

Paradise 1381

Chapter 1381: Spending Money That You Made

Ice Blue Shelter was a grade-4 shelter.

The guardian here was a female ice dragon, whose combat strength had been maintained at ninth-rank true god-level for many years.

Although Ace Star, the headquarters of the shelter, was covered in ice all year round, it was much more prosperous compared to ordinary shelters.

There was no reason other than within the jurisdiction of the shelter lay an ancient battlefield ruin—Frost Territory.

In fact, most of the planets within jurisdiction of the Ice Blue Shelter were covered by ice and snow, which was mainly an effect of the frost aura that emanated from this ruin.

Although Ace Star experienced winter all year round, the largest market on the planet was bustling almost every day.

Light snow was falling from the sky, the market was gaily decorated, pedestrians wearing thick clothes stood shoulder to shoulder, and the vendor cries from various shops were endless.

Looking at the lively scene before him, Lin Huang felt like he had returned to Winter City in the gravel world for Chinese New Year.

“I wonder how Xin Er is now...” he could not help murmuring, “And Xiao Xuan...”

Lin Huang walked through the streets of the market with the two Sword Servants. The three of them also did what the locals did and wore thick padded jackets, not because they were cold, but to avoid unnecessary attention.

Because a large number of residents in Ice Blue Shelter were non-cultivators, they had to wear thick clothing to keep themselves warm in such severe cold weather.

Although cultivators were not afraid of the cold, if they did not wear winter clothing they would easily attract the attention of ordinary residents. Therefore, most cultivators who came here dressed like the locals.

Of course, there were also some cultivators who did not care if they were noticed by the ordinary people living in the shelter and still chose to wear thin clothes.

Lin Huang glanced around the market and noticed three individuals in unlined garments; one of them was a female cultivator in a short skirt.

Cultivators naturally did not see anything wrong with this but a few ordinary residents in the market murmured in undertones.

“It’s so cold out, isn’t that girl cold, wearing stockings?”

“She’s a woman—for the sake of beauty, what’s the cold to them?”

“Why do I feel that she really isn’t cold...”

Sword302 heard that and could not help glancing at Sword301 beside her.

This girl had originally also been reluctant to change her clothes when she arrived. She had only done so after Lin Huang had brought it up.

When she noticed the direction of Sword301’s gaze, Sword302 turned her head and glared at him.

To ease his embarrassment, Sword301 cleared his throat and turned to Lin Huang to ask, “Lord Swordmaster, are there any special places in this market?”

“Nothing special, it’s just a regular market,” Lin Huang explained with a smile, “The Frost Territory will only be officially opened in two days; we can take a short break during this time.”

“Frost City? The name of this ruin seems rather familiar...” Sword302 seemed to have remembered something.

“I know this ruin. This is a fragment left over from an ancient battlefield. It’s said to be the debris remaining from a battle between two lord-level powerhouses who specialized in frost attributes. There are a large number of frost spirits in it. I’ve been there before one million years ago or so, but I don’t remember seeing a shelter nearby. When I entered this ruin previously, its surroundings were desolate with no planets capable of sustaining life at all...”

“Ice Blue Shelter was established only 30,000 years ago. Ace Star within the shelter and several other planets around it were all transformed into livable planets by the sky dragon named Ice Blue,” explained Lin Huang, who had read up on the information about Ice Blue Shelter.

“Ahh, so that’s what happened...” Sword301 understood then.

“Do you have any other memories of this ruin?” Lin Huang asked Sword301 quickly.

Although he had already done his homework in advance and purchased information about the Frost Territory in the black market, Lin Huang still wanted to hear whether Sword301 had any noteworthy information.

“I don’t remember much about this ruin. I just remember that it was completely accessible at that time, and it could be entered by anyone below lord-level. I was a Heavenly God at the time. Before my turn, many heavenly god-level powerhouses had already gone in. From what I can remember, there does not seem to be anything particularly valuable in there. I only remember that there were heavenly god-level frost spirits; I even hunted down two of them.” Sword301 thought about it and gave his answer.

Sword302’s reply had little reference value for Lin Huang. He was too lazy to continue asking. “This ruin is now exclusively occupied by the Combat God Temple. To prevent the depletion of resources, the Lord of the Combat God Temple probably set some prohibitions in place. Now entry is restricted to those at heavenly god-level.

“Every sixty years, the Combat God Temple is opened internally for two months at a time. It is opened to the public once every 120 years, and only for one month at a time. During this period of accessibility,

all organization members above grade-5 can use their identity tokens to enter or exit. Organization members grade-5 and below must submit an application to the Combat God Temple; they are only allowed to enter once their application has been approved.

“That’s why I urged the two of you to complete the reserve missions from Death Sickle over the last few days and get the Black Sickle identity tokens. Because the Combat God Temple only recognizes official identity tokens, it makes no difference if it is grade-6 or grade-7 organizations—even for those who are Combat God Temple members, they will not be able to enter this ruin with the identity token of a reserve.”

“Lord Swordmaster, do you have any missions for us when we enter the ruins?” Sword301 asked again.

“Both your missions are very simple—you will hunt monsters and obtain resources.” Lin Huang glanced at the two of them. “Although you are both under a state of restriction and your combat strength is affected by me, you don’t need resources to cultivate, but you do need money for your daily expenses.

“In the future, you will be responsible for your own expenses when you are back in the great world. You don’t need to tell me how many monsters you’ve hunted and how much money you sold them for. You can spend as much as you earn.” Lin Huang’s position on the Sword Servants was to let them fend for themselves. After all, it was unrealistic for him to support hundreds of Heavenly Gods on his own.

“If you really want to talk about specific missions... during your hunt, please observe whether there are Virtual God rank-9 level-4 monsters. If there are, don’t kill them, just let me know.”

“You mean, you want to hunt alone?” Sword302 asked immediately.

“That won’t do! At least one of us must follow you to ensure your safety,” Sword301 protested immediately.

“It’s not that you aren’t aware of my capabilities. In your current state, you won’t be of any use to me for enemies that I can’t cope with. It’s better that we hunt on our own so that everyone can get the maximum benefits from any resources.”

Seeing the two Sword Servants had more to say, Lin Huang continued.

“You two can follow me if you wish. But I need to set a rule—after the two of you exit the ruin this time, I won’t pay a single penny for either of you. You have to pay for meals and hotels. Whoever earns the money can spend it. You are not allowed to borrow from anyone! If I find out anyone is borrowing money, I will send them back to the Great Heaven Territory!”

“Then let’s hunt separately...” Sword302 immediately changed her attitude after hearing what Lin Huang had to say.

“Alright. After all, we have increased the financial burden on Lord Swordmaster these past few days...” Sword301 also gave up the fight.

“Relax, we don’t need to stay a full month in the ruins this time. I only need to hunt for a few Godheads. If it happens quickly, three or two days will be enough; if it’s slow, one week should be sufficient too. When I’m done, I’ll contact you both and we’ll leave together.” Lin Huang smiled and patted Sword301 on the shoulder.

Chapter 1382: The Frost Territory

Two days later, a large number of participants gathered at the entrance of the Frost Territory first thing in the morning.

Because it was only opened to the public once every 120 years, even if the trial quota was 8,000 people, the number of applicants always exceeded the quota considerably.

Of the 8,000 places available, excluding members of the Combat God Temple and other members of the grade-6 and grade-7 organizations, usually, about 5,000 of the remaining application slots would be left.

Of the remaining 5,000 application slots, more than 80% were occupied by grade-4 and grade-5 organizations, with very limited places left for organizations of grade-3 and below.

Lin Huang and the two Sword Servants were members of the top grade-6 organization, Death Sickle, and had the privilege of directly entering the Frost Territory. They did not need to line up to apply.

Despite arriving early at around 8 o'clock in the morning, the entrance area to the Frost Territory was already full of people.

Lin Huang even saw quite a few familiar faces.

Divine Clapnet's Forbidden Lamella, Xeno's Frontier, Precious Treasure Pavilion's Departed Feather, and Death Sickle's Fallen Star...

Destiny and Twin were not there to represent Death Sickle.

However, someone in a black robe standing beside Fallen Star caught his attention. The individual was slender and Lin Huang could not tell whether they were a man or a woman. All he could vaguely see was a masked face under the brim of a hat.

When he looked at the person in the black robe, the individual in question also looked right back at him, and the blood-red lips on the mask pulled up slightly in an upturned arc.

"They're smiling?!"

Lin Huang could clearly sense that the other party's eyes were on him. What was even stranger was that the other party was obviously wearing a mask to fully hide their facial features, but he could see that they were smiling.

"Is that fellow Virtuoso?" Lin Huang took a rough guess based on some of the rumors he had heard before in Death Sickle.

Virtuoso was the first name on Death Sickle's White Sickle Leaderboard. He had participated in more than 700 assassinations and never failed a single one. Death Sickle guarded his personal information extremely well and there were practically no leaks to the public.

Lin Huang even suspected that in the eyes of Death Sickle's seven Blood Sickles, Virtuoso's value ranked higher than that of Buried Heaven.

There was also a rumor within Death Sickle that Virtuoso might be the grade-5 genius of legend.

