

Doctor 1191

Chapter 1191: Su Linglong's Heaven's Net

On the sea ship, over half of the thousand martial artists were taking a sea voyage to the Shenwu Continent for the first time. Faced with the repeated and incessant ramming by hundreds of Dragon Scale Whales, they panicked, became disorganized, and were only focused on self-preservation. How could they possibly think about proactively attacking the Dragon Scale Whales and driving them away from the ship?

On the contrary, some martial artists who had been to the Shenwu Continent before had experienced such situations and were no longer surprised. Knowing that if the sea ship were to be overturned or damaged the consequences would be unimaginable, they began to counterattack under the command and coordination of Wu Rongshan.

"Facing a sea beast attack, everyone on our sea ship either flourishes together or suffers together. So those who are not afraid of death, follow me and get off the ship to repel the sea beasts!"

Steward Wu Rongshan of Green Bamboo Stronghold leapt from the lookout tower to the deck and roared loudly.

Moments later, Wu Rongshan, along with hundreds of willing Vast Level Perfection fighters, and dozens of Cosmic Level beginner experts, bound sturdy ropes around their waists. Then, holding the ropes with one hand and waving their spiritual artifacts with the other, they jumped from the ship and aggressively attacked the Dragon Scale Whales that were ramming the ship.

Among the fighters, there were also Su Linglong, Dongfang Ruhua, Linghu Qianjiao, Linghu Baimei, Zhuge Lian, and others including Ghost Hand, Niu Ben, Xiong Yingxiong, and Wu De.

Wu De, merely a beginner at Vast Level, originally did not want to risk jumping down to battle with the fierce, brutal, and incredibly powerful Dragon Scale Whales. However, under Fang Bai's taunting gaze, he gritted his teeth, stomped his foot, grabbed a rope, and with loud shouts, jumped down.

Fang Bai lightly tapped his toes and leaped onto the sea ship's watchtower, his divine sense dispersing and closely monitoring the martial artists who had jumped off the ship.

Fang Bai remaining on the sea ship was per Wu Rongshan's intention.

To Wu Rongshan, Fang Bai was the strongest among all the martial artists on this ship. By staying on board, he could intervene and rescue any martial artist in danger, thus minimizing casualties on their side.

Hundreds of martial artists who jumped down from the ship, tightened their ropes when they were still several tens of meters above the sea surface, suspended in mid-air, each looking for opportunities to strike at the sea beasts ramming the ship using the spiritual artifacts in their hands.

Although these fighters were mostly of Vast Level Perfection, with the augmentation of spiritual artifacts, their attack power was already very close to that of Cosmic Level experts. Moreover, there were many more of them than the sea beasts, almost making the ratio two to one, therefore giving the spirit beasts in the sea quite the trouble.

Although the sea beasts had strong defensive capabilities and were not seriously injured, when the powerful spiritual artifacts slashed and stabbed at them, they could feel pain, reducing their ability to ram the ship with full force.

"Ding!"

"Ding!"

"Ding!"

...

Several crisp sounds of a blade scraping metal, along with sparks flying, came from Su Linglong and others attacking. They were using newly crafted high-grade spiritual artifacts made by Fang Bai, chopping at the layer of scales on the Dragon Scale Whales.

The cultivation level of Su Linglong and the others, although only beginner level at Vast Level, gave each of them the ability to challenge those beyond their level. Coupled with the help of high-grade spiritual

artifacts, their attack power was comparable to Cosmic Level beginner experts. Their spiritual artifacts easily split the layer of scales covering the Dragon Scale Whales, also leaving long wounds on their bodies.

Although only slightly wounded, the fierce-tempered Dragon Scale Whales became infuriated and stopped ramming the ships, instead launching a furious attack on Su Linglong and the others.

"Boom!"

An adult Dragon Scale Whale swung its massive tail, creating a wave several meters high that crashed towards Su Linglong above.

Su Linglong forcefully pulled on a rope with her left hand, her figure nimble as a swallow, leveraging the momentum to rise two meters and barely dodging the onslaught of the wave.

"Behold my Heaven's Net!"

Su Linglong's beautiful eyes sparkled with a cold gleam, and amidst her shrill shout, she quickly waved the wood element spiritual artifact "Jade Soul Hook Rod" in her hand, weaving thousands of hair-thin, green wood element qi into a massive net in the air, which she cast down over the Dragon Scale Whale beneath her.

Su Linglong was employing the wood element martial arts "Heaven's Net," a technique she learned from Fang Bai.

Although Heaven's Net doesn't directly take lives, those martial artists who are caught and have insufficient strength find it exceedingly difficult to escape, unable to move or fight back, leaving them open to attacks.

The Dragon Scale Whale couldn't avoid it in time and was securely ensnared by the Heaven's Net made from thousands of strands of wood element qi.

These strands of wood element qi were like solid matter, tough and elastic; the more the Dragon Scale Whale struggled, the tighter the net tightened around it.

However, deploying Heaven's Net consumed a vast amount of essence energy, and after casting it once, over half of the essence energy in Su Linglong's Qi Sea was depleted. Struggling to deal with other Dragon Scale Whales, she immediately swallowed a Gathering Yuan Pill.

This Gathering Yuan Pill, a high-grade one long coveted by Cosmic Level Experts, had been given to her by Fang Bai not long ago. A single high-grade Gathering Yuan Pill could be exchanged for a hundred middle-grade ones at the Martial Artists Trading Market, highlighting its immense value.

As its name suggests, a Gathering Yuan Pill is an elixir for condensing essence energy.

The higher the grade of a Gathering Yuan Pill, the faster and more vigorously it consolidates essence energy. A high-grade Gathering Yuan Pill can absorb a large amount of essence energy from the surrounding space in a short period, which martial artists below the Cosmic Level Realm or without a powerful body cannot withstand; it might even cause their bodies to explode.

