

Pet Store 911

Chapter 911: Recruitment

Boom!

A burning stream of flames burst out of Su Ping's body. His blood seemed to be turning into a rising fire, unleashing a burst of horrifying astral power; red wings appeared behind his back.

Su Ping felt that he became faster and nimbler as he activated his constitution, filling him with strength.

Die!

Su Ping quickly gathered all his laws on his fist and punched out.

Like a burning meteorite, the punch caused a ghastly onslaught of destruction with a special torrent of flames.

The devil was instantly shattered, but it was soon reconstituted. Su Ping punched in a consecutive and brutal manner, without hesitation.

A hundred fist auras were launched, and the devil was completely obliterated. Nothing remained aside from the dense flames in the air whose heat permeated all the way to the fourth space.

Whoosh!

Su Ping climbed upwards again.

Boom!

He was suddenly overwhelmed when he barely reached the 200th handle. As in a trance, he saw countless laws and spaces spinning right before his eyes. Things that looked like particles were changing and being reassembled into something uncanny and indescribable.

Although Su Ping had never seen this before, he had a vague inkling that it was a path.

The overwhelming power of that path rushed at him; Su Ping felt that his head was shaking, making him feel that he was in the middle of a vast ocean.

...

Everybody in the outside world exclaimed when Su Ping reached the 200th handle, which was later followed by complete silence.

Everybody was completely dumbfounded.

The young man with a divine constitution was still at the 199th handle at the moment, and Su Ping had managed to reach the 200th.

He had officially reached the top position!

The contestants down below were overwhelmed by disbelief; they could not believe that Su Ping would catch up and surpass the top contender that quickly.

In the balcony—the Ascendants were shocked too. Su Ping seemed too strong for his level; he had truly worked a miracle!

He's in first place!

Ciro held his breath and widened his eyes as he gazed at the scene.

He thought it would be really fortunate if Su Ping could make it to the top, yet Su Ping had pulled it off!

Even the revered Reincarnation Divine Constitution had been surpassed!

“This is impossible!”

At the 199th handle—the young man with divine constitution had just finished off the devil and was about to climb again, but then he saw a man one step above him. He was absolutely astounded.

Su Ping—who was parallel to him moments earlier—had surpassed him?

How long was the guy at 199th handle... he already resolved the attacks?

He suddenly blushed and trembled in fury. However, in the next moment, he stopped shaking and his eyes turned cold. His aura changed too; he was no longer as cocky as before. He thoughtfully looked at Su Ping's back with a gaze as deep as the sea.

Then, he focused on climbing.

...

At the 200th handle—

Su Ping sensed pride and disdain rising in his head while being under the suppression of the path's overwhelming power. The feelings didn't belong to him; they were induced by the instincts of the Golden Crows in his blood.

The Golden Crows that would feed on dragons were too proud to be suppressed.

The flames all over Su Ping's body became more and more exuberant; infinite flames seemed to be circulating in his head. They belonged to the path of flames in his blood, which the Golden Crows were born to control.

Phew!

A stream of golden divine flames gushed out and tore apart the path's power.

That was the Golden Crows' special skill.

The path's power tore apart and flooded into Su Ping's head, giving him a sudden epiphany. A huge river appeared in front of his eyes, with laws being mere grains of sand in it.

The scene flashed and disappeared. Su Ping returned to reality before he could further think about it.

Since he wasn't entirely satisfied, Su Ping heaved a sigh and looked back, only to find that the young man with a divine constitution had also reached the 200th handle.

He smiled and climbed on.

At the 201st handle—Su Ping encountered another attack, which was in the shape of a sharp-pointed and long spear.

The spear seemed to be sentient. It attacked Su Ping destructively, mincing Su Ping's secret techniques and laws the moment they were hit.

He was caught in a long battle again.

Su Ping was finally able to win the battle once half an hour passed.

He continued climbing.

Time flew.

There were only twenty minutes to go.

Su Ping had already reached the 204 handle at the moment.

Su Ping was ready to climb again after finishing the battle. He thought of the young man with a divine constitution and found that he was still at the 200th handle. He was greatly relieved, as he wouldn't need to expose more of his trump cards to win the championship.

"They're already in the Path Section, a place where even Star Lords have to exert their utmost. What two monsters..."

In the balcony—the Ascendant experts had passionate looks, all glittery eyed. This time, they fixed their attention upon Su Ping instead of the young man with a divine constitution.

There was a chance that Su Ping would also have one of the nine divine constitutions too, or something even rarer, able to surpass the Reincarnation Divine Constitution!

After all, anything that could make up for the gap between him and the divine constitution had to be very precious!

"He's firmly set in the top position..."

Ciro became completely relaxed upon seeing that; he then wore an excited smile, he almost couldn't wait to send the news to Lord Hai Tuo.

"He's... the number one at the top now."

The other contestants were stunned too, feeling how surreal everything was.

Su Ping had jumped all the way to the top from the former 110th handle, in only five hours!

Probably no one would be able to look at his back from up close again!

"Horrible! Is this his real combat ability?"

"I didn't know he was strong. No wonder I was defeated so easily; it isn't embarrassing to be enslaved by him, is it?"

“Does he have a rare constitution?”

The other geniuses with Ascendant potential had glittering eyes. Su Jin'er was squinting; there was no telling what was on her mind.

Twenty minutes passed quickly, and Su Ping eventually stopped at the 205th handle.

The young man with a divine constitution, on the other hand, lingered at the 200th handle; he was still unable to resolve his opponent there. All the illusions were gone once the competition ended, and everybody went back to the Heavenly Path Mountain.

The young man with a divine constitution snapped back from his stupor, then he looked up; he instantly narrowed his eyes.

The 205th handle!

The man was five handles ahead of him!

He clenched his fists and looked awful.

Su Ping's head became clear again; he then lowered it and found that he was still at the top. He felt relieved, and then eager to find out what Lord Supreme's prizes would be.

“The trial is over.”

Whoosh!

A majestic shadow appeared; he was an Ascendant State cultivator from the Celestial Court. His face was concealed; only his glittering armor was visible. He looked like a god.

“The champion of the Golden Star Zone this year is... Su Ping of Silvy.”

“The second is Diaz of the Wudi Galaxy!”

“Third place is William VII of the Blood Shadow Galaxy!”

The Ascendant cultivator announced their rankings until the tenth. The following rankings would be announced elsewhere; still, they weren't as important.

Bzzing~!

Suddenly, the void trembled.

To be more precise: the entire universe—including the deeper spaces in the region—was trembling.

Next, everybody saw something they would never forget for the rest of their lives. A splendid figure emerged at the sacred Celestial Court; it was an illusion as big as dozens of planets.

The illusion was a solemn yet peaceful middle-aged man who wore a golden robe and a crown; he looked both like an emperor and an ancient god.

“It's Lord Supreme!”

In the balcony—the Ascendant cultivators wore slightly changed expressions, not daring to sit any longer.

All of them bowed in the direction of Lord Supreme.

The contestants climbing the mountain looked at the scene with unmasked dumbfoundment. *Is that the aura of the Celestial State?*

Su Ping's eyes glowed. Is that man on par with the Superior Gods, who were stronger than Joanna's original self?

The man would have been an elder among the Golden Crows.

He doesn't feel as suffocating as the Chief Elder, Su Ping thought. He wasn't really anxious; after all, he had seen a lot of creatures that were even more horrifying.

The Celestial State illusion slowly opened his mouth. "You're all geniuses of the Golden Star Zone. Many of you are endowed with Ascendant State potential; I hope you can reach that step." His gentle voice echoed in the universe.

Su Ping detected that his voice had penetrated deeper spaces; no wonder the whispers of ancient creatures had been left in the fifth and sixth spaces. It was impossible to contain the will of such an extraordinary being in the primary surface.

All the contestants were in awe, they were very respectful after hearing that.

Even the geniuses with Ascendant potential were acting obediently.

Their potential had made them act proud, but none of them would dare to put on airs before a Celestial.

After all, there were only a few Celestial experts in the entire Federation.

"You two have entered the Path Section as Fate State cultivators. This shows how gifted you are; there's even a slim chance for you to enter the Celestial State. Human beings have dominated the universe for many years, but many aliens invade us every now and then. Our country will be at peace if we have a few more Celestials!"

The illusion smiled and said, "Here's a little something for you. I hope it can help you grow faster."

Pills emerged from deeper spaces right before Su Ping and the young man with a divine constitution, named Diaz.

Each received five pills; they were black-colored, and gave a refreshing feeling.

"Path Pills!"

Diaz seemed shocked, not expecting Lord Supreme to be that generous. Path Pills were so precious that they could allow advanced Star State warriors to break into the Star Lord State!

Every pill contained a complete path.

The five pills equaled five paths; both contestants merely needed those pills to break through. After all, normal Star Lords only had one perfect path.

In addition, there was a strange stone next to the pills. It was red-colored, with black patterns on the surface.

Many Ascendants in the balcony showed faces with shock and greed.

“The Blood Source Stone!”

“Both were rewarded with a Blood Source Stone, which can lay a solid foundation on a small world!”

“It can strengthen them significantly when they reach the Ascendant State. This is such a generous reward!”

Some Ascendants were indeed greedy.

The treasure was still unusable for Su Ping and Diaz. It had to be noted that it was normally used by Ascendants.

Lord Supreme had obviously given them such a prize because he was certain of their advancement to the Ascendant State, unless they died by accident.

“Well...” *Ciro* had a lot of mixed feelings too. He took a deep breath and also became greedy, but he soon let go. After all, nobody would dare steal Lord Supreme’s gift. Even if someone assassinated those two kids, nobody would dare to take the stone away!

At that moment—the illusion of Lord Supreme asked again, “Would you like to respect me as your master?”

Wow!

In the balcony—everybody looked at each in bewilderment, not expecting such a development.

They knew that Lord Supreme’s disciples would surely reach the Ascendant State as long as they weren’t downright stupid.

Su Ping and the other geniuses had Ascendant potential, but many geniuses such as them had died by accident during their growth.

Becoming Lord Supreme’s disciple would mean to receive his protection; they would be able to reach the Ascendant State in a safe and steady manner.

They could hardly be killed, as long as they weren’t too reckless.

Su Ping was somewhat at a loss. *Another disciple seeker?*

He hesitated. It wasn’t bad to take a Celestial as a master, but he didn’t want to expose the system, nor his store.

At the 200th handle—Diaz replied excitedly, “Yes!”

His eyes were full of passion; he didn’t want to let go of such a rare opportunity.

His goal was to reach the Celestial State, but he had to reach the Ascendant State first, to ensure that his life wouldn't be threatened. Then, he would have the hopes of cultivating all the way to the Celestial State.

"Sure."

Lord Supreme nodded and then looked at Su Ping with a smile.

After hesitating for a moment, Su Ping asked prudently, "Lord Supreme, what will I need to do as your disciple?"

Everybody became silent after hearing that.

The excited Diaz, was also in a daze. He looked at Su Ping. *You still have concerns when a Celestial is willing to take you in?*

The other Ascendants thought the same, as they were lost for words. They found the kid was truly unusual; even they felt tempted by such an opportunity.

After all, becoming Lord Supreme's disciple would mean to gain access to the top secret techniques in the Ascendant State!

Lord Supreme seemed to have noticed Su Ping's concerns. He thoughtfully said with a smile, "All you need to do is cultivate; I won't impose many restrictions on you."

Su Ping thought for a moment, realizing that he had to accept it after hearing such conditions.

He felt that it would look too weird if he rejected the offer.

Chapter 912: Ascendant State Senior Brothers

The young man who ranked third—the reincarnation of an ancient phoenix—looked at Lord Supreme with hopeful eyes.

Both Su Ping and Diaz had been taken as disciples. Would he also have a chance?

However, Lord Supreme didn't invite him. He simply said, "The rankings of the Golden Star Zone have been settled; the top hundred will participate at the finals on my behalf.

"Whoever makes it to the top ten in the finals will be rewarded with an additional treasure!

"Next, you will have a two-day rest, then you'll set off to the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm, where the finals will be held."

Once the announcement was made, he looked at Su Ping and Diaz, then said, "You two, come with me."

Then, the enormous illusion was gone, and so were Su Ping and Diaz from the Heavenly Path Mountain.

Su Ping felt that he had been enveloped in a gentle force as he traveled through the darkness. He later found himself in a splendid palace when he opened his eyes.

Outside the palace was a fragrant garden where rare, precious grasses and flowers were being grown.

A man was seated in a pavilion located inside the garden; he was none other than the majestic Celestial State expert.

Next to him, two Ascendant State experts who had concealed their auras looked at Su Ping and Diaz with smiles.

Diaz quickly realized who they were and fell on his knees upon seeing them. "It's an honor to meet you, master."

Su Ping had to kneel, too. "It's an honor to meet you, master."

"Both of you, rise," said Lord Supreme with a smile, "Do you know my name?"

Diaz quickly replied, "I've heard a thing or two about you. Master, you are Shen Huang who reigns over the Golden Star Zone. You've slain countless demons and aliens, making great contributions."

The two Ascendants present smiled when they heard the answer.

"It is our responsibility to slay the beasts and defend our borders," said Lord Supreme with a smile, "You'll have to go to the border too, in order to polish yourselves and protect humankind when you reach the Ascendant State."

"As you wish, master," replied Diaz solemnly.

Su Ping bowed and nodded.

"You have a Reincarnation Divine Constitution. You may be able to rise to the Celestial State if you discover its secrets. Once the competition is over, you'll be free to advance to the Star State and even the Star Lord State. Your quest to the Ascendant State will be smoother if you get anything from the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm."

Lord Supreme looked at Diaz and said with a smile, "You're destined to encounter a disaster at the end of the matches, but you'll rise to a new level if you make full use of the situation."

Diaz was stunned by this revelation, making him feel alarmed. He quickly said, "Thank you for your enlightenment, master."