Before he entered the Great Heaven Territory, Lin Huang would have envied anyone who might be a grade-5 genius of legend. Right now, however, he felt nothing whatsoever.

Currently, under his command, he had Sword1 to Sword12 who were all grade-5 geniuses—fully twelve people in all.

Ignoring Virtuoso's stare, Lin Huang walked towards the Death Sickle camp with the two Sword Servants.

His identity was now Huang Lin. He looked completely different thanks to Thousand Face's disguising ability. With so many Black Sickles from Death Sickle present, he was not worried that an acquaintance might recognize him.

The Gold Sickle leader merely glanced at the tokens that the three held and let them pass. All three of them stood at the end of the camp and waited patiently for the ruins to be opened.

A large number of grade-6 and grade-7 organizations had come this time; there were around a hundred people or so from Death Sickle alone.

Of the several grade-7 organizations, the Combat God Temple had sent the least people—less than 200. The biggest number of participants from the remaining grade-7 organizations was 300 people. It was not that the Combat God Temple had set a quota restriction for them, but the organizations themselves had set a limit of 300 members to curb bad behavior.

After all, these organizations also had access to many exclusive ruins and secret realms; it was not that they absolutely had to enter the Frost Territory. If they did not leave something for the organizations under grade-6, that would undoubtedly lead to a public outcry.

The members of the grade-6 and grade-7 organizations were all very calm.

The camp of the organizations under grade-5 was much more lively—after all, they rarely participated in such events.

"The girl who walked over to the Death Sickle team just now has really long legs—looks like they'd be about two meters right?!"

"What's the use of her long legs? Is she as good-looking as Miss Fallen Star? Is she as capable as Miss Fallen Star? Our Miss Fallen Star is the fourth-ranked super genius on the Virtual God leaderboard! She's a rare woman with beauty and brains!"

"If you're talking about looks, I still think the angel lady from the Precious Treasure Pavilion is good-looking. Look at all the pairs of small wings on her back, they look so cute. I wonder how they would feel to the touch..."

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At around 8:30 in the morning, the number of participants at the entrance to the Frost Territory had exceeded 10,000 people.

The total quota was only 8,000 places, but every time the ruin was opened, it was never certain how many people would show up from the grade-6 and grade-7 organizations. Therefore, the Combat God Temple would always reserve 1,000 places each time, and the remaining 7,000 were reserved for the grade-1 to grade-5 organizations.

If the total number of participating individuals from the grade-6 and grade-7 organizations was less than 1,000 or exactly 1,000, then the 7,000 people who successfully registered could enter the site. However, this situation had never happened. Generally speaking, the number of participants from the grade-6 and grade-7 organizations usually added up to about 3,000 people. Therefore, out of the 7,000 application slots, usually, only about 5,000 people were eligible to participate in the trial.

At close to nine o'clock, the person-in-charge from the Combat God Temple finally arrived.

It was a majestic, well-built man in golden armor.

Many people on the scene recognized him as soon as he arrived.

To Lin Huang, this person was no stranger. Previously when he was putting together information on the God Territory, he also had a simple collection of data on the several top organizations.

This person-in-charge from the Combat God Temple was named Gao Xiong; he was a pure-blood Protoss. His combat strength had reached the pinnacle of the ninth-rank heavenly god-level. His ability ranked fourth among the Heavenly Gods in the God Territory, almost on par with Buried Heaven.

It could be said that in the great world, this fellow was one of the strongest people below lord-level.

"In terms of ability, how does he rank among the Sword Servants?" Lin Huang asked the two Sword Servants beside him with some curiosity.

For his inquiry, he utilized the message transmission system used between swordmaster and Sword Servant; it was not possible for anyone to eavesdrop.

"A lot stronger than the both of us, but not as good as the seniors above Sword12," Sword302 spoke first.

Sword301 next to her added, "If you only judge in terms of aura, it's similar to the strength of Sword25's aura. This person's ability is estimated to be between that of Sword20 and Sword30."

After hearing this Lin Huang nodded silently. To him, Gao Xiong's ability being ranked under Sword 12's was a given. After all, Sword12 was a grade-5 genius, which was comparable to the Bug Tribe Queen Mother.

His real intention in asking the two Sword Servants this question was not to find out Gao Xiong's true ability but to find out how strong his Sword Servants had been in their heyday. Gao Xiong was merely a reference point.

Now he could confirm that as long as he had full control over the Great Heaven Territory, the abilities of the Sword Servants under his command would return to their peak state. It was enough to build a top grade-6 organization.

Gao Xiong of the Combat God Temple was also an impatient person. As soon as he arrived, he delivered a few simple sentences, then opened the entrance to the site.

The first round of entrants from the five major grade-7 organizations—God Capital, Divine Clapnet, Xeno, Precious Treasure Pavilion, and the Combat God Temple—took up almost 1,000 or so slots.

After that, it was the turn of the grade-6 organizations such as Death Sickle. A total of twelve grade-6 organizations made up the second round of entrants, occupying more than 2,000 places.

The remaining organizations—grade-5, grade-4, grade-3 and below—entered in order, and used up the remaining 5,000 places.

After closing the entrance to the ruin, Gao Xiong closed his eyes and sat down cross-legged. He did not even look at the remaining two thousand people.

After a group of staff in the Combat God Temple comforted some young people who failed to enter the trial, the heads of the organizations quickly dispersed, taking their members with them...

Chapter 1383: What's The Condition For Advancement?

After he passed through the dimensional portal, Lin Huang was briefly dazzled but his senses quickly returned to normal.

Lifting his eyes to look around, all he could see was a pure white world.

An endless field of snow stretched as far as the eye could see. No one knew how many years this place had been covered with frost.

The sky above was gray and misty. A light snow drifted toward the ground.

With a cold wind blowing at him directly, Lin Huang felt chilly even though he possessed Divine Fire within him.

“The temperature in this place is already close to absolute zero...”

Looking around, Lin Huang did not notice other participants. It was clear that he was the only one who had been teleported to this area.

Using Divine Telekinesis to probe his surroundings, Lin Huang frowned slightly after a while.

This particular set of ruins severely limited the probing abilities of Divine Telekinesis. Even though the power of his Divine Telekinesis was comparable to that of a True God, the probing radius had been restricted to about 100 kilometers.

“Since my Divine Telekinesis perception has been restricted, it looks like I’ll have to employ other methods to find prey.” As he thought about it, Lin Huang had already retrieved a Monster Card.

Once the card had been crumbled, a bald humanoid robotic man more than three meters tall quickly materialized in front of Lin Huang.

This time, the object of Lin Huang’s summons was the mechanical-type Warlord.

“First, check if there are any high-rank virtual god-level monsters nearby.”

After Bloody’s departure, Lin Huang had handed over any exploration work to Warlord. As it turned out, Warlord was very competent at these jobs.

Warlord received the command and quickly released many snowflake-like mechanical bugs that mingled with the real snow and drifted away in all directions.

The mechanical bugs that Warlord released could disguise themselves in any form necessary and did not give off any life fluctuations. They could easily deceive most cultivators in the great world who were one level higher.

At Warlord’s current Virtual God rank-8 combat strength, the mechanical bugs could escape being detected by the Divine Telekinesis of most individuals below eighth-rank True God-level.

Of course, it was still possible for a small number of cultivators with remarkable Divine Telekinesis abilities or extraordinary perception in other areas to uncover these mechanical bugs.

Almost an hour later, the mechanical bugs sent feedback on the preliminary results of the exploration. Warlord automatically generated a small-scale map and projected it.

This map covered almost three thousand kilometers of the surrounding area.

“The white dots are beginner-stage and intermediate-stage virtual god-level monsters. The yellow dots are high-level Virtual Gods, and the Virtual God rank-9s are the blinking yellow dots. The red dots are true god-level monsters; the darker the color, the stronger the aura.”

“What about these green dots?” Lin Huang asked as he pointed at a green dot on the map.

“These are the participants.”

“Alright, plan the best hunting route then.”

Lin Huang had barely finished speaking before a white line quickly connected a large number of yellow dots on the map.

“If we take this route, we can kill 76% of the high-level Virtual Gods on this map without doubling back,” Warlord explained.

“Then let’s follow this route.” Lin Huang nodded slightly.

After they had determined the hunting route, the two of them set off without any hesitation, hurrying in the direction of the first target.

After about three minutes, the two found the first target—a Frost Fox.

The Frost Fox looked like a snow-white fox, but it was much larger than the foxes on Earth. Not including its three long furry tails, it was usually about three meters in length.

This kind of mutated monster cultivated Frost Element divine abilities; cold places were their favorite habitat.

Not only did they possess terrifying speed, but the strength of their claws and fangs was no less than that of a god relic. They could also form ice armor over their bodies and had amazing defensive abilities.

In addition to using melee strategies, they also utilized Frost Element techniques that allowed them to engage in long-range attacks and assist in combat.

It could be said that Frost Foxes were very well-rounded opponents.

The combat strength of this particular Frost Fox was only at Virtual God rank-7, but in terms of overall ability, it would take a lot of effort even if an ordinary Virtual God rank-9 wanted to hunt it.

However, the Frost Fox was unfortunate enough to encounter Lin Huang.