Su Linglong, possessing an Innate Spiritual Root and having cultivated high-level cultivation techniques martial arts passed down by Fang Bai, could fully withstand the rapid influx of massive amounts of essence energy, faring better than even ordinary Cosmic Level Experts.

With the aid of the high-grade Gathering Yuan Pill, Su Linglong quickly recovered her depleted essence energy and reinvigorated, she swung the Jade Soul Hook Rod again, casting the Heaven's Net towards another Dragon Scale Whale.

The same scenario played out with Dongfang Ruhua, Linghu Qianjiao, Linghu Baimei, Zhuge Lian, Wu De, Ghost Hand, Niu Ben, and Xiong Yingxiong.

Each, exceptionally gifted and once mentored by Fang Bai, wielded high-quality spiritual artifacts forged by him, and their strength was comparable to Su Linglong's. After a fierce battle, they too managed to repel several Dragon Scale Whales.

Simultaneously, steward Wu Rongshan and other martial artists from the Green Bamboo Stronghold teamed up in pairs or triples to significantly challenge many Dragon Scale Whales, driving them to dive deep into the sea and flee.

However, some relatively weaker martial artists were injured or even killed by the counterattacks of the Dragon Scale Whales. Although Fang Bai was vigilant in every direction, he was unable to be omnipresent; managing to save some but inevitably unable to save others, he could only sigh inwardly upon witnessing the fall of fellow martial artists.

Chapter 1192: Duty-bound Matters

The vast majority of martial artists on the sea vessel, before crossing over the Purgatory Sea to Shenwu Continent, are doing so to broaden their horizons, accumulate experience, and seek opportunities within the Martial Dao.

This is a form of training.

Since it is training, various unforeseen risks and crises will inevitably occur. Some martial artists can turn danger into safety and successfully overcome these risks and crises, while others may unfortunately perish. This is a common occurrence for martial artists during their training.

Fang Bai, having lived through tens of thousands of years across two lifetimes, had long since grown accustomed to this.

Although Fang Bai could use the Beast Taming Scripture to drive away the Dragon Scale Whales, they currently posed no threat to most of the martial artists on the ship. Furthermore, those martial artists who voluntarily jumped off the ship to attack the Dragon Scale Whales were mostly doing so to gain practical combat experience and to comprehend the profound truths of Martial Dao through the battle. If Fang Bai intervened, it might be considered meddling.

As for those martial artists who lost their lives to the Dragon Scale Whales' attacks, after all, they are the minority, and this was the fate they were destined to meet.

Therefore, Fang Bai simply stood by and watched, deciding not to get involved unless Su Linglong, Ghost Hand, and the others were in danger.

Although Su Linglong, Ghost Hand, and others encountered repeated dangers while fighting fiercely with the Dragon Scale Whales, they all managed to escape unscathed. This brought Fang Bai great comfort, thinking that his close friends and disciples had achieved commendable success in the Martial Dao and would have a certain ability to protect themselves even against Cosmic Level Experts in the future.

Several hundred martial artists used ropes to move swiftly over the sea surface. Wielding their spiritual artifacts, waves of Essence Energy surged forth as they engaged in an unending fierce battle with more than a hundred Dragon Scale Whales, with martial artists continuously getting injured or perishing.

The fallen martial artists plunged into the sea, becoming a feast wrapped in the bellies of the Dragon Scale Whales.

And the injured martial artists were pulled up to the ship by others for treatment.

Under the joint attack of numerous martial artists, the Dragon Scale Whales also suffered significant distress. Of the hundred-odd whales, more than half had their tough scales damaged and dived into the water to flee.

With more and more Dragon Scale Whales escaping, the martial artists standing on the ship watching nervously erupted into cheers, encouraging the adventurers who had jumped off the ship to drive the whales away. The faces of everyone revealed expressions of joy and relief.

The martial artists who had been fighting fiercely with the Dragon Scale Whales also sensed victory was near and revitalized their spirits, intensifying their attacks.

A hundred breaths later, the Whale King, responsible for commanding the hundred-odd Dragon Scale Whales to ram the ship, also seemed to realize that the situation was hopeless. It let out a sharp and urgent cry, leading all the Dragon Scale Whales to dive deep into the sea and swiftly flee.

The sea vessel, which had been continuously rocked by the impact, finally regained stability, and the martial artists on board cheered and high-fived in celebration.

"The fact that we were able to drive away the sea beasts with such a small price was all thanks to everyone's concerted efforts! Steward Wu thanks everyone here!"

After Wu Rongshan from Green Bamboo Stronghold leaped back onto the ship, and when the other martial artists had also boarded, he clasped his fists and bowed deeply to them in gratitude.

Wu Rongshan, as the steward of today's most powerful sect on Tiansheng Continent, Green Bamboo Stronghold, is also a mid-Cosmic Level expert, and the owner of this vessel. The martial artists hold him in high regard. Seeing him clasping his fists and bowing, they all returned the gesture.

"However..."

Wu Rongshan straightened up, his gaze sweeping across the nearly thousand martial artists gathered on the deck of the ship, and he spoke solemnly: "The journey to Shenwu Continent is long, and Purgatory Sea is home to ferocious sea beasts. We may also encounter extremely severe weather and difficulties. To wish for a smooth sailing is just wishful thinking..."

As he said this, he clasped his fists and bowed again, raising his voice: "Steward Wu hopes that in the coming days, should we encounter risks or crises, we can cooperate as we did today. Only by working together can we overcome the hard times and safely reach the other shore!"

"Of course!"

"This is our responsibility!"

"Don't worry, Steward Wu; we all understand the big picture!"

"Those who are too cowardly and afraid to die, unwilling to put in the effort, let's all despise him together!"

...

Martial Artists on the scene were responding one after another, many of whom had crossed the Purgatory Sea more than once and understood how important it is to work together on the sea vessel.