Lord Supreme looked at Su Ping and remarked thoughtfully, "The aura of the primordial creature in your body belongs to the Golden Crows, which did not exist on the planet where you were born. It may be an atavistic phenomenon."

"Golden Crows? Atavistic phenomenon?"

Diaz gazed at Su Ping in surprise.

Su Ping didn't change his expression, but he began to feel really anxious. He didn't expect that his secret would be found out that easily.

"Countless people have been born in this universe; there are always unimaginable things. What has never happened may happen in the future," said Lord Supreme with a smile, "Both of you carry a fair amount of secrets. I will not pry into them."

Su Ping breathed in relief.

Diaz was greatly relieved too; he too had a lot of clandestine secrets, including his cultivation methods.

“All you need to remember is that you will be the warriors of the Celestial Court, so you must stay loyal to it. Any other matters are irrelevant,” said Lord Supreme solemnly.

“Yes, sir!” Both of them replied.

“You have taken the fruits of laws before, and your understanding of laws is shallow. However, you have mastered the law of fusion and combined the power of those laws. You must have benefited a lot from the climbing. You’ll become even stronger when you fully digest your new knowledge.”

Lord Supreme looked at Su Ping and said with a gentle tone, “I look forward to your performance in the finals.”

Su Ping quickly nodded. However, he sighed to himself, as the man had detected what he was thinking.

Diaz could not help but look at Su Ping after hearing that. He finally realized that the latter had been painstakingly slow at the beginning because he was trying to gain a deeper understanding of the laws with the help of the Heavenly Path Mountain.

So to speak, his combat ability could be further improved? Diaz felt angry when the thought crossed his mind. He was already hitting the bottleneck, yet Su Ping still had room for improvement. *Should I try to comprehend multiple laws too?*

“These two pieces of armor, known as Soul Divine Armor, have been personally made by me.”

Lord Supreme took out two, mist-like objects and said, “They can resist Ascendant State attacks for ten minutes, but they won’t be triggered by lesser attacks. These are two Bracelets of Faith, which can take on Star Lords’ attacks for you.”

A pair of purple bracelets appeared in his hand.

“As for any attack below the Star Lord State, you’re more than capable of dealing with them on your own. They would not pose a threat to you; you can always escape if you can’t win.

“Your opponents in the following next selection round won’t trigger the Soul Divine Armors nor the Bracelets of Faith; they’re meant to protect you from assassins.”

The purple bracelets and the Soul Divine Armor flew to Diaz and Su Ping as he spoke.

Diaz’s eyes glittered as he stared at the Soul Divine Armor.

It was a secret treasure that could resist Ascendant State attacks for ten minutes!

More importantly, they could make use of such treasures even though they were only in the Fate State!

It had to be noted that even the Star Lords’ weapons of faith were intangible for those below the Star Lord State, not just the Ascendant treasures, which couldn’t even be touched, as if they were in another dimension.

“Thank you very much, master!” Diaz said excitedly.

Su Ping was quite surprised too, suddenly feeling that it wasn't bad to have a Celestial State expert as his master; that Soul Divine Armor alone could ensure his safety.

That was the benefit of working for a Celestial!

"Okay. You Long will tell you the other things you should know. Work harder and try to reach the Ascendant State within a thousand years," said Lord Supreme before he disappeared.

The two Ascendants who were next to him bid goodbye respectfully.

Then, a tall and handsome young man said with a smile, "Junior brothers, I'm your seventh senior brother. You may call me Senior Brother You Long."

"Senior Brother You Long!" Diaz quickly said, feeling flattered.

The man was an Ascendant State, and still he had become his senior brother!

Su Ping called out to him respectfully too.

"This is your ninth brother, Ye Lan," You Long introduced the other young man.

Ye Lan seemed somewhat cold, as if he were born that way. He nodded at them and said, "You're rather talented. Work harder. I'll take you to the Star Tower Domain when you reach the Ascendant State."

"The Star Tower Domain?" Diaz was slightly puzzled.

Ye Lan replied casually, "It's a mysterious realm hidden in deeper spaces; there's a strange tower there. It is said that you may find out secrets to reach the Celestial State at the top of the tower. Apart from that, you may find countless treasures too. However, you have to reach the Ascendant State first before you go there, or you will only get killed."

Diaz was shocked. "The secrets to the Celestial State?"

Su Ping asked curiously, "Can't our master go there? He can claim all the secrets if he reaches the top of the tower, right?"

Ye Lan glanced at him and said, "There's a special boundary in the Star Tower Domain that bars the entrance to all Celestials."

Su Ping instantly got it.

Diaz seemed regretful too.

"Your priority is to take a good rest and try to make it to the top ten in the finals, which will give you the privilege to visit the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm; you can easily reach the Ascendant State given your talents. Once you reach the Ascendant State you can cultivate and exploit your potential until you reach higher levels," said You Long with a smile.

Diaz said respectfully, "Of course, senior brother."

Su Ping asked curiously, "Senior brother, how many disciples does our master have?"

You Long smiled and replied, "83 in total; 85, counting you two. Our master will hold a formal recruitment ceremony for you when the competition is over. A lot of bigshots will send their congratulations, including other Celestial experts. The ceremony will be postponed because you're still in the middle of the competition."

"83?"

Both Diaz and Su Ping were stunned, not expecting such a large number.

Diaz could not help but ask, "Senior brother, are all our other senior brothers and sisters in the Ascendant State?"

"Mostly. Only a couple of new disciples are still Star Lords, but they're invincible when confronting other Star Lords. It's only a matter of time before they reach the Ascendant State," You Long chuckled and said.

Su Ping slightly changed his expression, feeling shocked.

So to speak, he had more than seventy Ascendant State senior brothers and sisters.

That was a horrifying number of supporters.

He didn't expect that a Celestial State expert would have that many Ascendant disciples.

"Your other senior brothers and sisters will show up with gifts for you when you're formally recruited." You Long chuckled. "Junior brothers, just take the Soul Divine Armor and have some rest. Tell me if you need anything. Also, keep these two Divine Warrior Badges."

He threw two golden badges to Su Ping and Diaz.

"Not just in this star zone, you will enjoy the privileges you deserve in any part of the Federation as soon as you show this golden badge. Not even the lords of your original galaxies would dare to disrespect you," said You Long.

Su Ping seized the badge and detected an immense divine power from it.

He didn't expect that his position would soar to such a degree after that part of the competition, or that he would receive a treasure like the Soul Divine Armor.

"The Divine Warrior Badge is similar to the Lord Badge in many ways. You can enter a virtual world where you can do a lot of things. Now, let me take you to the Mountains of Cultivation where we always train; it's a place with abundant astral power. Right, the Heavenly Path Mountain used in the competition is also there," You Long said with a smile.

Both of them were stunned for a moment, and then accepted the arrangement.

You Long raised his hand and enshrouded them with his aura, disappearing together with Ye Lan.

Once they reappeared, Su Ping found himself at the top of a splendid mountain that was in the middle of a boundless mountain range. However, that was still a tiny area on one side of the Celestial Court, which was still glowing sacredly at a relatively close distance.

“This one is yours, Junior Brother Su. Junior Brother Diaz, I’ll take you to yours shortly,” said You Long with a smile.

Diaz was stunned. “Each of us will have a mountain?”

“Yes. These mountains are known as the Mountains of Cultivation. The Heavenly Path Mountain will be located at the center when it returns. You can easily enter a meditation state if you cultivate here, and understand laws like drinking water. However, it’s not as easy to comprehend paths, which requires wisdom.

“Of course, it’s not really challenging for the likes of us.

“All in all, you only need to focus on cultivation. Whatever resources you need, no matter how precious they are, you can apply for them as long as they’re useful to you,” said You Long with a smile. His attitude was never condescending.

Ye Lan casually stood next to them in silence.

Su Ping had a jumble of mixed feelings; even a pig from a powerful background could fly to the sky. It was just like kids from rich families who received allowances that were more than what most people could earn in their entire lives.

Then, Su Ping and Diaz both absorbed the Soul Divine Armor.

According to You Long’s indications, they touched it with their mental power and bound it to themselves.

Su Ping sensed that the misty armor was covering his mind like a spider’s web, and that it would be automatically triggered if he endured an Ascendant State attack.

After that, Su Ping put on the purple bracelet.

Once he finished equipping them, he would be able to withstand attacks from Star Lords and Ascendants.

As for the Star State attacks, he could deal with them on his own.

This is exactly Lord Supreme’s method. He ensures that we won’t die as long as we aren’t too reckless. Su Ping was still feeling at odds; this was the lofty dream the other geniuses had.

You Long spoke more about cultivation tips for the Fate State before he took off with Diaz and left Su Ping alone.

The mountain had just been created; it didn’t have any cottage nor houses; Su Ping would have to build them on his own when he had the time.

I wonder where Green Lady is. Su Ping looked up at the sky. His Celestial State master felt as immeasurable as a deep ocean or an unfathomable abyss, giving him the same impression as the Golden Crows, especially the Chief Elder, did.

Chapter 913: Improvement

Su Ping slightly shook his head and focused his attention on cultivating.

He had gone all out during his climb of the Heavenly Path Mountain, moving one handle after the other even at the last moment and shattering a lot of attacks as he went. The law fragments stored in his body were then released.

The overwhelming shards emerged, making Su Ping's mind go blank; his nerves were spread out like a spider's web as they connected to the universe.

Mysteries, nature's evolution and laws of the universe were quickly flashing like mist and water.

Su Ping was devoted to contemplating.

Lightning and fire rose around him. There were also collapsed black holes, twisted spaces, and winds that looked like shadows!

Laws were manifested around Su Ping; they became clearer as he contemplated.

"Fire... Flawless!"

"Space... Adept!"

Su Ping closed his eyes. The Golden Crow fire appeared on his back, and the special thoughts it carried had given him a deep understanding of flames. His understanding was already flawless!

He had integrated plenty of fiery laws, such as burning, heat, destruction, erosion, and the like.

He derived and grasped the essence of fire laws from many laws.

It all came down to destruction. He perceived it after being inspired by the laws of lightning; it had occurred to him that he could be inspired by extrapolating from different laws.

Of course, an impasse would be reached if the cultivator wasn't smart enough and practiced multiple laws; their time would be wasted as they tried to grasp them one by one.

Su Ping began to work on the laws of lightning after perfecting the laws of flames.

He had previously taken the fruits of laws and grasped a hundred of them, but only at a shallow level; such attainment was merely comparable to the early Star State. This time, the law fragments enabled him to push the hundred laws all the way to the advanced phase!

The laws of flames had been perfected thanks to the Golden Crow Divine Constitution. Had Su Ping wanted to, he could advance all the way to the Star Lord State and become a dominator.

The hundred laws I knew were not my best attacks. I was only able to fight against many geniuses because of the abundant astral power brought by the Chaos Star Chart. I had a hundred times more astral power than the others did!

They're all geniuses, and they have much more astral power than the average Fate State warrior, and it has been purified with special techniques. If I were to compare against the average Fate State warrior, I'd say I have ten thousand times more astral power than they do!

The astral power inside Su Ping's body had been purified by Heavenly Tribulations hundreds of times. The Chaos Star Chart had also allowed him to store it in his cells, giving him a horrifying power storage capability. He could easily perform ultimate techniques that would have exhausted normal Fate State cultivators.

My astral power and secret techniques were the real reason why I defeated the other geniuses. The hundred laws only allowed me to offset their attacks, so that I could overwhelm them with my astral power repositories and secret techniques!

I can now rout the whole lot of them with laws now that I've gained a deeper understanding!

Su Ping was excited as he continued digesting those fragments.

Once he was done with training, he felt that he could suppress the unparalleled geniuses who had Ascendant potential with only one hand!

...

While Su Ping cultivated—the outside world was a mess.

A tremendous number of spacecraft carriers sent by various galaxies were gathered in space, outside of the Celestial Court; the media representatives from lesser planets hadn't been cleared to be there yet.

Once the competitions in the Golden Star Zone and on the Heavenly Path Mountain came to an end, the result was quickly spread throughout all the galaxies in the Golden Star Zone. After all, all the competitor's home galaxies had paid a lot of attention to their rankings.

"Yes, yes. That is correct."

Ciro reported the matter to Lord Hai Tuo on the phone.

On the other side of the phone—in his office, on Silvy's biggest planet—Hai Tuo felt that his ears were deceiving him.

"First place?"

"Are you sure he won first place in the entire star zone, not just our own galaxy?"

"Yes. First place of the entire star zone. Results will be officially announced soon," said Hiro with a smile; he too was quite excited.

There had never been a number one holder of the star zone from Silvy.

Considering past performances, it would have been already something to be proud of if anyone made it to the top ten.

Hai Tuo was stunned for a few seconds; he naturally knew that Hiro wouldn't lie to him. The man was an Ascendant State expert; he could ensure the validity of the message.

It meant that the news was real.

The kid he had sent off had won first place in the star zone competition!

It was an entire star zone!

There were only twelve star zones in the entire Federation. Since Su Ping was at the top of one of them, didn't it mean that he had the chance to rise to the final's top ten?

If that was the case, Su Ping would surely reach the Ascendant State with the help of the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm. Once he broke through, he would become a renowned genius in the Ascendant State across the universe!

The Ascendant State cultivators were different too.

Hai Tuo himself was a rather tough Ascendant State expert, but he knew he could not compare when it came to real geniuses.

Such experts were absolutely invincible, unless the Celestial State experts took action!

Su Ping might become one of them once he reached the Ascendant State.

"Ha, ha, ha..."

Hai Tuo laughed excitedly and said, "Whenever you have a chance, tell him to come to my place after the matches; I have a little something for him. No, I'll give it to him in person after the competition. Haha!"

"Sure."

Ciro nodded with a smile.

...

A lot of warships had been docked at the periphery of the Celestial Court. At the inner circle—the media of various galaxies had gathered to observe the competition.