The creature had barely growled a warning before its head was instantly penetrated by a silver gleam.

Almost in the next second, the silver gleam shot backward, circled Lin Huang, and fell into his palm.

It was a silver flying dagger thick as two fingers.

Lin Huang played with the weapon in his hand for a moment and nodded in satisfaction. "This was unexpectedly handy!"

The flying dagger was one of the telekinetic weapons that Lin Huang had formed from his God Weapons.

This was the first time he had tried it out in actual combat; it was much easier to use than he had expected.

Lin Huang walked over to the corpse of the Frost Fox, skillfully retrieved an ice crystal-like white Godhead, and easily stored the beast's corpse into his space storage.

After tossing the Godhead into the Divine Fire of his inner world, Lin Huang frowned.

"It's still unable to absorb anything..."

Just like on previous occasions, the Life Palace refused to absorb the energy from the Godhead.

In the beginning, Lin Huang had thought that this refusal to absorb energy was because his combat strength had improved too rapidly and he lacked a solid foundation. However, it had been a few months since he had advanced to grade-9 Imperial-level but his Life Palace was still in a saturated state, refusing to absorb the Godhead's energy.

Although the Life Palace seemed to be completely saturated, Lin Huang could clearly sense that his Life Palace was not yet complete.

Lin Huang had also considered that perhaps the Life Palace refused to absorb the Godhead's energy because there were special advancement conditions that had to be fulfilled before it could be fully completed.

This time he had deliberately taken things into his own hands instead of directly purchasing the Godhead refinement, just to see if the advancement condition was that he had to kill the monster

himself and obtain the Godhead. However, it seemed that this was not one of the conditions for advancement.

He stood where he was for a while and thought about it before turning his head toward Warlord and saying, "Modify the route; Virtual God rank-7s can be removed from the hunting targets."

Although Warlord did not know what happened, he still immediately did as he was asked. The yellow dots on the map instantly reduced by more than half.

The new route was also plotted in the next second.

After five to six minutes, Lin Huang and Warlord arrived at the location of the second hunting target.

This Virtual God rank-8 monster was an Ox Devil.

With a height of more than five meters, it was covered with fur that was several times thicker than that of an ordinary Ox Devil. The four magma-like scarlet eyes on its head stared at Lin Huang who had intruded into its territory.

A second later, however, a silver gleam flashed through the void. Before the Ox Devil could react, the silver gleam penetrated its forehead.

The light in the four scarlet eyes of the Ox Devil faded quickly as if there was no electricity. Its huge body crashed to the ground.

It was another instant kill!

Lin Huang possessed Divine Telekinesis that was as powerful as that of a True God, plus a telekinetic flying dagger that was comparable to a god sequence relic. Even without the addition of God Rule Power and Elemental Enlightenment, this was enough for him to easily kill all cultivators below true god-level.

After spending a few seconds to retrieve the Godhead from the Ox Devil. Lin Huang once again tossed the new Godhead into his inner world.

After a while, he frowned once more.

"It's still not working..."

"Warlord, modify the route again. Remove the Virtual God rank-8s and only keep the Virtual God rank-9s!"

Warlord projected the map again a moment later.

The route had changed again, but now, out of the initial several dozen yellow dots, only four were left...

Chapter 1384: Lin Huang's Guess

Looking at the four flashing yellow dots left on the map, Lin Huang's expression was not relaxed at all.

He still had no clue what the conditions for advancing his Life Palace might be.

"Let's go; we'll head to the nearest dot first."

Although he had absolutely no clue, he still intended to continue with his line of thought, screening and excluding each of the possibilities.

This time, his target was further away; it took Lin Huang and Warlord more than ten minutes before they finally reached its location.

This third intended target was a humanoid Frost Zombie.

This monster looked a little like a very hairy savage with a height of seven or eight meters. What it might have been in its previous life, Lin Huang could not tell. However, he was able to verify that this Frost Zombie was undead. To be exact, it was a Virtual God rank-9 undead.

Sensing the intruder's aura, the Frost Zombie lifted its head to stare in Lin Huang and Warlord's direction. It roared furiously and its aura blazed up like ferocious flames. Its aura was obviously much more powerful than that of an ordinary Virtual God rank-9.

"The strength of this aura... mythical-level?" Lin Huang could not help but raise his eyebrows upon sensing the Frost Zombie's aura.

He was barely surprised—after all, he had seen far too many mythical-level creatures.

The blazing flames of the Frost Zombie's aura quickly peaked; bending its knees slightly, it leaped high into the air toward Lin Huang.

The next moment, however, Lin Huang shook the cuff of his sleeve slightly and another silver gleam flew toward the sky.

The gleam shot toward the Frost Zombie's forehead at an even higher speed, penetrating it without any observable resistance.

The Frost Zombie did not have time to dodge at all as the telekinetic flying dagger pierced through its brain and out its skull again. Its leaping figure quickly smashed onto the ice, raising a cloud of mist.

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Lin Huang stared at the mist-obscured area, however, and frowned.

"It's not dead?"

The vital points of some types of undead were not the same as those of ordinary monsters. Normally, the head was a vital organ for most monsters. However, despite its head having been shattered, the Frost Zombie in front of Lin Huang showed no signs of its aura weakening. Obviously, its head was not one of its vital points.

From within the cloud of mist, the Frost Zombie howled in fury, sounding even more aggressive than before.

Clearly, Lin Huang's earlier attack had angered it.

"It doesn't seem to be very clever." As soon as Lin Huang finished speaking, the Divine Telekinesis-controlled flying dagger that had penetrated through Frost Zombie's head circled around, flew backward, and shot through the cloud of mist.

Almost at the same time, the Frost Zombie's roaring abruptly ceased.

After a while, Lin Huang's figure slowly descended to the ground.

Within the mist-covered area, he quickly saw the corpse of the Frost Zombie where it had tumbled to the ground. There was a clear wound on the left side of its chest cavity where its heart was—this was the result of the second attack.

The creature's life force was rapidly fading.

Lin Huang was expressionless. After he withdrew the flying dagger, he quickly retrieved the Godhead from the Frost Zombie.

As he tossed the Godhead into his inner world, Lin Huang also sent his consciousness into his body simultaneously.

This ice-blue Godhead took a long time to melt within the flames of the Divine Fire.

However, Lin Huang did not need to wait for it to be completely refined. He merely had to wait for a wisp of Godhead energy to be extracted, which he then infused into his Life Palace.

This time, the Life Palace did not reject the infusion of Godhead energy, accepting it instead.

Lin Huang, who had not expected anything to happen, was rather ecstatic after seeing this.

However, he quickly calmed down.

"So the Life Palace can only absorb rank-9 Godheads—or is there something special about this particular one?"

A few months ago when he had first elevated to grade-9 Imperial-level, he had felt that his imperial-level was not yet complete. At that time, he tried one by one with rank-1 to rank-9 Godheads, but the Life Palace refused to absorb any of them.

Right now the Life Palace was willing to absorb this rank-9 Godhead. He was still uncertain what screening criteria the Life Palace used, however.

After a moment of thought, Lin Huang returned his consciousness to his body.

"Let's go find the next one!"

After he had stowed the Frost Zombie in his storage space, Lin Huang and Warlord headed straight in the direction of the second Virtual God rank-9 monster.

After about six or seven minutes, the two of them located their fourth target.

This time, the object of their attention was a Snow Raven.

This was a species of white Corvidae, diminutive in size and only slightly larger than the palm of an adult.

Although it was not large, the combat strength of these creatures was by no means weak. Their speed was greater than 90% of monsters of the same rank. They were also proficient in psychic attack esoteric

arts and were highly skilled at combined psychic attack techniques with Ice Elements. If they encountered weak opponents, they could even freeze their opponent's souls directly with their gaze.

Sensing Lin Huang and Warlord's arrival, the Snow Raven immediately uttered a loud cry.

A torrent of psychic shock waves rippled swiftly outward like an invisible wave of water, engulfing Lin Huang and Warlord.

Both of them allowed the psychic shock waves to penetrate through their bodies as if nothing had happened.

For Lin Huang, he was able to completely resist a move like this.

His soul strength was comparable to that of a True God, and he was almost completely immune to all forms of psychic attacks at virtual god-level, not to mention this was only a Legendary-level Snow Raven.

As for Warlord, he was a mechanical type. He did not even have a soul in the conventional sense, so he was naturally immune to all forms of psychic attacks.

Lin Huang did not make any large gestures either; a silver gleam shot out from his cuff and into the open beak of the Snow Raven, exiting the creature's skull with no obstacles at all.

After killing the Snow Raven, Lin Huang quickly retrieved its Godhead and tossed it into his inner world.

After a while, he frowned again.

"It's not absorbing now?"

The Snow Raven's Godhead was also a Virtual God rank-9 Godhead, but the Life Palace rejected it entirely.

However, the energy from the Frost Zombie's Godhead was accepted by the Life Palace.

"They are all rank-9 Godheads—one was absorbed, but the other was not..." Lin Huang stood where he was and carefully analyzed the possible reasons. "Is it because the Frost Zombie Godhead is class-4, and the Snow Raven Godhead is class-3?"