In the previous intense battle with the Dragon Scale Whales, not many Martial Artists were injured or perished. The vast majority were simply drained of too much True Yuan, so much so that after returning to the ship, they couldn't even stand steadily. Therefore, some Martial Artists went to their rooms to recuperate, while others simply sat cross-legged on the spacious deck to nurse their Essence Energy, aiming to recover as quickly as possible.

Fang Bai and Su Linglong chatted a few words on the deck before returning to their own rooms.

Having escaped the Dragon Scale Whales, the sea vessel continued its high-speed voyage, and two days later it had covered a thousand miles.

In the dead of night, with a full moon hanging high, the thousand Martial Artists on the ship had entered the Cultivation State, rendering the scene utterly silent.

Wu Rongshan sat alone on the lookout tower of the ship, gazing up at the full moon in the night sky, his eyes filled with a touch of worry.

The moon of days past was clear and bright, its color like silver, yet at this moment, the moon appeared dim and hazy, like a sickly beautiful lady.

Based on Wu Rongshan's past experience, such a sight foretold that in the near future, an adverse thunderstorm covering hundreds of miles would descend upon the Purgatory Sea. It was uncertain whether it would hit them directly or merely graze by them.

A thunderstorm's fury is a force of nature, with contained energy far beyond human resistance.

Adverse thunderstorm weather, with its destructive power to sea vessels even more dreadful than the previous group of Sea Beasts, would be a stroke of luck if avoided. If enveloped within it, the consequences would be unpredictable.

Furthermore, the sea vessel had encountered an unusual event so soon after setting sail — a large-scale attack by Dragon Scale Whales — which lead Wu Rongshan to infer that this voyage to the Shenwu Continent was unlikely to go smoothly.

However, in repelling the Dragon Scale Whale attack, Wu Rongshan hadn't even activated the Defensive Array set up on the ship. He felt that even if another batch of Spirit Beasts, several times fiercer, were to arrive, with the ship's own durability and the Defensive Array, they could hold their ground.

Suddenly, Wu Rongshan's gaze shifted, noticing in the distant, vast and star-twinkling night sky, swathes of dark clouds gathering. Among these clouds, Lightning Snakes flickered, and it seemed as though the sound of thunder could be heard.

"It's coming... it's coming... it seems we won't be able to avoid this storm..."

Wu Rongshan muttered to himself, suddenly standing up, and then, as if his tongue loosed spring thunder, shouted loudly: "The storm is coming! Everyone, be careful!"

His shout, infused with a trace of Cosmic Level Essence Energy, boomed like thunder, instantly awakening all the Martial Artists on the ship.

Many Martial Artists, unaware of what emergency had occurred, rushed out of their rooms half-dressed onto the deck, and approached Wu Rongshan to ask, "Steward Wu, what's the matter?"

After recuperating half a day and half a night, the Martial Artists who had driven away the Dragon Scale Whales during the day had recovered to their peak strength, and their understanding of the Martial Dao had deepened from the intense fight, feeling like they had inexhaustible strength.

Wu Rongshan didn't speak, but simply raised his right arm and pointed towards the distant night sky.

The Martial Artists on the scene followed the direction he pointed, and couldn't help but contract their pupils, each drawing a sharp breath.

Chapter 1193: The Majesty of Heaven and Earth

Dark clouds roiled, fierce winds rampaged, and thunder roared.

A storm was brewing in the night sky a dozen miles ahead of the ship, poised to descend.

Standing on the deck of the ship, the faces of the thousand martial artists looking at the apocalyptic sky ahead were filled with terror.

Even Fang Bai couldn't help but frown slightly, his expression extremely solemn.

It was the true might of nature, containing powerful destructive forces of wind, water, and thunder—True Essence Forces. Despite the considerable distance from the ship, an overwhelming pressure could be felt, oppressive and suffocating.

Even the group of formidable sea beasts that had been trailing the ship and waiting for an opportunity to strike quickly dived to the ocean floor, not daring to emerge after the skies took a turn.

"Steward Wu, we should head south or north to bypass this dangerous area!"

A martial artist, frightened, shouted.

As soon as the martial artist spoke, not only did Wu Rongshan give a wry smile and a shake of his head, but the other martial artists also knew it was impossible.

The expanse of dark clouds was boundless, covering hundreds or thousands of miles, constantly moving, with no one able to predict where it would drift next.

Moreover, the dark clouds were only a dozen miles from the ship and moving much faster than the ship, making it impossible to avoid them by turning back now.

Adverse weather was common for ships traversing the Purgatory Sea, usually handled by sailing at full speed straight through the storm.

However, for Wu Rongshan, the storm brewing within that mass of dark clouds was arguably the largest he had ever seen, leaving him somewhat uneasy, uncertain if they could pass through it safely as they had before.

"Everyone, please rest assured, this ship is large and sturdy, and with a Defensive Array in place, it has safely withstood countless storms before. I believe it will be safe this time as well!"

Wu Rongshan spoke loudly.

Hearing his words, those martial artists, originally frightened and panicked, felt a bit more at ease.

Yet, some of the more experienced martial artists wore worried looks, thinking that such a fearsome display of elemental might is not so easily withstood. Whether they would survive this time would be up to fate.

Under Wu Rongshan's direction, the sailors poured more Essence Stones into the ship's drive to accelerate towards the black clouds, hoping to dash through the danger zone at the highest speed.

The dozen or so miles of sea passed in an instant, and the massive ship, like an arrow, pierced into the sea area beneath the dark clouds.

Below the dark clouds, visibility was almost nil, but many places on the ship were embedded with Essence Stones whose light was enough to dispel the fearful darkness, offering some comfort to the martial artists aboard.

While the storm was still incubating and had not yet fully unleashed its terrifying might, the martial artists could already feel the winds growing several times stronger than before.

"The wind is so strong!"