At that moment—in a warship by the edge.

Xingyue Shen'er and the others on board. They were dumbfounded due to the final result, and the illusion of Lord Supreme that was manifested in the end. They had been far away, but they had watched the game via special equipment.

They had also seen how Lord Supreme admitted Su Ping as a disciple.

"B-B-B-B-Brother Heaven Destroyer has become Lord Supreme's disciple?" A young man was so shocked that he stuttered.

The others were equally stupefied, finding it hard to believe.

Let alone Celestials, even Star Lords were experts in their eyes, and those in the Ascendant State were bigshots that they rarely saw.

As for Celestials... They were real legends of the universe!

There were only a few of them in the entire universe. The whole universe trembled when they stomped a foot!

Su Ping was as renowned as an Ascendant just by being Lord Supreme's disciple!

Furthermore, even the normal Ascendants would treat him respectfully.

After all, Su Ping's path to the Ascendant State would be a lot smoother with such a master; he would be much stronger than normal Ascendants, so no one could simply regard him as a junior.

"Oh my god. He has truly changed. He will soar in the universe!"

Even Xingyue Shen'er was somewhat dazed. She did hold high hopes for Su Ping; still, it was beyond her expectation that Su Ping would go that far. He was truly horrifying!

"What a strong young man." The ever-reticent deputy leader also looked solemn.

...

Time flew.

Two days passed in the blink of an eye.

Su Ping was devoted to contemplation; he was gaining a deeper understanding of laws. He wanted a flawless grasp of them all, but he knew that it was very difficult.

I'll ask my master to grant me access to the Heavenly Path Mountain after the matches. My contemplation will be faster there, Su Ping thought.

He woke up from his state of contemplation, then saw Senior Brother You Long stepping out of nowhere.

"Hello, senior brother," Su Ping called out respectfully.

You Long laughed and said, "Junior brother, no need to be so courteous. How are you? I'm here to take you and Junior Brother Diaz to the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm. It's time to go."

"Okay." Su Ping nodded.

You Long glanced at him and softly exclaimed, "You seem stronger than before. Have you made progress in the past days?"

"More or less," said Su Ping with a smile.

You Long remarked with mixed feelings upon hearing that, "What a genius. Good thing that our master met me sooner; he wouldn't have been interested in me if he would have met you first."

Su Ping said quickly, "Senior brother, you're being too kind."

You Long waved his hands and said, "Let's go."

Su Ping felt that his body became light. In the next moment, they disappeared as they were transferred to another mountain where Diaz was sitting cross-legged and cultivating.

"Junior brother," You Long called out to him.

Diaz opened his eyes and saw Su Ping and You Long. He quickly rose and paid respects to You Long, "Glad to see you, senior brother. Is it time?"

"That's right."

You Long smiled and stared at him; he found that Diaz was also stronger, but his improvement was not as significant as Su Ping's.

There's still a gap between them. Junior Brother Su is truly a talent to have surpassed the Reincarnation Divine Constitution! You Long thought and concluded.

Wearing the same smile, he said, "Let's go!"

...

A moment later, Su Ping, You Long and Diaz arrived at a high platform.

It was exactly the balcony of observers.

In the balcony—a lot of Ascendants were seated at the quaint tables.

They were accompanied by servants with weaker cultivations; some were Star State warriors, while others were in the Fate State. They seemed to be disciples who had been taken there to learn.

Everyone fixed their eyes upon Su Ping when they arrived, then they looked at Diaz.

In the beginning, Diaz had attracted everybody's attention with his Reincarnation Divine Constitution, yet Su Ping later emerged and surpassed him, making the latter even more alluring.

What kind of special technique did he use to surpass the Reincarnation Divine Constitution?

Whoosh!

A man quickly flew over. He was none other than Ciro, who looked at Su Ping with delight, having shed all his previous solemnity. "How are you? Have you rested well? Here are three Star Soul Pills. Take them. Lord Hai Tuo will prepare a celebration banquet for you after the competition."

He then handed the boxed pills to Su Ping.

Su Ping was surprised, as Ciro hadn't been as friendly before; it was a well known fact that Ascendant State experts would never have to flatter geniuses like him.

Most of the latter would never go past the Ascendant State anyway.

However, circumstances seemed to have changed.

Su Ping thought for a moment, then chose to keep the pills; he would later find out what they were.

"Are you the one who escorted Junior Brother Su?" You Long asked Ciro with a smile.

Ciro quickly cupped his hands and said, "You must be Heavenly Lord You, sir. I am Ciro, a general from Silvy; please forgive me for not greeting you first."

“That’s all right. Silvy should be rewarded for grooming such an astonishing figure, this junior brother of mine. Tell Hai Tuo that I’ll have a drink with him later,” You Long chuckled and said.

Su Ping was slightly surprised, as Ciro seemed to be all pins and needles in front of Senior Brother You Long.

Diaz, however, was shocked.

Heavenly Lord?

He knew that only the very famous Ascendants would be addressed as “Heavenly Lords.”

His ever-smiling senior brother was a horrifying Heavenly Lord? Was it because of their master’s teachings?

His eyes glittered; he became even more excited and hopeful.

Ciro quickly promised You Long that he would deliver the message.

Everybody looked at Ciro with jealous eyes. Then, they looked at Su Ping and Diaz with regret.

“Right, someone came to see you earlier, saying that she’s your friend. She asked me to give you some things that you had requested her to find,” Ciro said quickly.

Su Ping was surprised. “A friend?”

“Yes. Her name is Xingyue Shen’er, from the lineage of an Ascendant State expert,” said Ciro with a smile. He then took out a bunch of boxes and containers.

Su Ping’s eyes glittered. He had asked Xingyue Shen’er to look for those materials so he could develop his Solar Bulwark. *Did she find all of them?*

Holding back his urge to examine the materials immediately, Su Ping placed them in the system storage and planned to check them once he found a moment to be by himself.

“Please relay my gratitude to my friend,” said Su Ping.

Ciro smiled and said, “I will.”

Once they were done, You Long said with a smile, “Since you’re all here, let’s get ready to depart. Our master asked me to personally escort you to the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm; he’s waiting for you there. If the rest of you are interested, feel free to come and watch too. See you later!”

Chapter 914: The SSS Mysterious Realm

A leaf-shaped spaceship emerged from deeper spaces, right above the balcony where the Ascendants were gathered. It had a thin shape, almost resembling a sharp blade; there was a glowing hand pattern underneath the spaceship.

“Let’s go,” You Long said.

All the Ascendants present stood up to say their goodbyes to You Long. Some of them approached him while taking their winning proteges along, all to ask him to take care of them during the trip.

Being a friendly man, You Long accepted the requests with a smile.

Su Ping saw that Linghu Jian was standing next to a white-haired old man, whose beard dangled in front of his chest like a sword.

The old man, while observing Su Ping, suddenly said to Linghu Jian in a low voice, "It wasn't your fault that you lost to him."

Linghu Jian was slightly stunned by his remark. He smiled bitterly and said, "Thank you, master."

"He is truly a human-shaped monster with inexhaustible astral power, easily able to shatter your sword techniques!"

Noticing that Su Ping was looking back at him, the old man smiled at him and then said to his disciple telepathically, "Your sword techniques aren't good enough. You might have been able to chop his astral power apart if you had grasped the third level of the Sea Cutting Sword Technique, no matter how overwhelming it was!"

"Master, can I really grasp the third level with my current cultivation?" Linghu Jian couldn't help but ask.

He remembered that his master was quite satisfied when he grasped the second level, thinking it was a truly rare occurrence for someone of his level to do that.

As for the third level...

He wasn't quite there yet.

"It has nothing to do with your cultivation. A higher level will give you a comprehensive improvement, so that you'll be smarter, and thus be able to understand it with more ease. However, a genius like you still has a chance to grasp the third level with your current cultivation," said the old man telepathically.

Linghu Jian was stunned into silence.

"That young man is the best in this star zone this time."

A lot of people were observing Su Ping in the balcony; many were part of the families backing the top hundred contestants, such as Dragon Emperor and Claesabe. After all, it was a great thing that their descendants would rise to the top hundred.

Given their familial relations, they were given the privilege to visit them.

"I didn't know that you were able to rise to the top hundred with his help. My goodness. It's an accomplishment that even your grandfather failed to achieve. You must thank him properly if there's a chance," said a brawny man next to Claesabe with a smile.

"Father, keep your voice down. You're surrounded by Ascendant State experts," said Claesabe with a guilty-ridden face.

"You are part of the top hundred, and you also have the hope of reaching the Ascendant State. Keep it up, or I'll break your legs. Oh right, you must not touch any women until you reach the Ascendant State!"

“...”

Very soon, as per You Long’s instruction, all the contestants bade farewell to their families and entered the spaceship.

Those related to the contestants who had qualified thanks to Su Ping’s protection were gazing at him; they wore friendly smiles when Su Ping looked back at them.

“Senior brother, I want to say goodbye to my friends,” said Su Ping.

You Long was momentarily stunned, but then said with a smile, “Fine.”

Su Ping immediately flew out of the balcony. He went to the space beyond the Celestial Court, immediately seeing a massive planet at the periphery; it was much more eye-catching than the spacecraft carriers.

Therefore, a lot of media representatives from other galaxies were covering the news about the planet’s presence, wondering who was using it like a warship.

Su Ping soon arrived on Rhea after traveling through deep space.

He didn’t enter the planet; he had sensed Green Lady’s thoughts when he was close to the atmosphere.

“Senior Green Lady, you don’t need to come; the place I’m going to is rather complicated. It’s a top mysterious realm in the universe and a few Celestials will be there; you might get exposed,” said Su Ping via telepathy.

Green Lady said, “It’s fine. There’s nothing to be scared of while I stay inside your store.”

Su Ping was lost for words. He smiled bitterly and said, “Senior, while the master backing me is strong, it isn’t easy for them to deal with the Celestial State experts. My master also dislikes showing up in public.”

The Green Lady remained silent for a while.

According to her perception, the being behind Su Ping was definitely a Deity King (Celestial State expert,) or even a Deity Emperor who could live eternally!

However, since Su Ping had put it like that, that could be the wish of the being protecting him.

Not daring to disobey, she said after a moment of silence, “Okay, take care of yourself.”

She had already detected the Deity King’s aura in that place. She could have been exposed if Su Ping’s store hadn’t concealed her own aura. She preferred keeping a distance to avoid unnecessary trouble.

“Senior, please move the planet back to where it was; I’ll go back when the contest is over. Please take care of the business while I’m away,” said Su Ping in relief.

Green Lady was lost for words. *Why does he still care about his business?*

She could easily loot all the wealth on the planet if Su Ping truly wanted money.

“Take care of yourself,” said Green Lady, severing the communication.

Su Ping smiled and went back.

He quickly returned to the balcony. You Long looked into the distance after he saw that he was back; he seemed to be in deep thought. But then he put on a relaxed smile again and said, "Junior brother, your friend seems to be rather extraordinary."

Su Ping was really alarmed by this. A Heavenly Lord like him had already scanned Rhea?

He must have sensed that something was wrong. After all, an Ascendant was able to easily detect all the areas on the planet except his store, which was as eye-catching as a grain of sesame in the middle of the snow.

Su Ping only smiled, choosing not to say anything.

It wasn't a big deal, even if his store was blocked; the man was his senior brother anyway; the incident would not change a thing.

You Long remained silent, but he respected Su Ping even more. There was a store on the planet that not even he was able to see through. Whoever was inside had to be a horrifying existence, or invincible even among Ascendants.

A moment later—Su Ping and Diaz boarded the spaceship under You Long's lead.

The spaceship seemed to be thin, but it was actually quite spacious and luxurious.

"It will only take half a day for us to reach the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm, so I won't arrange a training room for you. It's been an exhausting contest so far; have some rest first. It's not a good thing to have taut nerves all of the time." You Long smiled at Su Ping and Diaz.

Diaz shook his head and said, "Senior brother, I prefer training."

Su Ping had a lot to digest. He also said, "Senior brother, training is resting; it would be a shame to waste half a day."

"Well, you..."

You Long was stunned. He looked at them, then he shook his head with a smile and said, "Not only you're more talented but also more hardworking than others. How can they possibly beat you? Fine. Diligence is a good thing. Master will kill me if he learns that I didn't let you train."

He led them to a training room and said, "This is the special training room I use all the time. It's possible to adjust the astral power inside; I've lowered it to Star State level-10, which should be good enough for you."

Diaz instantly expressed his gratitude.

So did Su Ping.

"That's all right."

You Long waved his hand, opened the door of the training room and summoned a Star Lord guard. "Give them whatever they need."

The Star Lord nodded respectfully, and then bowed towards Su Ping and Diaz; both were surprised by his attitude. After all, he was a Star Lord!

The training room was quite spacious; it had a strong gravity that could temper the body. It also contained dense astral power and a special attraction force.

It was good enough to prevent one's astral power from leaking out, let alone absorbing astral power. However, if one was adapted to the environment, training here would be very efficient.

After giving the instructions, You Long left Su Ping and Diaz alone in the room.

They were the only two in the enclosed room.

Su Ping had planned to check the materials for the Solar Bulwark that Xingyue Shen'er sought for him, but since he wasn't alone, he had to absorb the broken pieces first.

"This training room seems to be special."

Su Ping felt that it wasn't as easy to absorb astral power as before while he cultivated. He closed his eyes and fully activated the Chaos Star Chart. The astral power inside his cells began to spin like vortices, unleashing a strong attraction force.

The weird pulling force was instantly weakened; astral power flooded into his body and filled his cells, improving and strengthening him.

Su Ping had also sensed a refreshing aura in the room as he cultivated, which cleared his mind and reminded him of a lot of things which had escaped his attention; he found solutions to a lot of problems too.

Su Ping could not help but feel amazed by Senior Brother You's training room.