He thought back carefully. After he had elevated to grade-9 Imperial-level, he had tried to continue refining Godheads. In the end, he had tried Godheads from rank-1 to rank-9 one by one, and the Life Palace had still refused to absorb the Godhead energy. However, he seemed to recall that all the Godheads he had used at that time were from class-3 Legendary-level monsters—none of the Godheads were from class-4 Legendary-level monsters.

"So the Life Palace didn't accept the Godhead energy previously because the class of the Godhead was insufficiently advanced?" Lin Huang's eyes gradually brightened; he felt that he might have hit upon the truth.

"Warlord, are there any class-4 Legendary-level monsters in the remaining two hunting targets?" He immediately turned his head and asked Warlord.

"There is a frost spirit that should be class-4."

“Let’s go! We’ll hunt for that ice spirit right away!” Lin Huang could not wait to verify his guess.

Chapter 1385: Grade-10 Imperial Level!

Frost Giants were a race of frost spirits birthed from ice and snow.

As newborns, they were already at virtual god-level with white crystalline bodies. When they reached maturity, they could reach over a hundred meters in height and would be elevated to true god-level; their bodies also would turn ice-blue in color.

This type of monster was an innate class-4 mythical-level elemental demon. Its defensive capabilities were extremely powerful; if placed among mythical-level creatures of the same class, it would still manage to be in the top ranks. Strength-wise it was not weak either—among the same class of mythical-level beings it was considered to be of a superior level. Apart from this, it also possessed extremely strong healing abilities and was able to draw moisture from the air to regenerate its own body.

Another difficult issue was that this particular creature did not have any vital parts. To be precise, its vital part was an object called the Heart of Ice, concealed deep within its body. However, this object was not an actual heart, nor was it hidden within the chest cavity like a human heart.

A Frost Giant’s Heart of Ice could be located in any part of their bodies, and every Frost Giant might have a different location for it. The Heart of Ice might grow on the sole of the foot, or even at the back of the head.

Lin Huang’s hunting target this time around was a Frost Giant on the cusp of maturity whose combat strength was only at the level of a Virtual God rank-9.

Once he was close to the vicinity of his intended target, Lin Huang could already see the monster from a distance; it was almost a hundred meters tall.

The Frost Giant’s torso seemed to be forged from chunks of rock that were clear as ice crystals.

One look at the creature’s head and the state of its physical body, and Lin Huang already knew that virtual god-level cultivators of the same level as this monster would not dare to provoke it.

If one did not have a god rule relic to hand, it might be difficult to breach the monster’s defenses, what more when it possessed such extremely strong regenerative powers.

However, for Lin Huang, hunting this fellow was not a difficult task.

Before the Frost Giant could cause trouble, Lin Huang had already initiated his attack from far away

This time, he was a little more careful.

Around a hundred telekinetic flying daggers shot forth from his sleeve, each of them boosted with the Fire Elemental God Rule Power—Tattooed Demon.

Tattooed Demon’s black flame enveloped every single one of the flying daggers; they looked like comets blazing black fire across the heavens.

In just one second, these daggers practically turned the mythical-level Frost Giant's massive, nigh-indestructible body into a sieve.

Blazing with black fire, each of the flying daggers cut easily through the monster's defenses as if slicing through a thin sheet of paper. They pierced through its front, exiting from its back as if its indestructible protective measures were mere decoration.

It seemed easy enough for Lin Huang to penetrate the Frost Giant's defenses, but only he knew that if this previous attack had not been boosted by God Rule Power, there would be practically no way for him to pierce through this Frost Giant's body.

However, even though Lin Huang's attack had punctured the Frost Giant into what amounted to a sieve, it still showed no signs of giving up the ghost—in fact, its life force did not weaken in the slightest.

"The attack didn't hit the Heart of Ice..." Lin Huang did a quick Divine Telekinesis sweep and discovered the problem immediately.

The next instant, the hundred telekinetic flying daggers circled back for a return attack, once more piercing straight through the Frost Giant's body.

Without giving the creature a chance to regenerate, the daggers stabbed through it yet again and the puncture wounds on its body doubled in the blink of an eye.

"I still haven't managed to hit its vital part yet?" Lin Huang's brow lofted as he sensed that the Frost Giant's aura was still not weakening.

Once more, the hundred daggers shot forth and penetrated the Frost Giant's body...

Only on this third round did Lin Huang sense that one of the flying daggers had hit something. Seizing the advantage, he used a thread of Divine Telekinesis to tug the object out from within the Frost Giant.

The minute the object detached itself from the Frost Giant's body, Lin Huang very clearly sensed that the monster's aura was rapidly getting weaker.

It was only after Lin Huang had used Divine Telekinesis to drag the object in front of him that he realized that it was a white crystal about the size of a normal person's fist.

The entire crystal was translucent; its surface looked as if it were wreathed in a ring of white mist that gave off an icy aura.

This object was clearly the Frost Giant's Heart of Ice.

Once the Heart of Ice had been detached, the Frost Giant's life force was completely extinguished in a matter of seconds. Its body thudded onto the ground, transforming into a small ice hill.

Lin Huang merely gave the Heart of Ice in front of him a cursory glance before stowing it away in his storage space. After that, one stride brought him to the "ice hill", where he retrieved the Godhead from the Frost Giant's corpse.

After tossing the Godhead into the Divine Fire of his inner world, Lin Huang waited, full of anticipation, for the results of this round's experiment.

The minute the Divine Fire had refined a small thread of Godhead energy, Lin Huang impatiently maneuvered this wisp to the Life Palace and infused it in.

The pale white Godhead with its icy aura drifted in front of the Life Palace, then flowed easily into it without encountering any resistance.

At the sight of this, Lin Huang's eyes shone.

"The Life Palace absorbed it! My guess was right after all!"

The Life Palace had accepted the energy from the Godhead a second time, allowing Lin Huang to confirm his previous theory—the Life Palace would only absorb energy from class-4 Godheads!

After months without a clue about a method of advancement, Lin Huang had finally found the way to go about it.

He was utterly ecstatic.

"Warlord, there's no need to target any of the other virtual god-level monsters anymore. Just hone in on Legendary-level Virtual God rank-9s and that will do."

Upon receiving his orders, Warlord immediately directed his mechanical bugs to begin a new round of selection.

In the blink of an eye, four days passed by.

Lin Huang used four full days but was only able to hunt down nine Legendary-level Virtual God rank-9 creatures.

In actual fact, the total amount of combat time added up to less than three minutes; he and Warlord did not spend that long hurrying on the road either. The majority of their time was taken up by waiting.

Although the number of Virtual Gods in these ruins was not small, there were not that many Virtual God rank-9s. As for Legendary-level ones, there were even fewer of them.

Within those four days, Warlord's several hundred thousand mechanical bugs could only find nine Legendary-level Virtual God rank-9 monsters.

However, Lin Huang was not idle either while waiting; he was constantly stoking the Divine Fire to expedite the refining of the Godheads.

After four days, the first rank-9 Godhead was fully refined at last.

Once the Life Palace had completely absorbed the energy from the first Godhead, Lin Huang sensed a slight boost in his combat strength, which had been stagnant for months.

Seeing that waiting for Warlord's reports every day was really too boring, Lin Huang went into complete seclusion and invested himself body and soul into the refining of the Godheads.

Warlord remained by Lin Huang, guarding him while still directing the mechanical bugs to continue searching for Legendary-level Virtual God rank-9 monsters.

Twenty-four days passed by just like that.

On the last two days that the ruins were pen, Lin Huang gradually opened his eyes.

In these twenty-four days, he had refined eight godheads. After using all of his might to expedite the Divine Fire's progress, it took only around three days or so to refine a single Godhead. So far all nine Godheads within his body had been completely refined.

Lin Huang could also finally sense very clearly that his Life Palace was now satiated. Not only that, but his own combat strength had once more been boosted up a rank. His original grade-9 Imperial level was now elevated to an unheard-of grade-10 Imperial level.

"Finally it's complete! After this, I'll elevate to virtual god-level!" Lin Huang's eyes sparkled.

He already knew how to go about facilitating his breakthrough to virtual god-level.

"Warlord, you can stop searching for Virtual God rank-9s now; it's not necessary anymore. The ruins will be accessible for two more days—within these two days, concentrate entirely on locating coordinates for beginner-stage True Gods. We'll go on a final round of hunting!"

Chapter 1386: Hunting True Gods!

To be considered a True God, one had to have ignited Divine Fire and also have achieved an understanding of the existence of God Rule Power or Elemental Enlightenment.

Because Divine Power within the body was refined by the Divine Fire, the quality of Divine Power possessed by true god-level powerhouses far outstripped that of Virtual Gods. Once that was combined with God Rule Power and Elemental Enlightenment, it became an irrefutable universal truth.

Therefore, a Virtual God challenging a True God would be as hard as scaling the heavens.

Apart from a very few peak virtual god-level genius powerhouses who had mastered God Rule Powers or Elemental Enlightenment and could, therefore, challenge True Gods, other Virtual Gods would not stand a chance of winning an encounter with a True God.

Lin Huang dared to challenge True Gods for a very simple reason.