A weaker martial artist, unable to stand steady against the howling winds, cried out and ran into his room to take shelter.

Under the shroud of dark clouds, the Water Element Qi grew denser, which, upon reaching a certain saturation, would turn into a torrential downpour.

Looking up at the low-hanging dark clouds in the night sky, one could see strands of Lightning Snakes gathering, growing thicker and ready to transform into bolts of lightning striking down at any moment.

Under the force of the wind, the seawater was lifted several yards high, wave after wave crashing and battering the ship, the massive vessel swaying like a drunken man, seemingly at the brink of capsizing at any moment.

This scene was even more ferocious than when the Dragon Whales rammed into the ship just a while ago, but fortunately, the martial artists were fully prepared, and there was no repeat of martial artists falling into the sea as before.

"Brother Fang, we won't have any trouble, will we?"

Standing beside Fang Bai, Dongfang Ruhua saw the slight frown on Fang Bai's brow, seemingly worried, and with her bright, clear eyes that were black and white and sparkling like water, she blinked and asked softly.

Dongfang Ruhua possessed an Innate Thunder Spirit Root, not only was she not afraid of thunder and lightning, but she also felt a natural affinity for it. From time to time, she looked up at the electric snakes gathering in the night sky, her expression clearly exhilarated.

"Of course there won't be any trouble."

Although Fang Bai was not optimistic about the ship's ability to withstand the assault of the storm, it was not a time for disheartening words; he smiled and gently patted Dongfang Ruhua's head, saying, "Even if there really is trouble, I will keep you all safe!"

Fang Bai had many life-saving measures. Despite the imminent storm making him feel quite troubled, it was not enough to leave him helpless and waiting to die.

Even if the ship were to be torn apart, capsizing and sinking amidst the raging storm and thunderous lightning, he had ways to lead Su Linglong, Dongfang Ruhua, and the others out of the predicament and to escape to safety.

When Fang Bai was in the Secular World, he liked to occasionally pat Dongfang Ruhua's head; it was a habitual act that also showed a very intimate relationship between the two.

Dongfang Ruhua enjoyed Fang Bai patting her head; she felt it was a sign that Fang Bai favored her even more.

Under the envious gazes of Su Linglong and the other women, Dongfang Ruhua quietly moved closer to Fang Bai, her upper body nearly nestled in his arms.

A hint of joy appeared on her pretty face, her lips held a shy smile, her eyes squinted contentedly like a cat, sniffing the masculine scent of Fang Bai which she found deeply intoxicating, looking utterly at ease.

Among Fang Bai's female companions, Dongfang Ruhua was the youngest and purest, without any craftiness, and thus had a good relationship with the others, almost like sisters.

At this moment, the affectionate interaction between Dongfang Ruhua and Fang Bai was noticed by Su Linglong, Linghu Qianjiao, and Linghu Baimei who all laughed quietly, showing no sign of jealousy.

Zhuge Lian had met Fang Bai in the True Martial Realm and had only recently gotten acquainted with Dongfang Ruhua; not yet very familiar with her, she fancied Fang Bai and seeing Dongfang Ruhua so intimate with him, she couldn't help but pout slightly, feeling a bit of heartache.

"Boom!"

Right at that moment, a thunderous explosion struck amidst the dark clouds overhead, startling nearly everyone on the ship, who then looked up.

"The storm... has finally arrived!"

Fang Bai looked up at the sky, his eyes shining with sharp glints, murmuring to himself.

"Crack!"

A thick bolt of lightning struck down from the dark clouds, illuminating the entire night sky, the display shockingly majestic.

The next moment, torrential rain poured down.

The majesty of heaven and earth was fully displayed at this time.

Despite the intensity of the wind and the rain not being lethal, and the martial artists not fearing it, the lightning bolts that kept piercing through the clouds were enough to make them panic-stricken, forcing them to run into rooms on the ship to take cover.

Chapter 1194: Good Time for Cultivation

The huge ship, amidst the storm and torrential rain, sped through the waves that crashed against its hull with deafening booms, causing the ship to shake violently.

Most martial artists on the ship had already retreated to their rooms to hide from the storm and the threat of lightning, to prevent any injuries or fatalities under the terrifying natural power.

Those who remained on the deck were relatively stronger, yet even they turned pale and anxious. Some martial artists could only stand firm by tightly grasping onto fixed objects on the ship to prevent themselves from being thrown into the sea.

Accompanied by thunderous roars, lightning snakes burst out from the dark clouds, slashing across the sky with dazzling white light and tearing through the dark space to strike the turbulent sea.

The seawater struck by the lightning exploded and splashed, throwing up terrifying waves.

Crack!

A bolt of lightning, about one foot thick, struck precisely on the ship's highest crow's nest.

Despite the crow's nest being built from extremely durable millennial wood, stronger than iron and stone, the force of the lightning is one of the most destructive forces in nature and easily cracked the lookout, then under the fierce gales, it swayed for a moment before finally collapsing with a crash.

This scene shocked the martial artists who were still on deck, making them realize that their own bodies were not as tough as iron and stone. It would be wiser to temporarily hide in the rooms of the ship, which offered several layers of roofing and far greater safety than the outside.

"Elder Fang, Elder Wu, it is dangerous outside, please come inside the rooms to take shelter for now!"

Wu Rongshan said to Fang Bai and the others.

Wu Rongshan, a Cosmic Level Expert, has a very sharp sense of the crisis. He had moved away from the crow's nest just before the lightning struck it, avoiding the disaster.

Although the crow's nest was destroyed, Wu Rongshan wasn't upset as there was a large amount of lumber stored in the ship's warehouse, which could be used to rebuild it once the storm clears.

"Steward Wu, doesn't the ship have a Defensive Array? Why not activate it?"

Zhuge Lian, an Innate Fire Spirit Root, asked. At the moment, the natural forces were dominated by wind, water, and thunder essence Qi, especially filled with Water Element Qi, making her somewhat fearful. After Wu Rongshan finished speaking, she asked.