"Your cultivation technique is really similar to my divine constitution!"

Diaz's voice was suddenly heard close by.

Su Ping opened his eyes, only to find that Diaz was staring at him with a gloomy expression; there was also a vague tinge of disbelief and anger in his eyes.

Su Ping saw the black holes which had appeared around the guy's body, attracting the astral power nearby. They were similar to the black holes inside his body, sucking astral power, making his cultivation progress at an equally fast pace.

"Junior brother, your divine constitution is really good," said Su Ping with a smile.

Diaz raised his eyebrows. "You're calling me junior brother?"

"Are you not, junior brother?" said Su Ping with a smile.

Diaz's lips trembled. Their master had recruited them at the same time and he didn't mention who was senior, but Su Ping had won the championship and was evidently the stronger one. Seeing it from that angle, he could really be the junior brother.

"I will catch up and defeat you."

Diaz snorted and said, "My divine constitution has just been manifested; there are infinite treasures in it that haven't been developed yet. Let's compete again after it's fully developed!"

"Fine by me, Junior Brother Ten Handles," said Su Ping with a smile.

"You!"

Diaz was furious. Junior Brother Ten Handles? The guy was clearly referring to his ten-handle declaration.

He was close to blushing as he thought of the outcome, almost going on a rampage when Su Ping stared at him with teasing eyes.

However, he would be a real loser if he threw a tantrum; he gritted his teeth and kept quiet.

Su Ping smiled once again, but then stopped making fun of him. He closed his eyes and focused on cultivating.

The gathered fragments of laws were slowly being released. He devoted himself to understanding them.

The laws were deeply analyzed, one after the other. They were inching ever closer to become complete paths.

Time flew by, and half a day passed in the blink of an eye. Su Ping felt that he had just started meditating when he was woken up.

Su Ping shook his head, feeling that he needed more time; he was wondering why the contest had been conducted in such a rush this time.

The system's voice suddenly echoed. "The sky is changing."

Su Ping was really shocked by that remark; it had been a long time since the system had spoken. Surprised and infuriated, he asked, "Can you give me a heads-up before you decide to talk? What do you mean by the sky changing? The weather?"

The system, however, didn't sound as relaxed as before. He said solemnly, "I mean the sky of your universe, which is countless light years above your head!"

Su Ping was stunned. It was rare to see the system act that seriously. He couldn't help but look up, only to see the dome of the training room. He wanted to fly out and observe the space; however, he didn't do it in the end, as there was no distinction between up and down, even if he were to go out there.

There were countless stars and cold space in every direction. Was there even a sky?

"Do you know why?" asked Su Ping.

The system stopped talking.

Su Ping tried asking several times, only to be received with nothing but silence. He was really angered by the system, for bringing up the subject in such a vague way!

He decided not to think about it further; there would be stronger experts to worry about that problem anyway. It would be better for him to focus on winning the championship prize.

Once the competition was over, he would be able to improve his level.

He had held back and avoided breaking through for a long time; there was no telling what level he would reach.

I need to accompany Joanna to the Archean Divinity too. I've taken too long in fulfilling that promise, Su Ping thought. He felt sorry for Joanna, and could only shake his head. Then, the training room was opened, and Senior Brother You Long was standing by the door.

"Come on out. We've arrived."

Chapter 915: The Chaos Grass

Su Ping and Diaz left the training room with You Long and headed to the spaceship's hall where the other geniuses were gathered by the Star Lords.

Everybody was currently looking up at the dome.

The metal dome had become transparent, making it possible for them to see the outer space. There was a golden and glittering nebula laying in front of the sea of stars.

That nebula looked as brilliant as a galaxy; it also looked like a hazy golden eye from a distance.

The golden nebula grew in size as they approached. They saw countless golden stones that flowed like a river when they arrived.

There was a deep crack in the middle of those golden stones, which looked like a vertical pupil inside an eye.

The crack was multiple light years long; it was no longer a crack but a collapsed black hole when the spaceship moved closer; it seemed as if it would swallow everybody.

There were hidden beings defending the edges of the crack.

The golden stones were no longer visible when the spaceship got closer. The only thing visible was the boundless darkness; it made them feel as if they were falling into an abyss.

The spaceship suddenly stopped, and You Long flew out of the spaceship. A majestic shadow thousands of meters long appeared before him and looked down at the spaceship. There was a slight change of expression when it saw You Long, then said, "I didn't know it was you, Heavenly Lord You."

"By my master's order, I'm here to escort the contestants of the Golden Star Zone to the battlefield." You Long chuckled.

The shadow glanced at the spaceship and nodded. Then it disappeared.

You Long flashed back into the spaceship, which continued moving forward.

Many contestants looked at You Long with awe and admiration, as he was obviously much more renowned as a Heavenly Lord than the other Ascendants present.

Seeing that, Diaz clenched his fists passionately. *I'll become a Heavenly Lord too and even surpass him someday!*

However, his passion was chilled for a moment when he saw Su Ping. He was angry, wondering why he had lost to Su Ping, even though he had one of the best constitutions in the universe!

Even if the latter also had one of the nine divine constitutions, they would only be equal in strength.

I will surpass you soon, kid! Diaz secretly gritted his teeth.

He dreams of me acknowledging him as a senior brother?

No way.

Not ever!

“Heavenly Lord...”

In the crowd—many geniuses looked at You Long in a strange way.

Su Jin'er was one of them.

If I get that thing from this trip, I'll have a chance to rise to the Celestial State. Even Heavenly Lords will be nothing to me, Su Jin'er thought and then looked at Su Ping.

He's much stronger than before. I wonder what face he'll make when he sees my original self, she put on a smile and looked forward to that scene.

...

The spaceship moved at a high speed for a long time as it traversed the darkness, then light radiated from its depths as if it were in the origin of darkness itself.

The light then became increasingly brighter, and an object was later revealed.

It turned out to be a planet that looked like a lucky clover.

It had five leaves. The planet grew as the spaceship drew near; every leaf was as big as multiple suns.

Very soon, the plant was too big to be seen in full. The spaceship pressed forward, and was later docked on one of those leaves, according to a specific trajectory.

It was more of a green land than a leaf.

Other spaceships had also been docked in the same place.

Many temples had been established on the continent-sized leaf. It had a lot of residents, who were actually battle pet warriors that had been given permission to stay.

“Is that the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm? Oh my god. It looks like grass from a distance!”

“It's just a coincidence, like the way clouds may look like animals. How could there be such a huge patch of grass in the world?”

“Are those guys contestants from other star zones?”

Everybody was whispering on the spaceship. Some were shocked by the look of the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm, while others were looking at the contestants from the other star zones in earnest, since they wanted to make it to the top hundred or even top ten in the finals!

Both groups would receive unimaginable prizes.

It would also be a great achievement to make it to the top hundred in the finals. Countless organizations would extend invitations to join; they could also choose to learn under any Ascendant State expert.

After all, no Ascendant would mind having more genius disciples or increasing their influence.

The system's voice suddenly echoed. "It's the Chaos Grass."

Su Ping was surprised by this; he had his mind elsewhere, as he was observing other contestants.

Just like the others, he thought that it was just a coincidence. Many planets in the universe had special shapes and patterns when seen from a distance, but it was merely coincidental.

"What did you say?" Su Ping could not help but ask.

"It's the Chaos Grass." The system's voice was rather strange and emotionless, yet it gave Su Ping a weird feeling.

"Born in chaos with the essence of the universe, it bred the original gods; unfortunately, it has lost too much of its divinity. Countless souls of the gods are still attached to it... They must be hoping that the grass will revive them," said the system.

Su Ping narrowed his eyes, as the system had given him too much information.

Is the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm truly grass?

Moreover, was it really the place where the original gods were born?

"It's a marvelous planet born in chaos. How could it lose its divinity? Also, why didn't the souls of the gods go back to the Archean Divinity?" Su Ping had to ask.

After a moment of silence, the system said, "They wanted to, but they couldn't."

"Did they not know the way home?"

"Their home was no more."

"...Why?"

"No reason."

The system fell silent again.

Su Ping, however, was confused. *Isn't the Archean Divinity home to the gods?*

Did the Archean Divinity cease to be? But, it's one of the cultivation sites in the system.

Since top planes such as the Chaotic Realm of the Undead were available, the Archean Divinity couldn't simply be just a name. He had yet to go there, but he knew that all the cultivation sites he had explored were real.

He felt puzzled, but he let the matter rest since the system didn't offer an explanation. After all, the system would tell him everything when the time was right. He had a feeling that the system had a lot of secrets; it would give him real missions sooner or later. He wanted to be strong enough before that came to pass!

"Let's go and greet the opponents you're about to confront." You Long chuckled.

Everybody rubbed their fists excitedly upon hearing that.

Very soon, they exited the spaceship. You Long led them to a relatively close place where a crowd was gathered. He smiled and said, "You must be from the Autumn Deer Star Zone. I heard that an extraordinary genius has emerged in your place. Who is he? Let me have a look."

Su Ping looked at You Long in surprise. The always friendly and approachable man was acting quite arrogantly at the moment.

"Huh?"

Prompted by the provocation, the contestants of the Autumn Deer Star Zone looked ahead in askance at their leaders. None of them dared to express anger towards an Ascendant State expert.

Their leaders, who were also Ascendants, changed their expressions. One of the middle-aged men said solemnly, "I didn't know that Heavenly Lord You would personally escort you over. You must be real treasures!"

"Of course. The geniuses of our star zone will win the finals!" You Long chuckled, revealing his true personality.

Both Su Ping and Diaz showed stunned faces as they looked at each other. Was their senior brother deliberately making enemies for them? He seemed to be more arrogant than they had originally thought.

It was true that the top Ascendant State experts were wild and unrestrained.

"Hehe." The two Ascendant State experts from the Autumn Deer Star Zone sneered but didn't take the bait, as it wouldn't be a smart decision to argue with a Heavenly Lord.

They didn't say a thing, but the contestants behind them looked at Su Ping and the others in surprise. It seemed that extraordinary geniuses had been born in the Golden Star Zone; he wouldn't have acted as arrogantly if otherwise.

Su Ping was lost for words. He didn't want to be the center of attention, which would bring unnecessary trouble to him.

Diaz was also surprised, but in no way was he infuriated. Instead, he put on a smile and raised his head, with "I'm the most awesome one" written all over his face.

Right then the voice of an old man was heard coming from a distance. "Old You, how have you been?"

You Long narrowed his eyes and looked back, only to see a red-haired old man and a group of geniuses in front of a blood-colored spaceship. The old man had a red mole on his forehead and a wine gourd on his back. His eyes were half closed, but they emitted sharpness whenever they opened.

"It's you, Heavenly Lord Jiu Shen. Why have you been sent here? Have any precious geniuses emerged in your area?" asked You Long with a smile.

The old man said indifferently, "You've been sent here too, right? I heard that someone with the Reincarnation Divine Constitution had emerged, but was eventually suppressed. I'd like to find out who did that!"

Diaz lowered his head in shame as he heard that. He looked at Su Ping while feeling regretful and angry, obviously blaming the latter for preventing him from showing off.

The others could not help but look at Su Ping too. Obviously, the old man was referring to him.

They felt troubled. They were truly jealous, not expecting that Su Ping and Diaz's names would have already been known in other star zones, and were listed as among their primary enemies.

As for them, it seemed that they were only mediocre.

"Is it him? Well, there's indeed an ancient and strange aura in his body." The old man narrowed his eyes and instantly noticed Su Ping.

Su Ping felt goosebumps beyond his control as he was being observed by a Heavenly Lord, just like a predator that had locked onto him.

Prey that didn't react when a predator locked onto them deserved to be killed.

Su Ping was lost for words. It seemed that he had already grown famous, and the other contestants were already regarding him as one of the primary opponents.

"Was he the one who suppressed the Reincarnation Divine Constitution?"

Several contestants were observing Su Ping with solemn and hopeful eyes in the Autumn Deer Star Zone group.

Many geniuses from the old man's star zone were observing Su Ping too, trying to figure out how he had defeated a person with a divine constitution.

"Indeed. Those two have just been admitted by my master as disciples; they're my junior brothers. They will definitely be among the top three. I would go home right now if I were you," said You Long with a smile.

Su Ping began to sweat hard; he felt the urge to pull his senior brother's clothes, wondering if the man was actually working for someone else.

Diaz, however, didn't consider it a big deal; he was even excited by the prospect. He had considered himself the de facto champion before he met Su Ping. But he would have to settle for second place at the moment.

However, he hadn't fought directly against Su Ping yet; he still had a chance to defeat the guy.

Diaz glanced at Su Ping when the thought crossed his mind.

Su Ping had just happened to be looking at him too, so he noticed the latter's weird expression, and couldn't help but roll his eyes. *Damn it. Our competition is already over; why are you still looking at me? Are both of you working for someone else?*

More spaceships arrived at that moment.

All the contestants of the twelve star zones—altogether 1,200 people—were finally gathered.

It was then when a Celestial expert arrived, exuding a suffocating pressure. Even those in the Ascendant State became solemn.

The teasing You Long also wore a grave expression.

The Celestial was a silver haired man with a golden robe. He was as handsome as a god; there seemed to be a sun burning eternally right behind him.

"All the star zones are here. Let's begin the first trial."

The lofty expert didn't even give an opening speech. He simply announced the beginning of the contest.

Su Ping then recalled the announcement of the Universe Geniuses' Contest that had echoed throughout the universe earlier on, as he heard the man's voice.

It was exactly the same man who had made the announcement, Mu Shen.

A golden vortex suddenly appeared underneath his feet after he said that, and his voice echoed again. "A hundred people will qualify in the first contest. You will try to survive for five days in this forsaken area and collect enough Divine Cores. You will then be ranked according to the number of Divine Cores you manage to gather at the end of the five-day period."

