether his father was a Nascent Soul True Lord reborn or some legendary great being reincarnated, it did not affect their father-son relationship.

His cultivation, care, and protection for them were all genuine.

Furthermore, the more powerful the father, the more direct benefits to him as a son.

Though he was self-reliant, he was not an old-fashioned person; when it was time to lean on his family, he would.

“Dad, I understand.”

Lu Ping'an nodded earnestly.

Since the incident with the Hope Gu, Lu Changsheng's figure had loomed like a high mountain in his heart.

“By the way, Dad, I've broken through to the Sixth Level of the Hundred Refinements Treasure Body Art, but I feel like there were some issues during the cultivation process.”

At that moment, Lu Ping'an spoke up, seeking Lu Changsheng's advice on his cultivation technique.

“Hmm? A problem with cultivation? Tell me.”

Lu Changsheng immediately showed a concerned expression.

The details of the Hundred Refinements Treasure Body Art were extremely important.

Even slight mistakes in the cultivation process could cause body issues.

“It happened in the Secret Realm when I took a lot of Spiritual Medicines, and as a result, a thin membrane formed between my muscles and bones...”

“I suspect this has something to do with my breakthrough to the Fifth Layer before...”

Lu Ping’an spoke, revealing his situation to Lu Changsheng.

“May I see?”

Lu Changsheng held his son’s wrist, channeling his Mana and Divine Sense into his body to check.

A moment later, after seeing the thin membrane Ping’an mentioned, his brows furrowed slightly before smoothing out.

Chapter 980: Men are inherently tough, but gentle as fathers!_3 Lu Changsheng thought to himself that his son’s opportunity was indeed fortuitous,

This was one of the Divine Skills of the Hundred Refinements Treasure Body Art, which Lu Ping’an had mastered on his own without a teacher under the autonomous operation of the Cultivation Technique.

“This is alright, it’s a Technique and Magical Powers accompanying the Hundred Refinements Treasure Body Art, which I haven’t taught you before.”

“This must be when you had a breakthrough to the fifth level earlier, where the Cultivation Technique automatically operated, allowing this Divine Skill to begin its initiation. Then, with the nourishment of a vast amount of Heaven and Earth Spiritual Material, it acquired a few characteristics of the Divine Skill’s effect.”

Lu Changsheng said so.

As an Orthodox Level Cultivation Technique, the Hundred Refinements Treasure Body Art naturally had other Techniques and Divine Skills besides the Treasure Bone Technique.

Like the thin membrane inside Lu Ping'an's body, it's called 'Hundred Refinements Battle Armor.'

Once refined, it could spread the membrane out, forming an armor around the body.

If not displayed on ordinary days, it would stay inside the body like a keratinous membrane, enhancing bodily defense.

"Divine Skills!?"

Both Lu Ping'an and Lu Quanzhen were startled upon hearing this.

After all, only Nascent Soul Immortals could cultivate and master Divine Skills.

Now that they heard about Lu Ping'an's initiation into Divine Skills, how could the two not be surprised?

"Yes, Divine Skills, but it only possesses a few characteristics of the effect; to truly refine this Divine Skill, there is still a long road ahead."

Lu Changsheng spoke, saying thus.

He could see that the other seemingly had this trait by a fluke of chance.

The true small achievement of Divine Skills was still a great distance away.

Moreover, to condense this 'Hundred Refinements Battle Armor,' it's unknown how many resources and Heavenly and Earthly Treasures it would require.

"After we return home, I will pass the Techniques and Divine Skills of the Hundred Refinements Treasure Body Art to you,"

“During your Cultivation process, if you have any other issues, speak them all out.”

Lu Changsheng continued to speak.

Immediately afterwards, Lu Ping'an voiced all the issues and confusions he encountered during his Cultivation.

During this, Lu Changsheng nodded slightly as he heard his son talk about the Fist Technique that opens mountains.

He thought to himself that his son indeed had some comprehension in Body Refinement and Martial Path.

After the fifth level of the Hundred Refinements Treasure Body Art, one could gradually cultivate the body parts towards Magical Treasures, condensing a type of effectiveness.

This mount-opening Fist Technique of Lu Ping'an was based on this principle.

Except, his situation was a shortcut.

He did not condense his own Technique and Divine Skills, but by condensing a Magical Treasure within the body, leveraged a trace of its power effect.

However, as Lu Ping'an spoke, Lu Changsheng only then realized that this son had the strength but lacked a severe understanding of how to use it,

And just like his own old father, didn't even possess a single suitable Magic Artifact.

“Once we return home, I'll solve this for you.”

Lu Changsheng said boldly with a grand gesture of his hand,

Planning to teach the Techniques of the Hundred Refinements Treasure Body Art to Lu Ping'an once back home and then tailor several Spiritual Artifacts for him.