Wu Rongshan replied with a wry smile, "Though there is a Defensive Array set up on the ship, activating and maintaining the array requires a huge amount of Essence Stones. The operational cost is astronomical, and the Essence Stones we have are limited. Therefore, unless absolutely necessary, we won't activate the Defensive Array..."

Zhuge Lian pouted and said, "There are thousands of martial artists on the ship, and doesn't each person carry quite a few Essence Stones? If everyone contributes some, together it could amount to a lot!"

Fang Bai said with a smile, "Xiao Lian, do you know that once the ship's Defensive Array is activated, it requires about one million Essence Stones to maintain for just two hours? How much do you think the martial artists on the ship can contribute?"

"Ah! It takes that many?"

Zhuge Lian stuck out her tongue in disbelief, silently calculating in her heart. Wondering when the ship would sail out of the storm zone, she realized that it certainly wouldn't be possible within a few hours. Calculating the amount of Essence Stones needed was indeed daunting.

"Elder Fang is right!"

Wu Rongshan knew that Fang Bai was an Array Master. Before coming to Purgatory Sea, he even set up a Defensive Array for the headquarters of Green Bamboo Stronghold, so he straightforwardly mentioned the amount of Essence Stones needed to operate the ship's Defensive Array and didn't find it strange.

He paused briefly and then Wu Rongshan added: "Moreover, we have only traveled a short distance of our sea journey, and if we consume a large amount of Essence Stones here, we'll have no means to cope with other dangerous situations later! So... the situation isn't particularly dire right now, let's wait and see... wait and see..."

At this moment, the greatest threat to the ship was not the fierce winds and heavy rain, but the lightning constantly striking down from the dark clouds. Fortunately, the lightning was sparse, not dense, and the chances of it hitting the ship were very small. If they were lucky enough to pass through the storm area, they wouldn't need to activate the Defensive Array and could save a lot of Essence Stones.

"Linglong, Xiao Lian, Wu De, Ghost Hand, Niu Ben, Hero, all of you return to your rooms on the ship! Ruhua, Qian Jiao, Baimei, the three of you stay with me on the deck!"

Fang Bai suddenly said loudly.

"Brother Fang, why are you guys staying behind?"

Su Linglong asked, puzzled.

The others also looked at Fang Bai, baffled.

Fang Bai looked up at the night sky, his eyes gleamed with a strange light and he grinned, saying, "Ruhua has an Innate Thunder Spirit Root, Qian Jiao and Baimei possess Water Spirit Roots. In the eyes of other Martial Artists, this storm is full of danger, but for the three of them, it's a great opportunity for cultivation... Although there's some risk, I'll protect them!"

Su Linglong and the others suddenly realized, knowing that the Martial Arts Techniques taught by Fang Bai were extremely special, unimaginably powerful for ordinary Martial Artists. Perhaps Dongfang Ruhua and the two other women could really use this natural force to advance to the next realm, and they couldn't help but feel envious.

"Elder Fang, this... isn't this inappropriate?"

Wu Rongshan felt that Fang Bai's idea was utterly mad and couldn't help but frown and advise.

In Wu Rongshan's view, the terror of the natural forces far exceeded common understanding, and how could ordinary Martial Artists withstand and counter it? Although Fang Bai could easily kill Cosmic Level perfection experts and had the power comparable to Universe Level Experts, he might not be able to withstand a strike of lightning, let alone Dongfang Ruhua, Linghu Qian Jiao, and Linghu Baimei who only had Vast Level initial stage Cultivation Levels?

Even though Dongfang Ruhua had an Innate Thunder Spirit Root and was naturally close to lightning, her realm and cultivation level were too weak, her meridians surely weren't strong enough, and her Qi Sea was not vast enough. She likely couldn't handle the sudden influx of a large amount of Thunder Essence Qi, potentially leading to an explosion of her body.

Since Fang Bai was an Elder of Tribute at Green Bamboo Stronghold, and Dongfang Ruhua, Linghu Qian Jiao, and Linghu Baimei were his friends, Wu Rongshan naturally couldn't bear to see them encounter any mishaps, so he voiced his concerns.

Fang Bai knew Wu Rongshan meant well, and he smiled, saying, "Elder Wu, do not worry, since I have decided to do this, I naturally have confidence. It's dangerous to stay out here, you all should find cover as well!"

Wu Rongshan still thought Fang Bai was just being impetuous, and after a few more attempts to dissuade him, seeing that Fang Bai was determined, he gave up, joining the crew in the ship's control room to continue navigating forward.

For a moment, only Fang Bai, Dongfang Ruhua, Linghu Qian Jiao, and Linghu Baimei remained on the vast ship deck.

Fang Bai had Linghu Qian Jiao and Linghu Baimei sit cross-legged on the deck, circulating their Cultivation Techniques and eagerly absorbing the dense and abundant Water Element Qi brought by the storm for cultivation.

Meanwhile, Dongfang Ruhua stood at the very front of the ship, arms spread wide, looking up to the sky, waiting for the lightning to strike down.

Around her, the Thunder Essence Qi gathered, forming thin Lightning Snakes, flickering and shimmering unpredictably, seemingly calling to the lightning in the dark clouds.

Chapter 1195: Survival After Catastrophe.

Fang Bai stood between Dongfang Ruhua, Linghu Qianjiao, and Linghu Baimei, his expression solemn and fully on guard.

Linghu Qianjiao and Linghu Baimei utilized Water Element Qi for their cultivation; no matter how strong the rainfall, it would not cause them harm.

The only one Fang Bai was worried about was Dongfang Ruhua. Although she practiced high-level Martial Arts Techniques, it was uncertain whether her delicate body could withstand a lightning strike.