Everybody's faces changed due to the surprise. The trial seemed to be really dangerous. *Do we have to fight to stay alive until the end?*

Also, ninety percent of the contestants would be eliminated; only the top hundred would be selected. It would be like a screening process.

Chapter 916: Walking Zombies

"Prepare the countdown!"

An Ascendant State expert flew close with an hourglass as massive as a hill after Mu Shen's announcement, then initiated the countdown.

"Let's get inside!"

The leaders of the star zones instructed the contestants near them.

They had heard a thing or two about the trial. Apart from survival, the contestants had to loot enough Divine Cores or they would be eliminated.

A young man in the crowd quickly asked You Long, "Senior, should we team up?"

He was only as strong as Dragon Emperor; he immediately thought of an alliance since he had witnessed the screening matches in the Golden Star Zone.

Being the case, it would be much easier for them to survive and hunt for the Divine Cores.

All the others had glittering eyes too as they looked at Su Ping and Diaz.

Those two would be the greatest supporters if they were to team up.

Diaz sneered upon hearing what the young man said; he despised alliances the most. He would always remember how tigers traveled alone and only ants moved in groups. He preferred not to mingle with ants.

You Long shook his head and said, "It'll be up to luck whether or not you can team up. You'll be separated in the forsaken area, which is immense; you might not see each other at all in the next five days. It is also important to know that your enemies are not the other contestants, but the actual weirdness of the place..."

The weirdness of the place?

Everybody was surprised, feeling that their blood was freezing. What thing could possibly make a Heavenly Lord feel weird?

"Let's get inside. Try your best to hunt for the Divine Cores and survive," said You Long.

Everybody felt uneasy when he talked like that; however, they didn't have any other options at this moment.

"Junior brothers, zombies walk the remains and the Divine Cores are found right within their bodies. Attack the marks on their foreheads; it's the only way to destroy them," said You Long to Su Ping and Diaz telepathically.

Both of them were stunned for a moment. Then, they nodded.

"Let's have another competition!"

Diaz turned back and looked at Su Ping aggressively.

He never fought Su Ping when they climbed the Heavenly Path Mountain, and he never thought he was any weaker. He really wondered how he could possibly fall short when compared to that guy.

Realizing that the former wasn't convinced of his inferior power, Su Ping said with a smile, "A bet of ten again?"

"Nice try!"

Diaz was triggered by Su Ping's taunting, touching his scar. He had been fooled by Su Ping earlier, receiving a slap right smack in the face.

He wouldn't be fooled again.

“Humph. Let’s find out who hunts more.” Diaz snorted.

Su Ping merely offered a smile, not saying anything else.

You Long didn’t stop them from arguing, as competitiveness was always a good thing; it could help them in reaching the Ascendant State sooner.

The contestants from the various star zones entered the vortex shortly after.

They looked like a swarm of locusts from a distance.

Su Ping and Diaz entered the vortex at the same time.

The former detected a stream of dense divine power coming at his face. The darkness was gone moments later, and he found himself in a wasteland.

The land was blackened, with scars and dents everywhere, as if they were traces of giant beasts having walked in the area.

Su Ping looked around and saw a ragged village in the distance. He instantly flew there.

A vague trace of divine power is flowing in the air. This truly is a domain of the gods.

Unfortunately, the divine power is thin, and mixed with the decaying aura of death. Why did they fight?

Su Ping took to the skies and observed the environment from above; he didn’t see a single living creature.

Soon, he saw a ruined village. Most buildings had been razed to the ground; whatever was left was crumbling.

My perception range has been minimized. The gravity here is different too... It feels familiar. After checking his own status, Su Ping looked beyond the village and was able to vaguely see a city.

It was good that his eyes weren’t affected, as he could see objects far in the distance.

His eyesight could be significantly boosted when he focused the Golden Crow’s divine power on his eyes, allowing him to see a grain of dust ten kilometers away.

“Huh?”

Suddenly, Su Ping had a premonition and looked in a certain direction.

He saw a man standing next to a dry well in the ruined village.

The man wore ragged clothes; he was standing with his back against him, as if he were meditating.

However, Su Ping noticed that the man’s exposed skin was purple and wrinkled. That was anything but normal.

Suddenly, the man seemed to have noticed something, so he turned around.

Su Ping narrowed his eyes the moment their eyes met.

The man's face was ulcerated; there was a horrifying opening on his chest too, which went through his ribs. All his internal organs had withered.

Any person would have died after suffering such heavy wounds.

All of a sudden, Su Ping recalled the walking zombies that Senior Brother You Long had mentioned.

Whoosh!

While Su Ping was feeling shocked, the man flashed and lunged at him, roaring. His movements were barbaric and primitive.

Su Ping's expression changed a bit. He did not sense any air of a living creature from the man, so he instantly punched.

Bang!

His golden fist punched the zombie's broken chest, which felt like a rock; the zombie didn't even bother to dodge.

The aura of the fist compressed the air behind his back, until it became fluid.

However, the ferocious punch didn't cause any damage to the zombie, which continued lunging and had quickly grabbed Su Ping's arm. Its fingernails were as sharp as blades.

Su Ping wasn't taking any chances; he wouldn't allow himself to be hurt by the zombie. The Golden Crow's flames quickly emerged on his arm, setting the zombie ablaze; such flames would continue burning until the end of time.

To Su Ping's astonishment, the zombie was still attacking despite the flames all over his body, seemingly unable to feel any pain.

Remembering what You Long said, Su Ping looked at the zombie's forehead; he did find something glittering under the divine flames.

It was a divine seal!

Su Ping quickly gathered laws on his fingertip and poked.

The zombie was fast, but unskilled; Su Ping dodged its attack and penetrated the divine seal.

There was a crack, and then the divine seal glowed and exploded.

The zombie stopped moving and slowly fell down.

It fell to the ground in the village. Divine flames spread from his body, burning the rocks into magma.

Su Ping waved his hand and absorbed the flames, then he looked at the blackened body with a mix of suspicion and shock.

The corpse was still able to move. Was it the weirdness that You Long had mentioned?

Suddenly, Su Ping noticed divine power leaking from the dead man's chest. It was an intriguing situation, so he turned the corpse over and cut its chest open, revealing a brilliant golden item. That was the Divine Core, as well as the body's heart.

So to speak, I have to fight these creatures if I want to rise to the top hundred?

Su Ping's eyes became grave.

It wasn't hard for him to finish off the zombie, but it was still bizarre. The creature was quiet, inconspicuous and relentless. It would be truly difficult to get away from a lot of them.

Su Ping studied the Divine Core for a moment and tried to cut it open, but it was really hard; it would break if he continued.

He then stored the core and continued examining the body. He thought of something, and then collected some of its blood, teeth and fingernails. He planned to find a living creature to test if those things were poisoned.

After all that, Su Ping left the village and flew ahead.

He had been vigilant all the way. Those zombies could hardly be detected remotely, and he had to keep an eye on them, or it would be a nasty surprise if they flashed to where he was all of a sudden.

Su Ping saw a giant beast shortly after; it was slowly moving outside the village.

The beast was more than thirty meters tall, and was covered in wounds and bite marks. The blood on its skin had already dried up.

Suddenly, the beast stopped and flashed away, tearing the void open and vanishing.

Su Ping was alarmed by this, so he quickly took precautions.

However, the beast didn't show up in the next few seconds; an explosion burst out in the distance.

Su Ping looked at the source of the sound and saw a rising mist. He then realized that the beast had surely detected a contestant in that location.

Just like the first zombie, the beast was also dead.

Su Ping looked at the place and considered for a moment, choosing not to go there immediately.

It was unnecessary to deal with other geniuses since the trial was about survival and hunting; he didn't want to attack.

Indeed, it was possible to rise to the top hundred by knocking out the other geniuses, but that was a rather cruel method; Su Ping didn't want to give such a nightmarish experience to the hardworking contestants.

Su Ping turned around and moved in a different direction.

He soon hovered above another city.

The city wall was already broken. It seemed that some enormous thing had broken in and caused a huge opening.

Su Ping looked around and saw a lot of creatures standing on the streets, completely unmoving, as if they were scarecrows. It made for a rather creepy sight.

Su Ping was alarmed by what he saw; he slowed down and quietly approached them.

That was clearly a dangerous city, but it was also perfect for hunting Divine Cores.

Su Ping moved closer to the city wall; there he saw a couple of men in ragged armor. Most of them had been fatally wounded. Some had lost half of their heads, some had their spines exposed while others had large holes on their abdomens.

They would have been as dead as could be in the outside world.

Su Ping lay on the ground, then observed for a few minutes before he threw a stone to the other side of the wall.

Bang.

The stone cracked on the wall, making a huge noise.

The zombies seemed to have heard it since they shook. Still, they soon became immobile again when the noise faded away.

It seems that I can't gather them with noises. Makes sense. They would be as busy as bees whenever it rains if they did rely on noises...

Su Ping shook his head in amusement as he pictured it in his head.

All the zombies in the city will probably come at me when the battle begins if I simply charge at them. All of them are capable of flashing, which would be really scary.

Su Ping's eyes glittered. It wasn't difficult to finish off a zombie, but a swarm of them would be a major problem to him.

All of a sudden, he remembered the Little Skeleton.

Whoosh!

The Little Skeleton was instantly summoned.

It raised its head and looked at Su Ping in confusion.

Su Ping instantly sent it a thought, asking it to attract the weird zombies.

All of them were lifeless bodies, and the Little Skeleton was even a "dry corpse," all things considered; he wondered if the zombies would notice it.

Once realizing Su Ping's intent, the Little Skeleton turned its head—which almost fell off of its neck—as it looked at the zombies on the city wall.

The next moment, it flashed thousands of kilometers away, repeating the action a second time.

Soon, when it was only ten kilometers away, the Little Skeleton slowly released its aura near the city wall.

The zombies on the city wall noticed it just then, disappearing at the same time. They reappeared next to the Little Skeleton and bit it.

The Little Skeleton was clearly shocked too, and its bones were clattering. It flashed away and ran back to Su Ping.

The zombies flashed after the Little Skeleton, also reappearing every time the Little Skeleton did.

Su Ping—who had been hiding in a deeper space—unleashed his most powerful attack when they moved away. He planned to finish them off as quickly as possible, so that it wouldn't attract more zombies.

Bang!

Su Ping simply gathered a sword aura with laws and pierced a zombie's forehead.

However, the zombie seemed to have predicted the danger. It looked at Su Ping with a pair of completely white eyes. It then shattered the sword aura and waved its claws dauntingly.

The void was torn open, and its arm reached Su Ping in the blink of an eye, shattering the tertiary space.

Su Ping was really shocked, as the zombie was definitely terrifying. It had as much divine power as a Star Lord did!

Su Ping felt lucky that the zombie wasn't harnessing the power of faith, or he wouldn't be able to defend himself at all; he would have otherwise needed to use the purple bracelet given by his master so he could survive.

Those things are wild and brainless; they don't use any secret techniques. They're gods in the Star Lord State, ten times stronger than Star Lords who cultivate astral power!

Su Ping was determined to fight; he wondered if he was strong enough to suppress such a Star Lord zombie.

Whoosh!

The Inferno Dragon appeared, and soon merged with Su Ping. Then, the latter asked the Little Skeleton to keep the other zombies entertained while he simply charged at the one with Star Lord level.

Chapter 917: Overlapping of the Universe

Su Ping felt a mountainous force pushing towards him when they collided; the zombie fell on top of him like a small world.

Su Ping's arm felt heavy. He could not help but tear the void and retreat to the fourth space.

However, the zombie followed him and approached him from an even deeper space at an astonishing speed.

Su Ping was shocked; he instantly unleashed his full strength.

He gathered a hundred laws into a sword and activated the Solar Bulwark. The Astral Painting inside his body was also used; he then attacked the zombie's forehead.

The zombie seemed to have seen that move coming, so it raised its head to block it.

Su Ping was really surprised, since the previous zombies were incapable of defending.

It seemed that the current zombie was indeed extraordinary, since it had an instinct to protect its fatal weakness.

The sword cut deeply into the zombie's arm, breaking its armor and then lodging itself in its bones.

The sword vanished; it was then reconstituted in Su Ping's hand, before he used it to attempt another stab at the zombie's forehead.

The zombie blocked the attacks consecutively, while more cracks appeared on its arm. It roared furiously and charged at Su Ping when he paused, seemingly trying to tackle him.

Su Ping punched; both of them were forced back, but Su Ping retreated further. His hands were numb, but his eyes were glittering. *Is that the strength of a Star Lord without using the power of faith?*

He had never fought against God Warriors—who were equal to Star Lords—in the Demigod Burial.

After all, he had been too weak back then; it would have been pointless to fight a Star Lord.

Those God Warriors had also learned sophisticated secret techniques from Joanna. They could beat him easily, even without the power of faith.

I haven't merged with the Little Skeleton. I can suppress the zombie easily if I do!

Su Ping was quite satisfied with the result of the test.

It was beyond unbelievable that he was as physically strong as a Star Lord when he was only in the Fate State!

"Let's get it over with."

Su Ping would never dare to delay in such a situation. He wasn't intending on hiding anymore, even though a Celestial State was surely watching. After all, the man was already his master; there was a chance that the former would give him more benefits if he showed strength.

Besides, he would train in seclusion after the competition ended. Nobody had been able to do anything about him.

Phew!

A torrent of black air was spread out of Su Ping's body. His pupils became dark, and his skin emitted black air too. With him at the end, the dark deep space seemed to be turning dirtier. It was exactly the Sorcerer's Divine Constitution he had activated during his visit to the Golden Crows!

The zombie was swallowed when the field of the divine constitution was unfolded.

The darkness was gone a few seconds later. Su Ping stood where he was, and the mark on the zombie's forehead was broken.

Once things were taken care of, Su Ping instantly returned to the outside world; then he saw the Little Skeleton fighting against a few zombies. He had to admit that the Skeleton Kings' bloodline ability was awesome; the Little Skeleton had recovered over and over, even though its bones were cracked.