He also had Divine Fire within him; once his Divine Power had been refined by the Divine Fire, it was comparable in quality to that of a first-rank True God. Besides, he had also mastered many God Rule Powers and Elemental Enlightenment, and he was adept in Sword Dao true meaning.

Even though his combat strength was only at grade-10 Imperial-level, in every other aspect, he was by no means inferior to a low-rank True God.

After elevating to grade-10 Imperial-level, the first thing Lin Huang did was to begin hunting for True Gods.

There were still two days left for both the trial and for the period of accessibility to the Frost Territory; he wanted to take advantage of these final two days to elevate to virtual god-level as soon as possible.

It was a good thing that Warlord had listed down true god-level monsters as well during his search for virtual god-level ones. At the time, the reason for this was to avoid those areas as much as possible—who knew that the information would turn out to be so useful right now.

In less than a second Warlord had plotted out the best hunting route based on the low-rank True Gods on the list.

After less than ten minutes, Lin Huang located his first true god-level prey.

This was a Portly Snowman, which looked utterly adorable and even rather cute.

However, the truth was that it was a true god-level frost spirit, and its powers were not to be taken lightly.

It stood around five meters tall. In appearance, it was like the snowmen that children would build on snowy days, except that it had two legs and was considerably larger.

Portly Snowmen were adept in the use of Frost Elemental Enlightenment, particularly arcane attacks. Because they were frost spirits, they were able to utilize a great many Frost Elemental techniques at will without the need for a cool-down period.

However, while they were experts in offensive techniques, techniques were not the only thing they were extremely proficient in.

The truth was, all Portly Snowmen were equipped with terrifying defenses. These defenses were not like rigid those of the Frost Giants; rather, the Snowmen's bodies were capable of absorbing a substantial amount of physical and energy attacks, thereby minimizing the actual damage to themselves as much as possible.

Besides this, Portly Snowmen were like the Frost Giants—also equipped with considerable strength. Among monsters of the same level, the Portly Snowmen's strength was considered to be of a superior standard.

If any poor soul naively assumed that the Snowmen were only expert in offensive techniques and not in close-quarter combat, they would die very horribly indeed.

Looking down at the Portly Snowman below from high up in the sky, Lin Huang knew that the other had been aware of his presence from early on.

Portly Snowmen might not have aggressive tendencies but it did not mean that they were not territorial.

This particular Portly Snowman had not immediately attacked Lin Huang and Warlord when they had encroached into its territory, partly because it sensed that both the intruders were not yet at true god-level and they did not present a very great threat. Another reason was that the Snowman had determined both the newcomers were merely passing through and had not come specifically to hunt it down. This also had to do with the fact that Lin Huang had not immediately displayed any violent intentions.

However, the intruders had now closed the distance to the point where they appeared directly in the Snowman's line of sight. This proximity immediately stirred the Portly Snowman's territorial guarding

instincts. It reassessed the two newcomers' intentions and confirmed that the pair were heading straight for it.

Once it had ascertained that Lin Huang and Warlord were intruders, the Portly Snowman's initial adorable demeanor suddenly underwent a change. Its eyes turned blood-red as if scarlet ink had been dripped onto them. Its smiling lips lifted high, its wide mouth dominating half its face and opening to reveal a maw full of sharp crystalline teeth.

The Snowman's body expanded considerably as well; in less than the time it took for a breath, it had grown to over ten meters tall.

Although he had seen the descriptions of Portly Snowmen quite some time ago in the monster guide, Lin Huang was still rather shocked now that he was personally witnessing the Snowman's transformation up close.

"I wonder if those people on the Internet who keep fussing every day about wanting to have a Portly Snowman as a pet would still want to do so after seeing this," he muttered with a tinge of dark humor.

The minute he finished speaking, he discovered that a pale white mist was starting to coalesce around his body and he could clearly feel that the temperature of the air was plummeting rapidly.

"Not even a greeting and it's already making a move?" Lin Huang spat out a curse, but his hands did not slow down their movements in the least.

A dark red sword hilt appeared in Lin Huang's palm out of thin air. A second later, a thick, wide silver blade rapidly materialized into being.

The blade sliced through the air. Gale-force winds howled continuously and the mist surrounding Lin Huang's body dispelled in an instant. The temperature of the air—which had plummeted so rapidly earlier—quickly rose again.

In fact, the white mist that the Portly Snowman had generated just now was a type of Frost Elemental Enlightenment divine skill—Frost Wave.

This particular divine skill appeared in the form of a mist that could rapidly lower the temperature of an entire area to slow down an enemy's movements.

If the enemy lingered within the Frost Wave for too long, they might even be frozen into an ice statue.

However, this recent attack of Lin Huang's had been imbued with Wind Elemental Enlightenment. It immediately dispelled the Frost Wave and got him out of his predicament.

Upon seeing its attack being dispelled so easily, the Portly Snowman was stunned for a moment.

From what it had sensed previously, the auras of these two tiny things were not yet at true god-level and were no match for its power.

It had originally thought that the Frost Wave would finish off both the intruders and turn them into ice statues.

It had certainly not expected that in one move they would dispel an attack imbued with Frost Elemental Enlightenment.

The Portly Snowman's brief moment of being stunned gave Lin Huang an opening, however.

As this was his first encounter with a true god-level opponent, Lin Huang did not dare to act recklessly. Now that he had found a weak point in his opponent's defenses, naturally, he would not let this chance slip by so easily.

In an instant the shape of his sword blade changed, becoming long and narrow. The next second, a sword gleam streaked across the heavens like a blood-red electric arc.

The Portly Snowman several hundred meters away did not even have time to react before it was decapitated by the blade.

Lin Huang had not held back anything in this attack; he had combined Sword Dao true meaning with Lightning Element—Instant Flash, the Fire Elemental God Rule Power—Tattooed Demon, and God-slaying Power.

With the amplification effect of four Rule Bending Powers combined, one attack was sufficient to snuff out the Portly Snowman's life.

Before the Snowman's head could tumble to the ground, the monster's aura had already completely dissipated.

Its massive corpse rapidly crumbled into a gigantic pile of snow.

Lin Huang had not expected to be able to kill a first-rank True God; this caused him inexplicable delight.

This was the first time that he had killed a True God on his own; it was also the first time that he sensed just how powerful he was at present.

"I was able to kill a first-rank True God so easily; I don't know whether the upper limit of my abilities is at second-rank or third-rank..."

After spending a few minutes to retrieve the Divine Fire from within the Portly Snowman's corpse, Lin Huang tossed it into his inner world.

Once the white Divine Fire entered Lin Huang's inner world, it transformed into a stream of light that flowed into one of the Life Wheels. To be more precise, it flowed into one of the Life Lamps and began slowly integrating with the dark-red Divine Fire within the Lamp.

"Given this current speed, it will take almost a month to fully integrate..."

Based on what he sensed of the Divine Fire's integration speed, Lin Huang could roughly determine how long a full integration would take.

He swept a glance over the nine Life Wheels; it became increasingly clear what steps he should take next...

Chapter 1387: Ten Divine Fires

After successfully hunting down the Portly Snowman, the second true god-level prey that Lin Huang selected was a second-rank Storm Eagle.

The Storm Eagle was a monster that cultivated Wind Elemental Enlightenment as its main specialization, with supplemental cultivation in Frost and Lightning Elemental Enlightenment.

This sort of monster possessed speed that was considered top-tier even among other monsters of the same level. Besides that, its attack method was also quite swift and fierce.

It used Wind Elemental Enlightenment to create a Wind Blade that was reinforced with Frost Elemental Enlightenment. Then, it boosted the blade with Lightning Elemental Enlightenment—Rapid Speed. With three Enlightenments compounded like this, even a third-rank True God would do well to dodge the blade's cutting edge.

For this fight, Lin Huang fully relied on telekinetic weapons to face his enemy. He used his telekinetic flying daggers to counter the Storm Eagle's Wind Blade.

The telekinetic flying daggers clashed repeatedly against the Storm Eagle's incessant Wind Blade, which was supported by its three Elemental Enlightenments.

This face-off, torrential as a storm, lasted for more than half an hour before Lin Huang ended the fight with some reluctance.

Even though the Storm Eagle was strong, it had only mastered three types of Elemental Enlightenments, which made it far inferior to Lin Huang.

Lin Huang had engaged in a fierce battle with the Storm Eagle for half an hour only because he saw it creating the Wind Blade and he itched to go up against it. He also wanted to test out his newly-acquired telekinetic flying daggers; therefore, he had dragged things out for a little longer.

After killing the Storm Eagle, Lin Huang immediately extracted the Divine Fire from its body.

However, when he placed the Divine Fire in his inner world, he realized that this Divine Fire did not flow into any of his Life Wheels. It just went into a corner of his inner world, slowly withdrew its flames, stopped releasing energy, and turned into a lump of tinder.

"What's going on?"

When he saw what happened, Lin Huang was surprised.

Previously, the Divine Fire of the Portly Snowman had not only flowed into the Life Wheel of its own accord once it entered his inner world, but it had also been easily accepted by the Life Wheel.

However, the Storm Eagle's Divine Fire became inert once it entered his inner world.