However, Fang Bai had already prepared himself. Should he sense that the strength of the descending lightning far exceeded the tolerance of Dongfang Ruhua's body, he would intervene in time to rescue her.

While remaining vigilant, Fang Bai himself was not idle. Although he stood there, the Chaos Origin Energy within his Qi Sea was already circulating at high speed.

In an instant, the Wind and Water Element Qi between the sea and sky within dozens of miles centered on his body began to surge crazily into him.

The range covered by this storm was unknown, possibly spanning hundreds or thousands of miles, where the Wind and Water Element Qi were exceptionally abundant. Had it been another Martial Artist cultivating here, the Qi Sea and meridians might soon have burst from the sudden influx of massive amounts of Essence Energy.

Yet, Fang Bai's body seemed like a bottomless pit; to other Martial Artists, the Essence Energy sufficient to burst their Qi Seas and meridians was merely an "appetizer" to him.

A hundred breaths later, Linghu Qianjiao and Linghu Baimei had absorbed enough Water Element Qi and began entering the Cultivation State to refine that Essence Energy.

Their process of refining Essence Energy was essentially to discard the dregs and keep the essence, making the Essence Energy purer, before ultimately allowing all streams to flow into the Qi Sea to be stored.

"Annoying thunder and lightning, why can't it strike me!"

Noticing that Fang Bai, Linghu Qianjiao, and Linghu Baimei were already enveloped by swirling Essence Energy and had entered the Cultivation State, Dongfang Ruhua at the ship's bow became anxious, raising her head and crying out loudly.

To her great disappointment, besides the mast of the ship that had been struck earlier, the rest of the lightning from the dark clouds continuously struck the vast boundless sea.

For other Martial Artists on the ship, this was a fortunate event. However, for Dongfang Ruhua, who was keen on using lightning for cultivation, it was incredibly frustrating.

Whether in the Secular World or in this one of the three thousand Minor Worlds, the True Martial Realm, Fang Bai had not found any Thunder Essence Stones.

Compared to other types of Essence Stones, Thunder Essence Stones were hard to form and extremely rare. Even in the Cultivation World and Immortal Realm that Fang Bai was previously in, Thunder Essence Stones were exceedingly scarce.

Therefore, many Thunder System Martial Artists who lacked Thunder Essence Stones had to risk their lives to cultivate using the natural Elemental Qi of lightning.

This was also an act born out of necessity.

However, cultivating with lightning also depended on opportunity; without it, even if a myriad of lightning strikes passed overhead, not one would hit the body.

Just like the current Dongfang Ruhua, while everyone fears being struck by lightning, she longed to be struck by it yet could not achieve it.

In a blink, another hundred breaths passed, and Fang Bai's meridians and Qi Sea finally filled with Essence Energy, beginning the refinement phase.

Linghu Qianjiao and Linghu Baimei had only absorbed Water Element Qi, whereas Fang Bai had absorbed both Wind and Water Element Qi, merely in terms of Water Element Qi, he had absorbed several times more than the combined amount of the Linghu sisters.

However, after refining this abundant dual-type Essence Energy using his Cultivation Technique, it transformed into two traces of minute, pure Essence Energy, merging with the Chaos Origin Energy floating in Fang Bai's Qi Sea.

Never underestimate these two traces of pure Essence Energy; the power contained within any single trace once released could challenge even a Cosmic Level Expert.

The massive sea ship, cutting through the wind and cleaving the waves, narrowly dodged one lightning strike after another and sailed forward at high speed for over two dozen hours.

"Look, there's light in the sky ahead!"

"Just another ten-plus miles, and we'll be out of the storm-covered area!"

"We will be safe very soon!"

"Heaven has not forsaken us!"

...

The martial artists hiding in their rooms aboard the ship, while peering through their windows, continuously monitored the skies outside. Some martial artists spotted that the eastern sky, ten miles away, was no longer covered by dark clouds, and they couldn't contain their excitement; a few who thought themselves to be strong impulsively rushed shouting onto the deck.

Su Linglong, Ghost Hand, and others also came up to the deck with joyful expressions.

As the captain of this sea ship, Wu Rongshan also left the control room to examine the damage to the lookout post, so that it could be repaired in time after the ship escaped the storm area.

Fang Bai, Linghu Qian Jiao, and Linghu Baimei, before other martial artists appeared on the deck, had already exited their cultivation state and opened their eyes to rise.

If an attentive person were observing Fang Bai and the two Linghu individuals at this moment, they would notice some subtle changes in them.

These subtle changes indicated that the strength of the three had significantly improved.

"All of you have made great progress in your strength, but I have not improved at all..."

Dongfang Ruhua returned from the front end of the ship to Fang Bai and the others' side, her beautiful eyes examining them as she spoke with both envy and frustration.

"Cultivation for a martial artist not only depends on talent and the amount of cultivation resources but also largely on chance. This time it might just not be your moment; perhaps your opportunity is coming soon."

Fang Bai said, comforting her with a smile.

"Then I'll borrow your auspicious words, Brother Fang!"

Dongfang Ruhua is an extroverted personality, youthful, lively, and cheerful; she was merely a bit down just now, but after Fang Bai consoled her, she was all smiles again.

When the sea ship burst forth from the storm and saw the sunlight again, the martial artists aboard the ship gathered back on the deck, cheering to celebrate their narrow escape.

The experienced crew members, under Captain Wu Rongshan's command, quickly repaired the damaged lookout post. Afterwards, Wu Rongshan checked the consumption of Essence Stones and couldn't help but show a bitter smile.

This voyage, the sea ship carried over a thousand passengers and collected tens of millions of Essence Stones. Before setting sail, half was handed over to Elder Qiu Menglan of Reception Hall to take back to Green Bamboo Stronghold headquarters; the rest was managed by Wu Rongshan. A part was kept in the several Spatial Rings Wu Rongshan carried, and another part was stored in the ship's underdeck warehouse.