Su Ping didn't hesitate to offer help.

The battle soon came to an end in the fourth space, and Su Ping reaped five Divine Cores.

Su Ping and the Little Skeleton returned to the outside world and saw that there was no one on the city wall. He prudently drew closer and saw dozens of zombies in the dilapidated buildings behind the wall.

He then immediately asked the Little Skeleton to lure them.

The Little Skeleton had always been responsible for reconnaissance in the cultivation sites.

Therefore, it was quite good at disguising, detecting and luring. Making use of its abilities, it soon figured out the sensitivity of those zombies.

Right at the edge of their perception range, the Little Skeleton released its aura and attracted six zombies; Su Ping would quickly finish them off in the fourth space after they left the crowd.

Su Ping looted more and more Divine Cores as he cleared the city.

...

Inside the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm—

In the middle of a large area with buildings, on one of the grass leaves.

A couple of people were seated and observing. They were hazy, enshrouded in a sort of light; it seemed that they had hidden themselves in the river of time. They were right there, and yet they couldn't be detected at all, unless they wanted to be detected.

At the center of the temple was a miniaturized illusion of a certain world.

"I didn't expect that you would purge this mysterious realm. Have you taken care of the two Celestial State zombies lurking the place?" asked a tall and brawny man indifferently.

Up above, Mu Shen—who wore a white robe and seemed like the gentle and approachable sort—said, "They're dead anyway, and only their battle instincts remain. They were indeed smart and strong when they were alive, but they have already died."

"You didn't summon us here just to check up on those kids, right? I heard that peace in the universe is being lost again, that there's something about to come out. Is that true?" asked an old man in a low voice.

Mu Shen nodded and said, "You know that the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm is the closest to the core of the universe. I heard a rumbling noise when I was training in seclusion not long ago."

"A rumbling noise?"

“Exactly.” Mu Shen narrowed his eyes and said solemnly, “It’s the noise of a heartbeat. It came from the depths of the universe. My rough speculation is that it came from the ninth space; the heart penetrated many spaces and contained the rhythm of paths. I suspect that it may have been what’s recorded in the ancient classics.”

“Do you mean... the Heavenly Path?”

“I heard that there’s another level above us, the Heavenly Path State!”

“It’s indeed in the records; there were Heavenly Path State experts In the primordial times, who mastered the laws and everything else in the universe. They were like supercomputers that managed all the issues in the universe, including advancement, reproduction, birth, death, and so on.”

All Celestial State cultivators narrowed their eyes; they had lived too long, so they were cognizant of many secrets.

The entire universe would be shocked if word was spread out.

The Celestial State was the highest level in most people’s eyes.

Otherwise, they wouldn’t have been called “Celestial.”

“Have you summoned us here because you want us to track the noise down in the ninth space together?” asked Shen Huang, who was Su Ping’s master.

He was courteous and elegant in a golden robe, as if ensconced in a throne.

Mu Shen shook his head and said, “I’ve asked one of my reincarnations to look into it. I’ve called you over because of another matter; Elder Gu asked me to inform you.”

“Elder Gu?”

Everybody seemed grave when they heard that; such a name was a real taboo in the Federation.

“He said that the deeper spaces in the universe were starting to merge. Judging from the trend, all the deeper spaces will soon combine. We won’t be able to tear the void open by then, and all the objects located in deeper spaces will be squeezed out too!”

Mu Shen added solemnly, “You must know about the many items left from the primordial times that are hidden in deeper spaces, and how dangerous they are!”

“Is the merging real?” asked someone in shock.

He could not help but continue, “I thought it was my imagination. I visited a place in the ninth space earlier, and found that it had connected to the eighth space; I thought it was a special case. If all the spaces are combined, won’t all the primordial relics and beasts appear in the Federation?”

Everybody’s expressions changed.

They were the strongest beings in the Federation, entities who were more respected than actual emperors, but all of them felt chills at the possibility of the universe merging.

They had explored too many places in the deeper spaces; they knew how many horrifying things were hidden in the universe.

“Has Elder Gu inferred how long it’ll take until the spaces are combined?” asked one of them.

After a moment of silence, Mu Shen said, “Ten thousand years at most!”

Everybody in the temple was silent.

Ten thousand years was a long time for ordinary people; for them, it was just the length of a training session.

“No wonder the center of the Federation has been pooling in resources and developing technologies; they must be making preparations for this.”

“If the spaces indeed merge, our territory will be seriously destroyed; humankind might be in danger too. Has Elder Gu summoned us here because he has a solution?”

Mu Shen said, “No, but he has a way of slowing it down. He has made twelve Sky Fixation Divine Sticks. We need to send them to twelve places in the ninth space, which aid in extending the merger of the universe to a hundred thousand years, giving us more time to think.”

“Sky Fixation Divine Sticks?” asked someone in astonishment, “They must be ultimate treasures if they are able to slow down such a grand merging, right?”

“Why? Are you interested in those treasures too? You can’t steal them,” said a female Celestial and sneered.

“Junior sister, it’s been a million years since that incident. Why are you still holding grudges? I’m a Celestial now; I don’t need to steal anything,” said the man helplessly.

The woman was still sneering. “I know fully well what you’ve been doing these days. And mind you, we are not related, at all. We did learn from the same master, but we walk on different paths. Don’t call me junior sister.”

The other Celestials glanced at them; only them shared the same master. However, their master had died a long time before, and they had advanced to the Celestial State with the combination of loot from relics and their own hard work. After all, reaching the Celestial State had a lot to do with relying on one’s effort!

“Each of you will take care of one of the Sky Fixation Divine Sticks. Do not lose them; they are of critical importance to our universe!” said Mu Shen indifferently.

“That’s true,” an old man nodded and remarked, “Elder Gu is truly awesome. We wouldn’t be able to prepare anything if we only have ten thousand years. A hundred thousand years is still a short span of time, but we should be able to groom many Ascendant State students to deal with the catastrophe.”

“No wonder you’ve summoned us to this contest. Do you want us to recruit more disciples?”

Mu Shen nodded and said, "Exactly. Talents with Ascendant potential emerge in every Universe Geniuses' Contest; they can easily reach the Ascendant State with proper training. We will need to train more of them in the future. It would be even better if one or two of them reach the Celestial State."

"One or two Celestials, in a hundred thousand years... Well, it's challenging, but not entirely impossible."

"It's been almost eighty thousand years since Xue Ying reached the Celestial State, right? As far as I know, a Celestial emerges every hundred thousand to three hundred thousand years." A seemingly young man chuckled, but everybody knew he had been a Celestial for a long time.

He was an intimidating being, even among Celestials.

"Huh?"

Suddenly, the brawny middle-aged man raised his eyebrows and looked at the miniaturized illusion of the world at the center, where a battle was in progress.

He asked in surprise, "What's the constitution used by that kid? It doesn't seem to be one of the divine kind, but it's still very powerful."

Everybody looked at the battle too, and were also shocked by what they saw.

Shen Huang was stunned for a moment, then put on a big smile. "Just let it be, everybody. He's my new disciple. He seems to have hidden himself really well."

He was also stunned by this.

He had originally thought that the Golden Crow Divine Constitution used by Su Ping was his main constitution.

He didn't know that Su Ping had another constitution, which was as good as the Golden Crow Divine Constitution!

Dual constitutions?

It wasn't unprecedented; there had been triple and even quadruple constitutions, which had been activated by hybrid bloodlines or artificial methods.

However, single constitutions were always stronger.

Multiple constitutions weren't strong because of their number. Rather, they would weaken each other, making it hard for an expert to reach the top.

Shen Huang was delighted because it was obvious that Su Ping didn't have dual constitutions. This meant that one of his constitutions was not an actual constitution, but his own physical build!

It was just like the orcs who had the build of beasts as well as constitutions that were activated by their genes; those were two different concepts.

That kid actually has the blood of Golden Crows, Shen Huang thought in delight. The Golden Crows had gone extinct since primordial times. They fed on dragons and would eventually attain Star Lord strength

when they reached adulthood; they could easily reach the Ascendant State, and might even advance to the Celestial State if they were talented. Their cultivation was far easier than that of humans.

Chapter 918: Eyes

On the battlefield.

A man and a skeleton were quietly approaching a dilapidated city; the skeleton would look around every now and then to examine the environment.

Those zombies aren't equally strong when compared. The ones in armor seem to be city guards from the past, who are as strong as Star Lords; the other zombies are mostly in the Star State. I haven't seen many of them in the Fate State; they must have already been corrupted by that weird power.

Su Ping had gained a lot of experience after hunting more than thirty zombies.

He soon reached the city and asked the Little Skeleton to explore the area.

The city was desolate, with collapsed walls and buildings everywhere. Su Ping noticed a lot of zombies inside the houses, which were the most dangerous, as they could hardly be detected when they were as lifeless as rocks.

Blood!

Su Ping had already figured out a way to hunt them. The zombies were indeed dangerous, but they were even dumber than beasts and easy to hunt.

To allure the prey into a trap was the most primitive and effective way to hunt.

Su Ping smeared his blood on the inferior skeletons that the Little Skeleton had summoned; he would then let the inferior skeletons wobble forward. The zombies in the buildings would instantly flash over and shatter the inferior skeletons.

However, more inferior skeletons emerged close by, due to the aura that Su Ping deliberately released.

The zombies flashed over again and executed them.

More and more inferior skeletons crawled out and lured the zombies from further and further away into action. Once there were no more zombies around, Su Ping showed up and killed them in the deeper spaces.

Su Ping continued to collect more and more Divine Cores as the hunting proceeded.

The area was gradually cleared.

A lot of zombies in the sector outlined with Su Ping as the center had been destroyed.

“Huh?”

Su Ping suddenly had a premonition when he entered the city. He saw a zombie on the top of a dilapidated building.

The zombie wore a broken armor, seemingly having stood there for millions of years.

The creature seemed to be terrifyingly dangerous. Su Ping had goosebumps all over his body; he could not help but narrow his eyes and retreat in haste.

That zombie was absolutely daunting. It could have Ascendant level power.

It could easily shatter him with physical strength alone, even if it wasn't able to use any Ascendant techniques.

After evading that zombie, Su Ping continued exploring other places. He didn't even try figuring out the zombie's combat ability, as it would be unnecessary. He was moving in the real world, where death would mean 'game over.' He would have plenty of chances when he returned to the cultivation sites, where he could fight Ascendants or even stronger creatures.

However, such fighting was of little significance. Instant death would hardly bring him any improvement.

Soon, Su Ping cleared ninety percent of the city. He frowned, since the city was absolutely dead; there was not even a living rat in the place!

Are there no living creatures in this region? Su Ping thought.

He left the city and moved on.

He then found himself on a desolate plain; there were weird beasts on the plain, apart from zombies.

Su Ping had collected more than three thousand Divine Cores after hunting on the plain.

There was a river beyond the plain, but the river wasn't flowing; it was as dark as ink, seemingly frozen like black ice. However, black water splashed out when he tossed a stone over, and the river made ripples. Said ripples would quickly settle, and the river would go back to its dead state again.

Just like before, Su Ping sent out the inferior skeletons as scouts.

Horrifying creatures would quickly crawl out of the river and attack the inferior skeletons.

Su Ping lured them away from the river and ambushed them.

He looted more than twenty Divine Cores from the river. Finally, nothing else came out again; he flew across the river and continued searching for zombies.

Time went by quickly.

Su Ping ran into other cities very quickly after going past the river. The cities were crumbling, and were actually built close together; he cleared them carefully.

He no longer dared to be careless after seeing that intimidating zombie. After all, he would have to use up his master's armor to save his life if he caught the attention of an Ascendant State zombie.

The second city was even more badly destroyed. It was cleared after Su Ping took down more than 1,800 zombies. The other areas were too dangerous for him to approach, so he simply moved on to the next place.

...

9000 Divine Cores!

Su Ping had collected almost ten thousand Divine Cores by the time he cleared five cities.

He thought he was a fast hunter. After all, it wasn't easy to deal with the zombies; he had to lure them over and kill them quickly.

He was almost surrounded by zombies once, during the hunting; all the zombies had flashed over. He was horrified, as he had realized that the black air lingering on the zombies' teeth and fingernails could quickly contaminate his flesh.

He would simply cut off the wounded parts whenever he was hurt in battle.

Fortunately, with his cultivation and control over his body, he could easily regenerate his arm if he ever needed to cut it off.

This is...

Suddenly, Su Ping saw a mountain in a city.

The mountain seemed to have been destroyed in a violent manner; there were multiple pits at its base. Some buildings had also been reduced to smithereens.

Su Ping had a weird feeling when he saw the mountain for some reason.

Some memories seemed to be flashing back. He found that the mountain felt familiar, as if he would have seen it somewhere before.

"Huh?"

Soon, Su Ping saw that a lot of zombies were standing still at the top of the mountain.

He instantly asked the Little Skeleton to summon the inferior skeletons to hunt them.

Some of the zombies were quickly attracted and executed.

Those zombies had been heavily wounded; some of them had ruined cheeks, while others had mutilated bodies. They must have gone through unimaginably brutal battles.

Su Ping's heart became heavy as he hunted them down.

All those zombies had been gods when they were alive.

What happened here? What were the gods fighting against in such a brutal way?

He remembered the Twilight Deity King, Green Lady's master. What was hidden in the sky that the man tried to hold back?

The zombies on the mountain were generally strong; a couple of them were Star Lords. Su Ping was truly astonished. Obviously, the mountain used to be some sort of holy land, which was why so many strong gods were there.

Su Ping slowly approached the mountain after hunting a dozen zombies, and the inferior skeletons moved on.

A zombie suddenly came out right then.

The zombie flashed to meet the inferior skeletons and squeeze them. Afterwards, it returned to its motionless stance.