Puzzled, Lin Huang took control of the lump of Divine Fire tinder and tried throwing it into a Life Wheel. However, once the tinder got near the Life Wheel, the Life Wheel's blood-red flames started acting up, repelling the tinder.

Lin Huang tried this with all ten Life Wheels, one by one, but all ten reacted in the same way.

“What sort of devilish tricks are you trying to pull here?”

Lin Huang was left speechless. Nonetheless, after he thought about it again, he had a vague guess as to why the Life Palace might have rejected the Divine Fire.

“Warlord, make a slight alteration to the route. Let’s find another first-rank True God.”

About seven or eight minutes later, Lin Huang and Warlord found their third true god-level hunting target.

The target this time was a White Lynx. It was a mutated monster, and its combat strength was only at the level of a first-rank True God.

This monster possessed high explosive power and agility, as well as being skilled in covert kills and sneak attacks. Nevertheless, it had no chance of displaying its skills in front of Lin Huang, as the telekinetic flying daggers shot through the air and took it down from a distance.

After killing the White Lynx with ease, Lin Huang once again extracted the Divine Fire from within its body and put it inside his own inner world.

After entering his inner world, the Divine Fire transformed into a stream of light and promptly flowed into the second Life Wheel without any difficulties.

When he saw that, Lin Huang basically had his speculations confirmed.

“So it only accepts the Divine Fire of a first-rank True God?”

“Warlord, find the third-rank True God nearest to us right now.”

To verify his speculations, Lin Huang was prepared to continue testing through trial and error.

After a few minutes, both of them found their fourth true god-level prey, which was also the strongest opponent Lin Huang had ever encountered in his life.

This third-rank True God monster was a Golden Ursine.

The Golden Ursine was considered top-level even among monsters of the same rank in terms of strength or defense, and its close-combat strength was enough to directly challenge a third-rank true god-level combat cultivator powerhouse.

Lin Huang itched to have a go. This time, instead of using his telekinetic flying daggers, he raised his battle sword for a close-combat confrontation.

Without holding back any of his power, he unleashed force-type completely!

Six Rule Bending Powers compounded together – Superhuman Strength, God-slaying Power, Lightning Enlightenment—Lightning God, Heaven’s Punishment, Fire Enlightenment—Tattooed Demon, and Fire Enlightenment—Hell. Even after boosting all of this with Sword Dao true meaning, it still took him a full hour before he finally took down the Golden Ursine.

“Killing a third-rank True God is pretty much the limit of my abilities...” This fight allowed Lin Huang to make a rough assessment of the upper limit of his own abilities.

After extracting the Divine Fire from within the Golden Ursine's body, Lin Huang once again tossed it into his inner world.

As with the Divine Fire of the Storm Eagle from before, this Divine Fire also soon fell still and regressed into tinder form.

All ten Life Wheels refused to absorb this Divine Fire, just like before.

After stowing the corpse of the Golden Ursine into his storage space, Lin Huang turned around to face Warlord.

"Warlord, help me find another first-rank monster again."

A few minutes later, both of them quickly found their fourth True God-level prey (TN: This appears to be a typo on the author's part; it should be the fifth one, but we have opted to translate it as it is). This time, it was another first-rank True God.

After killing it, Lin Huang retrieved its Divine Fire.

As Lin Huang watched, the Divine Fire was accepted by the third Life Wheel without a hitch.

Lin Huang was, therefore, able to confirm his speculation from before by one hundred percent—his Life Wheels only accepted first-rank Divine Fires.

"Warlord, let's change our route. We'll hunt down first-rank monsters first!"

For the next hour, using Warlord's route as a guide, Lin Huang hunted down his prey—seven first-rank true god-level monsters.

Without exception, all seven Divine Fires were accepted by the seven remaining Life Wheels with no difficulty at all.

When the tenth Life Wheel accepted the tenth Divine Fire, Lin Huang distinctly felt as if there were a minuscule change in the grade-10 Imperial-level within him.

He even had a vague feeling that as long as the ten first-rank Divine Fires in his body could integrate fully with the Divine Fires in his Life Lamps, he might advance to virtual god-level.

"Looks like all I can do is wait patiently for around a month..." Lin Huang sensed the integration speed of the Divine Fires in his body and made a rough estimation.

Shooting a glance at the time projected, he got ready to continue his race against the clock.

"Warlord, help me plan a new route. Exclude all first-rank monsters from our hunting targets. From now on, we're only hunting second and third-ranks!"

Warlord immediately nodded and went to work.

As a Mechanical type, he did not possess human emotions like joy, anger, sorrow, or happiness. Therefore, he did not have any complaints about Lin Huang constantly changing their route.

Over the next day and a half, Lin Huang kept running between second and third-rank True God targets according to the route that Warlord had marked out, killing them one after another.

When he encountered a second-rank, he had no problem killing them in an instant. However, when he met a third-rank, a fierce battle would unfold that usually lasted anywhere between half an hour to two hours.

A low-level True God would generally have mastered more than ten types of Rule Bending Powers.

Based solely on the number of Rule Bending Powers one had mastered, Lin Huang would surpass an average third-rank True God, but only to a certain extent. The disparity in their overall strength was actually not that great.

This was why he was especially willing to use these third-rank monsters as practice for his combat skills.

If he encountered a power type, he would directly confront them using force-type.

When he encountered a speed type, he would use rapid speed sword skill against his opponent.

...

The last two days in the Frost Territory went by in a flash.

Within these last two days, Lin Huang had hunted down a total of more than sixty low-level True Gods. Among them were 10 first-ranks, 28 second-ranks, and 23 third-ranks.

Apart from the first-rank Divine Fires that had all been absorbed, the other Divine Fires inside his inner world regressed to tinder, waiting to be rekindled...

Chapter 1388: Elevation to Virtual God-Level!

Once they had been teleported out from the Frost Territory, all the participants gathered at the entrance to the dimensional portal once again.

Out of eight thousand participants, more than seven thousand had returned. The survival rate had exceeded 90%, which was already very high.

Lin Huang glanced over; once again he saw many familiar faces. He also saw the two Sword Servants.

When Sword301 and Sword302 saw Lin Huang, they immediately approached him and used the telepathic bond between swordmaster and Sword Servants to communicate.

“Lord Swordmaster!”

“The two of you don’t look too bad, it seems you’ve profited a lot from this ruin,” Lin Huang laughed and teased them.

“We teamed up and hunted for some true god-level monsters. We had a better haul than expected,” Sword302 finished and asked Lin Huang somewhat uncertainly, “Lord Swordmaster’s aura seems to have gotten stronger but your combat strength hasn’t broken through to virtual god-level yet, has it?”

The reason she asked this was because if Lin Huang had broken through to virtual god-level, as his Sword Servants, their combat strength would have been elevated to true god-level. However, as of now their combat strength remained fixed at Virtual God rank-9 without any change.

“Hmm, I did improve a little. It shouldn’t take long to advance to virtual god-level.” Lin Huang nodded slightly and did not explain in any further detail.

As they were chatting, a figure glided over to them noiselessly.

Lin Huang turned his head and looked at the newcomer, who was wearing a black robe and a white mask on their face. It was obviously Virtuoso, who was ranked first on Death Sickle’s White Sickle Leaderboard.

“I’m Virtuoso, might I make your acquaintance?” Virtuoso initiated the conversation, addressing his words to Lin Huang.

Their voice sounded gender-neutral, which made it impossible to distinguish whether the speaker was male or female.

Only now at such close range did Lin Huang noticed that the mask Virtuoso wore was a simple white one made of some unknown material. Except for two red smears where the mouth was located, there were no eyeholes even.

Through the mask, it was impossible to make out any expression on the other’s face.

Lin Huang even suspected that it might have been an illusion when he saw the red lips curve up on the mask a month ago.

“Hello, I’m Huang Lin.” Although he was somewhat doubtful about the other’s purpose in striking up a conversation first, Lin Huang still gave his pseudonym with a smile.

“We are all fellow members of Death Sickle. I noticed that the three of you looked relatively unfamiliar, so I wanted to come over and get acquainted,” Virtuoso explained.

Despite saying this, Virtuoso seemed to have no intention of conversing with the two Sword Servants at all; he just glanced at them briefly.

“We just joined recently,” Lin Huang said with a smile.

“Good luck, I’m optimistic about you guys.” After Virtuoso finished speaking, they clapped Lin Huang on the shoulder and turned away.

‘What does Virtuoso want? Just to come over and say hello?’ Lin Huang could not understand what the other was trying to do.

Before, he had registered with Death Sickle as Xie Lin and had never had any interaction with Virtuoso beyond seeing their name on the White Sickle Leaderboard.

Lin Huang had made his appearance using the identity of Huang Lin, a cultivator who had come into contact with Death Sickle for the first time. Even Fallen Star and the rest could not recognize him.

Therefore, Virtuoso taking the initiative to come by and say hello puzzled him greatly.

He naturally knew that the other party had not come over because the three of them looked unfamiliar.

The Black Sickle members in Death Sickle numbered at least one million and the estimated number of those Virtuoso knew were very few. If he approached every member that he was unfamiliar with, he would have been exhausted.

Moreover, Fallen Star and the rest had accidentally revealed at one point that Virtuoso was an aloof, reticent person who basically ignored all the other members in Death Sickle.