These Essence Stones were used to power the ship's sailing and to activate and maintain the defensive formations set up on the ship.

Earlier, in order to speed through the storm area quickly, a large amount of Essence Stones was spent to accelerate the ship. Now upon calculating, Wu Rongshan found that they had spent millions of Essence Stones, which was about one-tenth to one-fifth of the total amount they had brought, causing him great distress.

But on second thought, considering the vast scale of this storm, a once-in-a-lifetime event, and the fact that the ship was not severely damaged and there were few casualties among the martial artists aboard, spending so many Essence Stones was considered worthwhile.

Chapter 1196: The Strange Formation of Misty Island

After enduring a siege of sea beasts and the test of heaven and earth's might for more than a dozen hours, the martial artists aboard the sea vessel had greatly strengthened their mental resilience.

During the thousands of miles of sea journey that followed, although the ship encountered several large-scale attacks by sea beasts, the martial artists united as one, bringing the situation under control.

Now, the only one on the ship who hoped for stormy weather again was Dongfang Ruhua.

Every day, she would run to the ship's deck multiple times, looking up into the sky in all directions, muttering to herself, "Thunder and lightning, follow my wishes, appear quickly..."

However, day after day passed with a tranquil sea under a clear sky. Dongfang Ruhua was deeply disappointed, but the other martial artists were overjoyed, hoping to safely reach Shenwu Continent just like this.

"We are approaching Misty Island now."

One morning, Wu Rongshan stood on the ship's lookout post, peering into the distance where mist was spreading, and loudly addressed the gathered martial artists on deck: "Our ship will stop at Mist Island Port for one day to resupply. If any of you need to exchange cultivation resources, feel free to go ashore and take a look at the Martial Artists Trading Market on the island."

"Steward Wu, what kind of place is Misty Island?"

Dongfang Ruhua looked up at Wu Rongshan, asking curiously.

Although Dongfang Ruhua was young and only at the initial stage of the Vast Level, Wu Rongshan respected her due to her close relationship with Fang Bai. He smiled and replied, "Miss Dongfang, Misty Island is an island on the Purgatory Sea, and it is a necessary stop for ships from Tiansheng Continent heading to Shenwu Continent. Ships from Tiansheng Continent that pass by Misty Island almost always dock at its port for replenishment."

Dongfang Ruhua uttered an "Oh" and continued to ask, "Is Misty Island very big? Does it have permanent residents?"

Wu Rongshan said, "Misty Island is roughly a thousand square miles, quite a large island indeed! There are about ten thousand permanent residents on the island..."

Dongfang Ruhua remarked, "A thousand square miles with only about ten thousand people doesn't seem too crowded!"

Wu Rongshan said, "The population might be small, but don't underestimate those ten thousand people. They have moved there from various places in the True Martial Realm, and each person's strength is incredibly powerful. It is said that the majority are Cosmic Level Experts, and there might even be Universe Level Experts. The most critical point is that the island's residents are very unified. No matter what happens, they always stick together..."

"Just think about it, nearly ten thousand unified Cosmic Level Experts—how powerful is such a force? Anyway, it's much stronger than any second-level Sect, and it is not outclassed compared to first-level Sects! As a result, for many years, countless ships have passed by Misty Island, yet no one dares to cause trouble on the island!"

As Wu Rongshan said this, he glanced towards the dense fog ahead, his eyes reflecting a look of reverence.

"Wow, that's amazing!"

Dongfang Ruhua stuck out her little tongue and blinked her big eyes, her pretty face expressing astonishment.

Before this, the strongest sect Dongfang Ruhua had witnessed was Green Bamboo Stronghold, a second-level Sect. Even Green Bamboo Stronghold only had a dozen or so Cosmic Level Experts. But on Misty Island, nearly ten thousand Cosmic Level Experts were gathered—how terrifying must their collective strength be?

"Steward Wu, are there any fun places on Misty Island? I heard the scenery on the island is extremely beautiful!"

Zhuge Lian asked.

Having spent her childhood within the Sect, Zhuge Lian seldom ventured out for training. Free from the Sect on this occasion and accompanying Fang Bai in the search for her mother, she felt like a bird released from its cage, her mood soaring. Moreover, being a girl of merely seventeen or eighteen, naturally playful at heart, the thought of Misty Island hanging isolated in the sea, untouched and undisturbed by the rest of the world, and home to a handful of powerful residents, undoubtedly made it seem like a paradisiac refuge, sparking an endless longing in her.

Wu Rongshan nodded and said, "In the area of Misty Island, the sea is azure and the sky is blue, filled with abundant Essence Energy. The island is surrounded by green mountains and clear waters, with a variety of Spiritual Medicines planted everywhere – the scenery is indeed extremely beautiful! But if we're talking about fun places... for us Martial Artists, naturally it's the Martial Artists Trading Market on the island!"

Zhuge Lian said, "The Martial Artists Trading Market is nothing more than a place for Martial Artists to exchange or trade Cultivation Resources, not interesting... not interesting..."

Wu Rongshan smiled and said, "Ordinary Cultivation Resources may not intrigue Miss Zhuge, but... there are high-grade Frostflower Grass, Blood Jade Vine, Purple Bamboo Leaves, and even Beauty Ganoderma available there... I wonder if Miss Zhuge might be interested?"

Zhuge Lian's eyes shone brighter as Wu Rongshan mentioned those varieties of Spiritual Medicine. She had heard of them, and they were known for their excellent benefits to a woman's appearance.

Especially the Beauty Ganoderma, which is the main ingredient for crafting Youth Retaining Pills. These pills can preserve a woman's youth and prevent aging of her face. If Misty Island truly has high-grade Beauty Ganoderma, it would surely drive countless women of the True Martial Realm insane with desire.

While everyone was talking, the sea ship entered the foggy area ahead, slowing down and proceeding gently.