Su Ping found that the zombie was well preserved. The other zombies' skin was purple, wrinkled, and covered in dust. Even so, that one was quite clean; it was obviously a girl when it was alive, its hair still fluttering in the breeze.

Su Ping had goosebumps, as this zombie felt even more horrifying than the one he met earlier.

Fall back!

Su Ping made the decision to make a quick retreat.

He suddenly saw that the zombie moved as he made his escape. However, it didn't flash to reach him. Rather, it slowly turned its head to look in the direction he was retreating to.

Su Ping had a chance to see the zombie clearly. Its cheeks were rather dirty too, but still, they were much cleaner when compared to other zombies; there were two fatal holes on its throat and chest.

A divine seal was glowing bright with a passion on its forehead.

Su Ping saw its face, which was so fascinatingly beautiful that not even dust could bury her impeccable beauty.

However, the face was numb and gray.

"Huh?"

Su Ping's heart shivered. He had a weird sense of familiarity.

He had never seen that face before, and he clearly didn't know her.

Still, her dead, gray eyes, which seemed to be staring at something, gave him an odd familiar feeling, as if he knew her from somewhere before!

Who is she?

Su Ping was quite perplexed. *Did I see her in one of the cultivation sites?*

However, on second thought, he had been to a few divine cultivation sites; he didn't remember seeing the woman in any of them.

Su Ping had not seen a lot of pretty women, either, even when exploring other cultivation sites. After all, his main targets were beasts.

The pretty, slim girl became distant and vague as he was retreating, but he had the feeling that she seemed to be staring at him too.

However, she was already dead.

She would have charged and attacked him if she would have indeed been gazing at him.

Who was she exactly?

Su Ping was at a loss; he didn't stop until the girl was nowhere to be seen. He frowned and thought hard on a high building for a moment; he then asked the system in his heart.

The system didn't respond after he waited for a long time.

Su Ping truly felt helpless. He thought for a moment longer, finally giving up the idea of returning to continue investigating.

The risk wouldn't be worth it, just to return because he had a certain sense of familiarity.

Odd. Considering my current cultivation and sensitivity, my instincts can't be wrong. If I feel in danger, dangers must indeed be lurking about. I must have seen her before if I found her familiar.

Su Ping frowned; he simply couldn't figure out why.

A long time passed, but he could only let the matter rest for the moment and focus on completing the trial.

Su Ping continued traveling after leaving the city.

...

In the palace, the old man said to Shen Huang with a smile, "That was a really close one. Your young disciple nearly ran into the zombie with high Celestial State power."

Shen Huang was relieved to see that Su Ping had retreated far away. He would have felt embarrassed if Su Ping were to be eliminated that early in the competition. Moreover, the armor he had given to Su Ping wouldn't only resist the zombie's attacks for a while; Mu Shen would have needed to take action in order to save him.

"That zombie seems capable of thinking," said Shen Huang, frowning.

The image showed how the zombie was staring in the direction Su Ping had left, still unmoving.

Mu Shen furrowed his brow in surprise too; he had already purged the remains and suppressed the Celestial State zombies found in that place. Some of them had indeed developed intelligence, but they were quite childish and bloodthirsty. Why did that zombie let Su Ping go after spotting him?

Weird. What secret does that kid have? Mu Shen became curious about Su Ping.

Considering the unrecorded divine constitution and the strange incident a moment earlier, that kid was definitely hiding great secrets.

"Mu Shen, did you control the zombie just now so it would let that kid escape?"

Someone chuckled and looked at Mu Shen, with vague dissatisfaction in his voice.

Mu Shen frowned and said casually, "That's beneath me."

Those four words had already indicated his attitude.

The Celestial who had questioned him slightly raised his eyebrows, but he didn't add any other comment. After all, Mu Shen had convinced all of those present that he hadn't done anything with his short remark.

"That kid is truly a bold and experienced hunter, a true talent. He currently has the most Divine Cores; some of the others have suffered losses because of their recklessness."

"Haha. Are you referring to the kid who's the reincarnation of a bird? He thought his fire could burn anything; he didn't know that it wouldn't be a solution when dealing with ancient poison!"

"I think it isn't bad. He is reckless, but his character befits his path of cultivation; he might be able to create a path of his own," remarked another Celestial State expert.

The others offered silent smiles; it was indeed a possibility. Everybody had their own standards, so there was no need to argue.

"How are you going to arrange the competition after this trial is over?"

"Are you planning to send them to the void battlefield? That place is not a joke. We might not be able to rescue them in time if anything happens to them."

Since the trial was halfway done, they already had a rough speculation on the kids' performances.

Mu Shen said casually, "They can't be sharpened without weathering through storms. It's time they see the real appearance of the universe; they should be respectful of nature and the universe!"

"Still, all those kids seem decisive and relentless to me; none of them seems immature," someone disagreed.

Mu Shen replied, "They've only killed beasts and a few enemies of humankind. However, they won't be facing beasts in the void battlefield."

"Is there any difference? Those enemies might look and feel different. But any man with blood-hardened hearts can kill them!"

"I, for one, agree with Mu Shen's arrangements. The void battlefield hasn't been very peaceful as of late. Those kids are supposed to train there at the end of the contest, which will be a good thing for them. But now the training will be conducted in advance. We should shorten the unnecessary processes now that the universe is about to merge."

Chapter 919: Soul Sea

Time flew.

The trial was coming to an end in the blink of an eye.

Su Ping had run into a couple of contestants from other star zones during the hunting. Some of them were attacked by zombies, but he didn't lend a hand; after all, he was in great danger too.

Some of them intended to rob Su Ping of his Divine Cores, but all of them were preemptively knocked out.

Just as Su Ping had expected, all those contestants were relocated when they were about to die, just like the eliminated players before.

I have 32,000 Divine Cores right now. I wonder what my ranking is... It shouldn't be a problem for me to make it to the top hundred, Su Ping thought. He had been hunting diligently and effectively; he didn't think he would get eliminated. With any luck, he could even make it to the top three.

I need to ask my master or Senior Brother You Long about that weird zombie and this place, Su Ping thought as he remembered the familiar zombie earlier.

He had never seen the zombie before, but its eyes gave him a strong sense of familiarity; he had certainly seen them before.

Soon, the trial was over.

Su Ping was fighting a zombie when he suddenly became light; then, he was shrouded in a magnificent force and relocated from the deeper space. He found himself back in the Chaos Grass when he reappeared.

Su Ping looked around, finding that there were much fewer people around him, only a couple of familiar faces remained.

Su Jin'er was relatively close to him. She glanced at him; there was dust on her pretty face. She smiled when they made eye contact.

Aside from her, the young man enslaved by Su Ping earlier—who had golden wheels in his eyes—had passed the trial too.

Su Ping also saw Linghu Jian, the Sword God's disciple.

Dragon Emperor and the Thousand Leaves Holy Lady were both gone. Claesabe, Ibetaluna, and the others whom Su Ping had protected had also been eliminated.

Su Ping felt sorry for them, but he knew that they could have hardly survived in those ruins.

Even someone as strong as him could have been knocked out in advance if by a stroke of bad luck he would have caught the attention of an Ascendant State zombie.

"There are altogether 294 survivors!"

A majestic Ascendant State cultivator flew over and looked down at him with the gravitas of a god. "You've met the requirement of ensuring your own survival. Now, we'll count your Divine Cores and rank you accordingly. The top hundred may participate in the next round.

"Every Star Lord's Divine Core equals five normal ones.

"Now, please present your Divine Cores to make the proper calculations."

Only 300 of the 1,200 contestants from the twelve star zones remained.

Everybody took out their Divine Cores after the Ascendant's announcement. Some carried several hundred, while others presented thousands of them.

As he was presenting his Divine Cores, Su Ping checked the other people's results; he felt greatly relieved when he found that most people had no more than a thousand Divine Cores.

It was actually quite understandable.

After all, it wasn't an easy task to hunt a thousand Star State zombies in only a few days.

Soon, many Star Lords descended and tallied the Divine Cores in front of them.

The counting was done at a very quick speed, simply scanning the Divine Cores with their minds and immediately deducing their number.

Those Star Lords wrote down the results.

Those around Su Ping exclaimed when he presented his Divine Cores, a veritable mountain of them. Even the geniuses nearby who had looted a thousand Divine Cores were wide-eyed, thinking they had collected enough to reach the top hundred, if not the top ten.

However, they had underestimated the real geniuses!

Apart from Su Ping, a few others had taken out a tremendous number of Divine Cores too.

The Divine Cores piled up in front of Su Jin'er were as high as her own height; there were ten thousand of them. However, she was stunned by Su Ping's Divine Core loot and could only smile bitterly. She never expected that she would be dwarfed by him in the end; it would be embarrassing if her real identity was exposed.

"Humph!"

A young man in bloody clothes—who had a mountain of Divine Cores in front of him—gave everyone an aggressive gaze. His expression changed to a colder one the moment he noticed that several others had almost as many Divine Cores as he did.

He thought he was unique, but it turned out that he wasn't!

Soon enough, all the Divine Cores were calculated.

"Luo Ying, of the Black Eye Star Zone, ranks first!

"He has 43,292 Divine Cores!

"Su Ping, of the Golden Star Zone, ranks second. 39,201 Divine Cores!

"Steven Relo, of the Sword Tide Star Zone, ranks third. 39,200 Divine Cores!

"Dragon Shepard, of the Heavenly Dragon Star Zone, ranks fourth. 31,382 Divine Cores!

"Fifth place goes to..."

The Ascendant State cultivator announced the top ten, while projecting the rankings of the rest with a holograph.

Everybody started looking for their names. Some would simply look at the hundredth place at the bottom; they became desperate when they saw that he had collected 8,209 Divine Cores.

They knew their own Divine Core harvest; they had already been eliminated.

I've failed to advance...

Linghu Jian felt bitter when he saw the number of Divine Cores of the hundredth position. He had only collected two thousand Divine Cores, which wasn't nearly enough.

Is this what the top geniuses of the universe are capable of?

Ever since he was born, he had been ahead of his peers, becoming the most brilliant star on his planet and his galaxy. However, he couldn't even make it to the top hundred in the vast scope of the universe.

It wasn't hard to imagine what kind of monsters had made it to the top hundred.

Second place?

Su Ping was slightly surprised by the ranking, but he soon accepted it; it was similar to what he had anticipated. He was among the top five, and fairly close to the very best.

The man collected four thousand Divine Cores more... Quite the fast hunter. Su Ping's eyes glittered. He hadn't wasted any time hunting, and his method was quite effective too. He had tried his best, even making use of the Sorcerer's Divine Constitution.

And yet, his loot still fell short by four thousand when compared to the other guy.

I was only short by one?

On another part of the crowd—a young man with a chiseled face was stunned. It was a rather amazing situation, to only be one Divine Core behind the second place.

He could not help but look at Su Ping in the crowd and observe.

Su Ping, on the other hand, was observing Luo Ying, the overall winner. He was a slim young man in black clothes; there were vague scales emitting purple light on his exposed skin.

Luo Ying was also observing the high rankers. He looked back at Su Ping when he noticed the latter's gaze. They stared at each other, neither taking their eyes away.

Luo Ying suddenly put on a smile and his eyes looked strange, implying that he was waiting for Su Ping's challenge.

Su Ping smiled, then turned to observe others.

Even if Luo Ying was the only one ranking above him, it was unadvisable to underestimate the others. After all, other players hiding their real prowess was a possibility, while some could be better at fighting than hunting.

"The top ten will be given an opportunity to visit the Soul Sea.

"You will stay there for ten minutes.

"The top three will stay for thirty minutes.

"The champion will stay for an hour.

“The rest of you, take a good rest here and prepare for the contest two days later. By the way, the Celestial State experts have made a decision regarding the new content for the next stage of the contest. The battle to be held in two days will be extra cruel; I hope you prepare yourselves well, because you might really perish!” said the Ascendant expert casually.

Everybody’s hearts became heavy when they heard that.

They knew it wasn’t a threat to increase their vigilance. Death was a clear possibility.

What is the Soul Sea? Su Ping was feeling curious. The champion was given twice as much time to stay there when compared to the ones in second and third place, while the rest of the top ten could only stay there for ten minutes. It was obvious that the Soul Sea was precious.

“You ten, come with me.”

Right after giving the announcement, the Ascendant expert waved his hand and took Su Ping and the other top ten to a vast temple.

There were two Ascendant experts at the gate, seemingly appointed as guards.

A vague yet overwhelming sacred air was radiating from the palace; it became evident that a Celestial State expert was inside.

The Ascendant State cultivator bowed and said, “My lords, I’ve brought them here. I’m now taking them to the Soul Sea.”

“Okay, let’s go,” said an indifferent voice coming from within the temple. It belonged to Mu Shen, who had addressed the audience earlier on.

“The Soul Sea is the central area of the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm; it’s a special place where you can absorb magnificent divine power. There are also a lot of thoughts and ancient whispers left there. You must stay focused on cultivation, as you may find an opportunity to reach the Ascendant State.” Shen Huang’s voice echoed in Su Ping’s head.

Su Ping was stunned by the message; he then nodded at the palace.

The Ascendant cultivator then returned and flashed with Su Ping and the others in tow, who then found themselves in a golden world; vague red shadows were flowing inside.

“Get inside; I’ll bring you back when the time is up. All you need to do is cultivate wholeheartedly while you’re there. This is a rare opportunity.” The Ascendant State cultivator looked at the top ten contestants and put on a smile.

Although they hadn’t fully grown up yet, they were geniuses that would clearly become Ascendants in the future, the best in their level, with the possibility to be distinguished as Heavenly Lords. That was why their Ascendant chaperon wasn’t acting arrogantly when he addressed them. Those kids could grow up quickly.

All the others seemed to know what the Soul Sea was about; their eyes glittered.

The next moment, everybody flew inside to seize the day.