Virtuoso's move to initiate a conversation was also inconsistent with his image in Death Sickle.

Virtuoso's behavior puzzled not only Lin Huang but Fallen Star and the others as well, who had noticed and could not help but glance in Lin Huang's direction.

After this small incident, the participants of the major organizations quickly dispersed.

Lin Huang also returned to the Iron Fist Shelter with both the Sword Servants.

The instant he got to the hotel, Lin Huang took out a storage ring and tossed it to Sword301.

"This is my haul from the Frost Territory. In addition to the beast corpses, there is also loot from the monsters' private possessions. Please help me sort it out."

Sword301 took a look at the ring and was stunned for a moment. "Lord Swordmaster, you hunted down these third-rank True Gods yourself?"

"Yes, is there a problem?"

"No, nothing..." Sword301 quickly shook his head.

As of now, he and Sword302 had access to nine types of Rule Bending Power, but since the strength of their Divine Power was only at the level of a Virtual God, their overall ability was only equivalent to that of second-rank True Gods.

The monsters that both of them hunted together were basically second-rank true god-level prey. When they encountered third-rank monsters, they had no choice but to detour around them.

However, Lin Huang had hunted over twenty third-rank true god-level monsters on his own.

After he had handed the corpses and the rest of his loot to the two Sword Servants for sorting out, Lin Huang rented a top-tier cultivating room in the hotel and entered closed-door cultivation to begin integrating Divine Fire in earnest.

As time passed, the ten first-rank Divine Fires and the dark red Divine Fire within Lin Huang's body slowly integrated day by day.

The color of the Divine Fire also changed daily.

As he watched the progress bar for the integration process going up every day, Lin Huang looked forward all the more to the transformation of his ability after he elevated to virtual god-level.

Twenty-eight days passed just like that. In all ten golden Life Wheels, the integration of Divine Fire was completed in less than ten minutes.

The initial dark red Divine Fire became fiery red, like a blazing piece of coal.

The very second the Divine Fire completed integrating, the ten Life Wheels moved at almost the same time and flew out of the Life Palace right away.

After leaving the Life Palace, all ten Life Wheels surrounded the Life Palace and began spinning wildly. Red Divine Fire surged out from them like a river and spurted toward the Life Palace.

In the blink of an eye, the entire Life Palace was engulfed by an endless sea of flame. No trace of it could be seen.

“Is this... condensing the Godhead?”

The scene in front of him had occurred entirely on its own once the integration of Divine Fire was completed. Lin Huang had no control over it at all; he could only observe from the sidelines as it happened.

The process of condensing the Godhead had begun; Lin Huang patiently waited to one side.

This time, the surge of Divine Fire lasted for ten days.

Lin Huang’s Life Palace finally collapsed completely, transforming into points of starlight.

Another ten days later, after being immersed in Divine Fire, these countless points of starlight gradually condensed into a black crystal the size of a thumb. A mysterious blood-red divine pattern was faintly visible on the crystal’s surface.

It was not until the Godhead was completely condensed that the Life Wheels stopped spurting Divine Fire. They turned into ten streams of light that submerged themselves into the Godhead.

Once the Godhead had been established, rings of Divine Power immediately spread out in all directions and into every corner of Lin Huang’s body.

At this moment, Lin Huang felt every cell in his body undergoing a violent metamorphosis, even down to the particles of his soul.

This transformation took three days and three nights to be fully completed.

When Lin Huang opened his eyes again, he felt as if he had been reborn.

“Finally, I have advanced to virtual god-level!”

Chapter 1389: Consecutive Advancement

“Host: Lin Huang”

“Gender: Male”

“Age: 20”

“Combat Strength: Virtual God-level (rank-1)”

“Title: Godslayer”

“Goldfinger: Xiao Hei, Stone Tablet, Eternity Fire, Yin Yin”

4“Integration Item: Origin God’s Heart, One Page Sword Scripture, Galactic Hive, God Weapon, Great Heaven Palace (Initial Integration)...”

“Life Palace: Monster Paradise”

“Inheritance: Great Heaven, Sword2, Sword8, Sword10, Sorcerer Goddess...”

“Divine Ability: Substitute, Golden Cicada...”

“God Rule: Superhuman Strength, Seraphic Speed, God-slaying Power”

“Elemental Enlightenment: Instant Flash, Sun Shadow, Heavenly Roc, Traceless, Lightning God, Heaven’s Punishment, Tattooed Demon, Hell”

“Sword Dao: True Meaning Level (Possesses Sword Heart, Sword Spirit)”

“Sword Skills: 200,000 types”

“Minor: The Twisted Fate Scripture, Seamless...”

1“Monster Skills: Divine Telekinesis, Divine Regeneration, Holy Power, Elemental Immunity, Leech Pods, Absolute Control, Divine Purification Light, Revival, Immortal Warrior Body, Vampire Particles, Divine Strength, Divine Defense, Lightning Lord, Dark Mirror, Doll forbidden skill, Punishment, Divine Witchcraft, Knight, Integration, Mechanical Building, Mechanical Recovery, Evil Blood Substitute, Divine Disguise, Demon Flame, Hellish Fire, Abyssal Fire, Lightning God, Phoenix.”

5“Summon Authority: Activated (Supreme God-level)”

1“Available Number of Summons: 50”

“Remarks: Not too bad”

2...

Upon checking his personal panel, Lin Huang was fairly satisfied.

After elevating to virtual god-level, not only had the upper limits of the mythical-level imperial monsters’ combat strength been unlocked to true god-level (the imperial monsters’ combat strength was not directly advanced to true god-level), but the available number of summons had also increased from the original 30 to 50.

This meant that as soon as Bai and the rest were able to elevate their combat strength to true god-level, he could summon fifty true god-level imperial monsters at the same time to fight for him. This was not even including the quota for the hive limit.

In addition to the increase in the upper limit of the imperial monsters’ combat strength, the upper limit of the Sword Servants’ combat strength had also been unsealed. The sixty-eight Sword Servants, including Sword301, had their combat power unsealed right away to first-rank true god-level.

The changes in the imperial monsters and Sword Servants were all within Lin Huang’s expectations.

What surprised him more were the changes brought about after the Monster Paradise Territory had officially evolved into God Territory.

“God Territory: Monster Paradise”

1“God Territory’s Territorial Range: Radius of 10,000 kilometers from the God Territory possessor (potential to grow)”

“God Territory Ability 1: Within the God Territory’s territorial range, the dead summoning beast’s soul will return to the God Territory with its body reconstructed with Divine Power and revived. Those that have broken soul will have their broken soul pieces recalled and recovered.”

“Ability Restriction 1: Each summoning beast can only be revived 100 times within 24 hours. Their soul will disintegrate when it surpasses 100 times and they won’t be able to return to the God Territory (potential to grow)”

“Ability Restriction 2: Each summoning beast can only have their soul recovered 12 times within 24 hours. Their soul will disintegrate if it surpasses 12 times and they won’t be able to return to the God Territory (potential to grow)”

“Derivative Ability: If the God Territory possessor is dead within the coverage range, he can choose to use a summoning beast to substitute death. The summoning beast that is chosen as the substitute won’t be able to be summoned within 24 hours (potential to grow)”

“Remarks: The God Territory possessor can only be substituted for death 12 times within 24 hours. He can only be substitute 5 times if his soul disintegrated (potential to grow)”

4...

“God Territory Ability 2: Within the God Territory’s territorial range, the God Territory possessor and his summoning beasts would have a 12 fold boost on their strength, speed, and spirit. The other summoning beasts would have a 50% drop on their strength, speed, and spirit (potential to grow).”

“Remark 1: The God Territory possessor can turn off the boost and undermining effect as he wishes.”

“Remark 2: The weakening ability of the God Territory is not effective for life entities that exceed the God Territory possessor’s level by one level or more.”

1...

“God Territory Ability 3: Within the effective range of the God Territory, the God Territory possessor can freely borrow any skills from all monsters within the effective range of the God Territory.”

“Remark 1: The borrowing of monster skills already possessed by the God Territory possessor is invalid and will not result in a compound effect.”

“Remark 2: Within 24 hours, the God Territory possessor’s number of Monster Skill spaces will temporarily double and the maximum number of borrowed skills must not exceed the God Territory possessor’s number of Monster Skill authorities. (If he originally has 50 skill spaces, he can borrow up to 50 more skills.)”

...

The territorial range of the God Territory was much larger than the previous territorial range of the Life Palace. The number of revivals of the summoned beasts, the number of soul repairs, the number of substitutions, and the increase in the ability of the summoned beasts had all been significantly elevated.

After checking his personal information, Lin Huang sensed the changes in his body again. He could clearly feel his physical strength, his spirit strength, and his Divine Telekinesis strength; even the Divine Fire had transformed in its nature.

Before it was only comparable to the level of a first-rank True God, but now it had almost elevated to the level of a third-rank True God.

He carefully checked his body and took another look at the date. Lin Huang did not plan on ending his closed-door cultivation; instead, he turned his attention to the pile of second-rank tinder in his inner world.