After all, he had no capability to forge Magical Treasures,

But with his current fame as Master Lu, requesting others to forge a few Spiritual Artifacts was not a big problem.

Once Lu Ping'an breaks through to Foundation Establishment and has Spiritual Artifacts, he could situate himself in White Tiger Mountain and start utilizing the Spirit Land there.

As the father and sons idly chatted, the Spirit Boat swiftly flew toward Bi Lake Mountain.

...

Meanwhile, in the Beast Taming Xu Family,

A mighty disturbance swept over the entire Dragon Head Mountain, fierce beasts roared, shaking the void.

“The Family Patriarch has come out of Closed-door Cultivation!”,

“Previously it was said during the Beast Tide incident, the Family Patriarch was gravely injured and went into secluded cultivation, with strict instructions not to be disturbed unless absolutely necessary—how soon it has been that he had to come out!”

“This incident must involve someone deliberately targeting our family, hence the Family Patriarch had to step in!”

“Not only the Family Patriarch, but the aura of the Earth Dragon Beast is also present!”

Countless members of the Xu Family sensed this aura and were extremely alarmed,

Many high-level members immediately understood and spoke with trembling voices.

“Check immediately, see which force is responsible; this old man isn’t dead yet, and they dare to mess with my Xu Family!”

The voice of the Elder Ancestor of the Xu Family thundered like rolling thunder, with the roars of thousands of beasts suppressing a burst of rage as he spoke towards the Xu Family high-level officials,

This Closed-door Cultivation of his had only lasted ten years, and such an incident in his family naturally made him extremely angered.

“At your command!”

The high-level officials of the Xu Family were terrified and shivering,

Instantly, the entire Beast Taming Xu Family sprung into action,

Because this was not merely a matter of the death of one False Core Immortal,

It also concerned the face and dignity of the Beast Taming Xu Family!

...

One month later,

Lu Changsheng, Lu Ping’an, and Lu Quanzhen returned to Bi Lake Mountain,

He directly took his two sons to the summit of Blue Cloud Peak,

After all, it was time to tell them about some matters regarding the Mount Sumeru Cave Heaven,

Moreover, both Lu Quanzhen and Lu Ping’an were preparing to break through to Foundation Establishment, and he planned to have both men breakthrough in the Mount Sumeru Cave Heaven,

“Follow me,”

Lu Changsheng led the two toward the summit.

“Hm?”

The two brothers looked at each other,

This summit of Blue Cloud Peak was a familial forbidden area, shrouded in clouds and mists all day, something they had never experienced before, yet now their father was bringing them here,

Before long, the three arrived at the summit of Blue Cloud Peak,

As the “Inverted Five Elements Formation” opened, a tall and prominent Mount Sumeru Tree King appeared before the two, glistening with gold and jade,

“This is?”

Both could tell that the tree before them was no ordinary one,

However, Lu Quanzhen immediately noticed that, aside from this tree, there was no residence to be seen on the entire summit,

“This is the Mount Sumeru Tree King, our family’s sacred tree of stabilization,”

Lu Changsheng pointed at Mount Sumeru and spoke,

“Mount Sumeru Tree King, the sacred tree of stabilization?”

The two looked at the Mount Sumeru Tree King before them, desiring to know why this tree was considered their family’s sacred tree of stabilization,

However, Lu Changsheng did not explain and pointed to a rather inconspicuous tree next to Mount Sumeru, speaking towards Lu Quanzhen, “Quanzhen, this is the Auspicious Tree that your mother used to Cultivate the ‘Heaven and Earth Longevity Technique’.”

As his son already knew about the Heaven and Earth Longevity Technique, he naturally would not hide it,

“Auspicious Tree?”

Lu Quanzhen was taken aback, observing the Auspicious Tree before him,

“Haha, this name was chosen by your mother, so you are certainly unfamiliar with it,”

Lu Changsheng smiled and said,

“Father, is the Heaven and Earth Longevity Technique unpracticable without a Spiritual Root?”

At this moment, Lu Ping’an suddenly looked at Lu Changsheng and asked,

Upon hearing this, Lu Changsheng paused for a moment and then gently shook his head,

He understood what his son meant by his words,

But without Spiritual Power, it was impossible to refine Heaven-and-Earth Spiritual Plant,

“Hm.”

Lu Ping’an pursed his lips, his expression somewhat heavy as he nodded,

“Mount Sumeru.”

Lu Changsheng softly called out,

Instantly, a golden portal appeared before them,

“Hm?”

The two brothers saw the golden portal before them, both stunned,

For the portal reminded them of the gate to the Purple Shadow Secret Realm,

Could it be that their family owned a Secret Realm?

“Go in,”

Lu Changsheng patted their shoulders and spoke.