Su Ping felt as if he were in the middle of an ocean of divine power the moment he entered the place; it seemed to be even denser than Joanna's lake of divine power. Apart from divine power, he also detected great paths that flowed around him like tangible ribbons.

Paths...

There are more sophisticated things above the paths.

Is that the feeling that the Ascendant State experts pursue?

Su Ping felt like his mind was touching what seemed to be dust, but inside the dust was a vast universe. He was shocked, then he had an epiphany: laws could be developed to become paths, and paths would turn into worlds. So, what could worlds then become?

Why did he have to understand the truth?

Gods...

Invisible, but omnipresent... That's what gods are!

Su Ping felt that his mind was blank, as if in the process of being polished. The unimaginable beings he had seen in cultivation sites were surfacing in his heart again, with even more detail, allowing him to see them with more clarity. He was even more awed and shocked by their existence.

"I feel so lonely..."

"I'm dead. You should come to the other world with me!"

"Gu Zhantian, what are you doing? Are you planning to slay the heavens on your own?"

All of a sudden, voices invaded Su Ping's head; some were cries, some were sobbing, and others were furious roars.

Su Ping was in a trance; he saw a man in white holding a marvelous void in a fragmented space. The man turned around, with everlasting determination in his eyes, then said, "What I'm about to slay are the heavenly paths, so that those things won't be able to arrive!"

"You can't go!" someone roared, but the man in white became even more daunting and brilliant.

"I have to!"

He was drowned in the fragmented space, and even more cries moved closer.

Suddenly, a voice resounded. "Time is up."

Su Ping felt that his body was light. Then, all the voices were gone. He found himself standing in the place he originally was when he opened his eyes, outside of the golden world.

Luo Ying was the only one left inside the golden world at the moment.

The other contestants had been taken out earlier; some of them had closed their eyes, as if still in contemplation, and others seemed to be wallowing in misery.

"The ideas and thoughts in there are too mixed. There are a lot of disturbances."

“It affected my understanding of the Ascendant State. Damn it!”

“I heard that it’s a special ninth space, and a forbidden land at that. Even people like us were given the opportunity to enter that place, all thanks to some special reasons.”

Su Ping was really surprised.

The ninth space was a very deep space.

He didn’t know how many layers the universe had; however, he was only capable of tearing into the fifth space at the moment. He would often run into many horrifying void creatures that were mostly in the Star Lord State when he ventured into the sixth space!

Even Star Lords could be caught in dangerous situations when to that depth.

As for the seventh space, Su Ping didn’t even dare to imagine.

He had not realized until then that he had been inside the ninth space!

He would have been instantly killed if he entered in the ninth space with his own capabilities.

The images I saw, were they legacies left in the ninth space? They must have happened in ancient times. The man who swore to slay the paths of heaven was surely an unparalleled hero back then, Su Ping thought.

Chapter 920: Condensing a Small World

Su Ping actually learned a lot, even though he only stayed in the Soul Sea for half an hour. He managed to get in touch with something with the essence of the Ascendant State.

He was certain that he could reach the Ascendant State if he could stay there for a few more days.

I might get another chance to go in there, and stay longer if I win the finals, Su Ping thought.

The first ranker, Luo Ying, was still inside the Soul Sea at the moment.

He was also relocated half an hour later. His hazy body was covered in purple light, which seemed to be lightning, or some special energy.

He slowly opened his eyes, golden light flashing in them; you could see a temporary confusion, but they soon became sharp.

“Senior, I heard that some of the great powers in ancient times could be etched in deeper spaces. I saw heroes dying in battles while I was there; what were they fighting against?”

Luo Ying looked at the Ascendant State cultivator.

Everybody else was slightly stunned too; they turned their heads and looked at their protector and guide.

“Those were things from the primordial times, and secrets that you’re too weak to know yet. However, all of you have a chance to break through and become Ascendants, so it’s fine for you to learn them

now. It is said that catastrophes happen after certain, fixed time cycles. Some catastrophes were human wars, while others were wars against beasts.

“In addition, there were special things in history that have already gone extinct.

“All in all, you only need to remember that this universe isn’t as peaceful as it seems; beasts invade our borders all the time. Your galaxies are uneventful because someone else has been defending them in your place. All of you need to train harder, that way you can defend your countries too in the future!” said the Ascendant expert.

There was a slight crease in Luo Ying’s brow; that was not the answer he wanted.

He saw a lot of things back there, and felt that great dangers were hidden in this universe.

Otherwise, why would the unparalleled heroes in those images fight so relentlessly?

Su Ping glanced at Luo Ying; the latter had obviously seen the images left by the powerful minds of those heroes. Unfortunately, the Ascendant State cultivator had simply said that they were fighting beasts; it wasn’t the answer that Su Ping wanted to hear.

Maybe it’s a secret that the Ascendant cultivator can’t touch yet, Su Ping thought.

“All of you experienced the Soul Sea. Even if you only stayed for ten minutes, that experience alone will be a seed of the Ascendant State in your heart. Go back and get prepared; the upcoming contest isn’t easy,” said the Ascendant cultivator in a casual manner.

He then took everybody out of the palace where the Celestial State resided.

The guides of all the star zones were staying outside the palace. Su Ping saw You Long, who flew towards him quickly. The latter said with a smile, “Junior brother, good for you. It’s incredible that you ranked second; I’m sure you enjoyed your visit to the Soul Sea.”

Su Ping suddenly thought of Diaz; he didn’t find him among the top ten. He was rather surprised by this.

The next moment, he remembered Diaz’s look. The man would have probably gnashed his teeth after seeing him win second place...

Su Ping smiled and said to You Long, “Thank you, senior brother. I am planning on entering secluded training; I heard that the upcoming contest will be cruel.”

You Long nodded and said telepathically, “You’re going to the void battlefield, a deep-space battlefield in the sixth space near the Divine Sea Mysterious Realm; it’ll be dangerous there. You won’t be protected by the astral arrays, so you have to keep your eyes peeled for any weird thing that might drift your way.”

Su Ping showed a slight change in his expression, not expecting the contest to be that dangerous.

The sixth space was a place where even the Star Lords had to be cautious.

“I understand.”

Su Ping nodded.

He had fallen to the sixth space through a crack in the fifth space back in the cultivation sites, so he knew how dangerous it was.

“There are about two days left. I’ll take you to a place so you can rest,” said You Long.

Su Ping nodded.

The guides of the other star zones also ushered their contestants too.

Very soon, You Long took Su Ping to a palace.

The palace was covered in an astral array, and there were small enhancement arrays inside.

You Long chuckled and said, “This is my residence. You can stay here for now. Rest well; no one will disturb you.”

Sensing the abundant astral power inside the palace, Su Ping took a deep breath and said, “Thank you, senior brother.”

“That’s all right. Our master is very happy because of your achievement; he will probably award you later.” You Long smiled and left.

Su Ping entered the training room, and then asked the Star Lord servants outside not to disturb him before he closed the door to start with his training.

He took out the materials that Xingyue Shen’er had found for him; all kinds of smells filled the room as he opened the boxes and bottles.

There was the smell of blood from some hearts, and a refreshing grassy smell. There were also red feathers and sharp claws.

Su Ping examined them and found that they were exactly the materials he needed; all of them were genuine.

I owe her a big favor, Su Ping thought.

He extracted all the materials with his astral power. He set his own body ablaze when he activated the Solar Bulwark’s secret technique, quickly making the temperature of the room soar.

However, the training room was blocked by a powerful astral array, which prevented it from being burned down.

Su Ping melted the materials which then turned into a golden red fluid, then directly swallowed it.

Su Ping felt that something was awakened when the hot fluid flowed into his body.

His blood boiled and burned, as if his body would have turned into a furnace.

The burning lasted a long time; Su Ping’s blood was dried and thickened. The weird feeling inside his body became increasingly clearer, just like when the bottom of the lake is revealed after the water is pumped away.

Phew!

Suddenly feeling an excruciating pain, a pair of burning wings unfolded behind his back; they were glowing brilliantly.

He felt extremely comfortable, as if just having broken free from a cocoon. He suddenly opened his eyes, which flashed with gold light and fire.

Su Ping stood up, feeling that his body was overflowing with power.

His cells became tensile and condensed, which were currently on fire.

His senses were significantly sharpened, and his fists were surrounded by a powerful aura. Su Ping took a deep breath, sucking up the air in the room before breathing it out.

He then unleashed all the pressure in his body as he exhaled.

Su Ping closed his eyes and gradually relaxed, before he examined his own body carefully.

His body had undoubtedly been significantly improved; he was invincible in the Star State with nothing but his physical strength!

It's a shame that I haven't mastered the power of faith yet, or I'd be able to fight the Star Lords! Su Ping thought. Su Ping knew his condition fully well after having dealt with a lot of Star Lord creatures in the cultivation sites.

Unfortunately, the power of faith was on a completely different level, and Star Lords could defeat him easily with that.

Perhaps I can try condensing a small world...

The idea suddenly popped up in Su Ping's heart, before it gained further momentum.

Star Lords kept their power of faith in their small worlds—

Otherwise, no matter how talented they were, their power of faith would quickly fade away, unless they attached it to some special treasures.

Condensing a small world requires a complete path...

My path of flames is already complete!

It requires a tremendous amount of astral power as well as a complete path to construct a small world.

I also need to have enough mental power to control it.

Su Ping took a deep breath and got started; he wasn't short of anything except for being below the minimum cultivation realm.

The first path that Su Ping chose was the path of flames.

As for the small world, Su Ping chose to compress it in his abdomen; he melted 100,000 cells to accommodate the small world with the vast space inside the cells.

As the path of flames laid the cornerstone, a tremendous amount of astral power filled the space.

Su Ping's Chaos Star Chart circulated crazily and absorbed the astral power inside the training room.

All the astral power stored inside Su Ping's cells was poured into the proverbial black hole found in his abdomen.

Light gradually appeared in the black hole. Su Ping had the vague inkling of a special feeling... That he was in control of that unique space. He could create anything there.

After a long time passed, a small world took shape in Su Ping's body.

The astral power in Su Ping's body was fully drained. His mental power was also depleted; he had been forced to constantly send his mental power to stabilize the small world.

I have to create an inner circle. Otherwise, the small world will be a monster forever sucking me dry. Su Ping's eyes glittered as he did his best to speed up the construction.

He didn't construct a complete small world immediately; there wasn't enough time for that. He was planning to create a seed first.

The seed of a world.

Soon, the seed of a small world sprouted; it was very small, but it already had an inner cycle.

Next, Su Ping could fill it with astral power to expand it.

Now I can absorb the power of faith too. However, my small world is too small to absorb a lot. I need more astral power.

There's abundant astral power in this room, and my Chaos Star Chart is fast too. However, it'll take at least a month for me to create a complete world!

Su Ping slowly opened his eyes. It was then that You Long's voice was heard coming from the outside world. "Junior brother, it's time. Have you rested well?"

"I'm ready."

Su Ping ended the training and donned a new set of clothes from his storage before he walked out.

"Huh?"

You Long exclaimed in surprise the moment he saw Su Ping.

He detected an obvious difference in Su Ping, while only two days had passed; there was a different feeling in his aura. However, he didn't have much astral power.

"Was there a failure or something in my training room?" You Long couldn't help but ask.

Aura aside, Su Ping seemed to be weaker than before he entered the training room.

Su Ping was amused by this; he shook his head and said, "No. I tried a different cultivation method; it consumed some of my astral power."

"..."

You Long was lost for words. His junior brother was truly reckless, exhausting his astral power with such a dangerous method right before the contest.

“Here you go. This is an Astral Source Fruit; half of it should be able to replenish your astral power.” You Long took out a purple fruit and tossed it over to Su Ping.

The fruit had an elegant appearance. Su Ping was stunned. *It restores astral power?*

Throwing courtesy to the side, he quickly took a bite.

It only took two mouthfuls for Su Ping to feel that the pulp had turned into a magnificent dragon of astral power filling his body, soon replenishing his astral power reserves.

He ate faster, soon finishing the entire fruit, core included.

The astral power inside its core was even denser; Su Ping felt as if his astral power was overflowing; all his cells completely full.

Su Ping’s body had been strengthened after having cultivated the third level of the Solar Bulwark; his cells were now able to accommodate many times more astral power. To put it simply, his astral power was tens of thousands times more when compared to a normal Fate State warrior!

If I hadn’t constructed the small world, the astral power would have been enough for me to fill up my astral power twice, Su Ping thought.

He looked at You Long and asked, “Senior brother, do you have more of these fruits?”

You Long was shocked after seeing that Su Ping was able to finish the entire fruit without suffering from indigestion. It was scary to see that his junior brother—who was merely a Fate State warrior—had finished a whole Astral Source Fruit.

Even a Star Lord would have been satiated.

“...”

“What kind of body do you have, junior brother? Why do I feel that you have an even better appetite than Junior Brother Diaz?” You Long couldn’t help but ask.

Smiling awkwardly, Su Ping replied, “Having a good appetite is bliss.”

You Long put on a bitter smile and said, “Fine. Here’s another one. You’re going to the void battlefield; this will replenish your astral power if you’re ever exhausted.”

Su Ping accepted it with glittering eyes. “Thank you, senior brother!”

You Long waved his hand. His monstrous junior brother was still weak; he would remember this favor well, that was why You Long wasn’t too regretful. He said, “We’re running out of time. I’ll take you to the rendezvous point.”

“Okay...”

Hardly had Su Ping said that when both of them disappeared.

They soon arrived at the palace of the Celestial State experts, where the other top hundred contestants were gathered.

Su Ping turned his head and found Diaz, who was staring back at him in the crowd with a gloomy mood.

Diaz ranked twelfth in the end. He could have collected more Divine Cores; unfortunately, he encountered three Star Lord zombies, which took him a lot of time to get rid of. That was why he didn't have much time left to find Divine Cores, thus failing to make it to the top ten.