“My foundation has been securely laid. It shouldn’t be a problem to advance to Virtual God rank-3 in no time at all. According to the current speed of my Divine Fire integration, it will take me about eighty days to advance to Virtual God rank-3. There are only three and a half months left of the year before I have to return to the gravel world. After that, it won’t be possible to continue to improve my combat strength for the short term. I can use this time to strengthen my cultivation.”

After he had confirmed that there would be no problems in continuing to advance, Lin Huang did not hesitate. Taking out ten lumps of second-rank Divine Fire tinder, he inserted them into ten Life Wheels respectively.

This time, the Life Wheels did not refuse the tinder but accepted them right away.

The ten lumps of tinder sank into the ten Life Lamps. Under the stimulation of the Divine Fire, they quickly activated and began to burn again in just a few seconds.

Lin Huang closed his eyes to focus and started a new round of Divine Fire integration.

Another month passed by in a flash; by the end of it, the ten lumps of second-rank tinder had been completely integrated. This time, the shape and color of the Divine Fire in Lin Huang’s body did not change much but the Divine Power it released was obviously much stronger than before.

Once the integration of Divine Fire was complete, the ten Life Wheels oscillated again and detached themselves from the Godhead.

The Life Wheels formed a circle on the periphery of the Godhead. Once again they spurted out Divine Fire and started a new round of refining.

Time went by and another ten days passed. The Life Wheels stopped spurting Divine Fire and the Godhead had also completed a new cycle of refining.

Lin Huang was now officially elevated to Virtual God rank-2!

He checked his physical condition and looked at the date, before once more turning his attention to the lumps of third-rank Divine Fire tinder in his inner world. Very soon he began a new round of cultivation...

After forty days, Lin Huang had successfully advanced to Virtual God rank-3.

This closed-door cultivation lasted more than four months.

Lin Huang broke through three minor levels one after the other from grade-10 Imperial-level and successfully advanced to Virtual God rank-3.

At this time, there was only less than a month left before the end of the one-year period that had been agreed upon...

Chapter 1390: The Young Princess of the Nephilic Judge Tribe

The next time Lin Huang stepped out of the cultivation room and saw Sword301 and Sword302 again, the two of them were already third-rank True Gods.

When the swordmaster's combat strength increased, it would in turn automatically unlock their Sword Servants' combat power.

The two Sword Servants were overjoyed when they saw Lin Huang coming out of the room.

"Congratulations, Lord Swordmaster, for advancing three levels in just four short months!"

When Lin Huang previously obtained the Great Heaven inheritance, he had already proven his Sword Dao potential and convinced many Sword Servants. Now, his terrifying cultivation speed had made the Sword Servants hold even more reverence for Lin Huang as a swordmaster.

"You've both worked hard these past few months." Lin Huang nodded slightly.

The two of them had waited for Lin Huang for more than four months, and they had to constantly keep an eye out for movement around the cultivation room to prevent Lin Huang from being disturbed. It was indeed a very boring job.

"Has there been any news lately?"

"Nothing major. There've only been two pieces of news that have become hot topics in the past few months. The first is that the Nephilic Judge Tribe has publicly re-acknowledged a young princess who had previously been estranged. The second is that this young princess of the Nephilic Judge Tribe has leveled up to true god-level," Sword302 said as he pursed his lips, "The Nephilic Judge Tribe has a very low fertility rate and has had difficulty in producing a pure-blooded descendant even after thousands of years. This young princess is probably someone's secret illegitimate child..."

"A young princess of the Nephilic Judge Tribe..." The first thought that came to Lin Huang's mind was Kylie. "Are there any pictures of this young princess?"

Sword302 was stunned at Lin Huang's words, then projected the news information with a playful look in her eyes.

Lin Huang was speechless once he saw the projection.

It really was Kylie!

In the projection, Kylie radiated sheer heroic spirit in her armor of interwoven purple and gold. The mask on her face had also been removed, revealing her beautiful face.

Seeing that Lin Huang was stunned for a long time, the playful expression on Sword302's face deepened. "If Lord Swordmaster is interested in this princess, then once our influence has been established, we can directly visit them to propose marriage.

"However, ever since this young princess's true face was revealed, many Pure Blood Protoss tribes have been flocking to the doors of the Nephilic Judge Tribe over the last few months. From what I've heard, there are more than twenty fine pure-blooded young men from the Angel Tribe who are on the suitors' list to ask for her hand in marriage."

"I thought the people of the Angel Tribe were genderless?" Lin Huang raised an eyebrow.

"They don't have a fixed gender, but they can modify their gender to suit their needs," Sword301 could not help interjecting when he heard this.

"The competition is fierce, Lord Swordmaster..." Sword302 laughed as she teased.

"Kylie is actually my partner. She's just temporarily separated from me due to certain reasons." Lin Huang nonchalantly shot a glance toward Sword302.

"Huh?" Sword302 was shocked.

However, Lin Huang was unwilling to explain any further. Instead, he continued to search for information and news about Kylie.

It had taken Kylie more than half a year to finally be recognized by the Nephilic Judges. Apart from the time required for identity verification, the majority of her time was actually spent on the road.

For one thing, this was because the core zone was extremely far away and the journey was very long. For another, the core zone was not accessible to just anyone. Bloody and Kylie must have spent a lot of time trying to obtain permission to enter.

There were not many descriptions of Bloody within the available data. Lin Huang saw several articles mentioning that young Princess Kylie had a beautiful close female friend, but that was all. There were no recorded images of Bloody, nor was there any information about her.

"That's very like Bloody..." Bloody had always been low-key and cautious. Although there was no information on her, Lin Huang was almost certain that this mysterious best friend of Kylie's had to be Bloody.

It was about four months ago that Kylie had retraced her origins, which was just a few days after Lin Huang went into closed-door cultivation.

In the past few months, Bloody and Kylie had probably been borrowing resources from the God Territory core zone to investigate the route for returning to the gravel world.

Although the God Territory was a vast land, several months should have been enough time to find the star map in Qi Muxiong's memory if they compared the star maps one by one.

Since there was still no news from Bloody and Kylie, it was very likely that the star map in Qi Muxiong's memory that contained the route back to the gravel world was not in the God Territory.

"I hope we can find that star zone quickly, though. There's only less than a month left till the end of the appointed one-year period..." Lin Huang was a little anxious, but there was nothing else he could do other than being restless.

With Kylie's current status, it was definitely easier for her to obtain resources for star maps compared to him. In this regard, he could not be of much help.

Shaking his head to rid his mind of distracting thoughts, Lin Huang summoned Warlord.

Seeing Warlord appear out of nowhere, the two Sword Servants were so shocked they immediately fell into their fighting stances.

"This is Warlord. He's my imperial monster, as well as my partner," Lin Huang quickly explained to avoid any accidental injuries.

The two Sword Servants were taken aback when they heard that and immediately relaxed from their fighting stance.

Sword302 seemed to have thought of something, and could not help asking, "So, the young princess of the Nephilic Judge Tribe..."

Lin Huang nodded slightly, saying nothing more.

The two Sword Servants glanced at each other, and both saw the astonishment in each other's eyes.

"Warlord, help me check if there are any open ruins or secret zones in the God Territory, the kind we can easily go in and out of. It would be best if the monsters there are at true god-level combat strength..."

Warlord began to search on the Internet immediately.

"Lord Swordmaster, will we be entering ruins again?" Sword301 asked.

"It's mainly for them to enter," Lin Huang pointed at Warlord, "We're just going for a round of hunting."

After Lin Huang's combat strength was elevated, Warlord and the other imperial monsters were still stuck at Virtual God rank-9. To further advance to true god-level, they had to rely on themselves to hunt for Divine Fire tinder and ignite the Divine Fires within their own bodies.

Kylie's elevation to true god-level was due in part to her advancement to virtual god-level because of Lin Huang. Then, after increasing the upper limit of her combat strength, she had hunted for Divine Fire tinder and ignited her Divine Fires.

Lin Huang's current plan was to release all the imperial monsters, let them hunt freely, and have them advance to true god-level as soon as possible.

As for himself, he was preparing to hunt down a great deal of Divine Fire tinder that was above third-rank, then wait until he returned to the gravel world before slowly refining them.

The reason he chose a secret zone ruin that he could easily get in and out of was that he wanted to be able to leave immediately before the end of the appointed one-year period.

In less than three seconds, Warlord had found a ruin that met Lin Huang's requirements.

"There is a ruin that specifically meets your requirements, but there is a small problem.

"The ruins of Lust are a pre-existing set of ruins located on the border between the God Territory and the Abyss. In these ruins, there are a large number of Abyssal creatures as well as dark creatures that have been tainted by Abyssal energy. Usually, only virtual god-level and true god-level monsters roam around on the land within the outer perimeter, while heavenly god-level monsters are to be found within the inner perimeter..."

"So, what's this small problem?" Lin Huang raised an eyebrow.

"Not many people from the God Territory go to these ruins to train. More than 90% of those who train there are members of the Abyssal Tribe," Warlord finished speaking and looked up at Lin Huang.

"We'll go to this one. If we encounter any members of the Abyssal Tribe, kill the ones that you can defeat, and just run away from those that you can't," Lin Huang made the final call without any hesitation.