The dense fog surrounding Misty Island is said to form naturally, existing all year round. Wu Rongshan and others had grown accustomed to seeing the pervasive and lingering mist every time they passed through this sea area near Misty Island.

Moreover, sea ships that usually pass by Misty Island are commonly equipped with a compass to guide their way, ensuring that they don't lose their sense of direction.

However, in Fang Bai's eyes, the thick fog was not actual fog but an illusion created by a massive Illusory Formation.

Perhaps the person who initially set up this Illusory Formation did not want the existence of this secluded island to be discovered, to avoid disturbing the peace. However, for some reason, this island has now become a well-known waypoint for sea ships traversing the Purgatory Sea.

Fang Bai deduced that whoever set up such a vast Formation must be at least an Array Master with Innate Cultivation Level, and it would require tens of millions of Essence Stones and at least several months or even years to succeed.

This Formation, established by an Innate Expert, would naturally be inscrutable to ordinary Martial Artists. However, for Fang Bai, breaking this Formation to disperse the fog is not a difficult task; it would only take some time and effort.

Fang Bai wasn't sure if the Innate Expert who created the Formation lived on Misty Island, but if they did, he was quite keen on meeting them.

After all, Innate Experts are the pinnacle of the Martial Dao in this world, and Fang Bai held a great deal of interest in them. He pondered that once an Innate Expert takes one more step forward, they would reach Foundation Establishment, marking the beginning of a new Martial Dao Realm. Engaging with Innate Experts could provide insights into the Cultivation World, known as the Three Thousand Great Worlds – the place of Fang Bai's past life.

However, Fang Bai bore no malice towards the inhabitants of Misty Island and had no intention of disrupting the Formation. He simply stood on the sea ship, exerting all his might to release his Divine Sense, exploring the surroundings, and hoping to detect the presence of some Innate Experts.

Chapter 1197: Bizarre

About half a two-hour period later, the ship passed through the dense fog, and the scenery ahead became suddenly clear.

"That is Misty Island!"

On the ship, a martial artist pointed forward and shouted excitedly.

The other martial artists looked intently and saw a huge island in the distance, about ten miles away, seemingly boundless.

From afar, many continuous mountain peaks stood tall on the island, some with elevations reaching thousands of meters, appearing majestic.

The pure and rich Essence Energy continuously released from the island enveloped the sea area, and the martial artists on the ship bathed in this Essence Energy, each of them revitalized.

"It was said by martial artists that cultivating for one day on Misty Island is equivalent to two days outside. No wonder many martial artists who come to Misty Island do not want to leave and wish to reside here permanently. The purity and richness of Essence Energy here are incomparable to the outside world!"

Wu Rongshan muttered to himself, contentedly absorbing the Essence Energy around him, his face showing a hint of envy.

When Wu Rongshan passed by Misty Island years ago, he was also attracted by the cultivation environment here and wanted to become a resident of the island. Unfortunately, he did not pass the selection by the island's higher-ups and could only continue honestly as the steward of Green Bamboo Stronghold, often regretting it.

Even now, Wu Rongshan has not given up on becoming a resident of Misty Island, and many martial artists from various places hold the same idea every year.

Every year, Misty Island selects some foreign martial artists to grant them island citizenship. Those who become islanders feel it is a great honor, while those who are not chosen feel extremely disappointed.

The selection of island citizens on Misty Island is very strict, requiring top-notch talent and prioritizing those with Innate Spiritual Roots and young men... These stipulations strike some martial artists as odd, but they dare not raise any objections.

However, Wu Rongshan has never mentioned this to anyone, fearing that if he fails to become an island citizen and the news spreads to the ears of Green Bamboo Stronghold disciples, even if the Stronghold Chief Gu Li is kind and does not blame him, he probably would not have the face to stay in Green Bamboo Stronghold.

Upon reaching the port of Misty Island, they found that there were already more than ten ships docked there, including ships from the second-ranked Sects of the Tiansheng Continent, Falcon Mountain, and Swiftwind Valley, as well as ships from other continents.

Although Swiftwind Valley had already perished, before its destruction, some ships had already sailed out, and the disciples of Swiftwind Valley onboard were still unaware that their Sect no longer existed.

After paying a sum of cultivation resources to the Misty Island residents stationed at the port, Wu Rongshan instructed the crew to dock the ship well, and then he left the ship alone and strode away.

Before leaving, Wu Rongshan again warned the martial artists on the ship that they could go exploring on the island as they pleased, but they must return to the ship by this time tomorrow, or they would be left behind.

Wu Rongshan was heading to the Immortal Mist Peak of Misty Island, where the strongest leaders among the nearly ten thousand island residents lived. To become an island citizen, one must obtain the consent of these leaders.

Wu Rongshan wanted to try his luck again; if he still didn't succeed this time, he decided to completely give up and stay honestly in Green Bamboo Stronghold.

Nearly a thousand martial artists on the ship also disembarked after Wu Rongshan, heading to explore the island. Most of them planned to visit the Martial Artists Trading Market to see if there were any cultivation resources they needed.

"Brother Fang, it's so boring on the ship. Let's go play on the island too!"

Zhuge Lian, unable to contain his excitement, eagerly suggested.

"Having been stuck on the sea ship for nearly two months, I'm suffocating! It's good to go to the island for a change of pace!"

Dongfang Ruhua also stated crisply.

"Since there's a Martial Artists Trading Market, Taoist Master here won't miss it! Everyone, I'm going ahead, see you tomorrow!"

Wu De shouted as he leaped onto the shore, grabbed a martial artist to inquire about the location of the Martial Artists Trading Market, then his figure flickered and he disappeared in an instant.

Although Su Linglong, Linghu Qian Jiao, and Linghu Baimei didn't say anything, their expressions showed interest.

As for Ghost Hand, Niu Ben, and Xiong Yingxiong, they only looked up to Fang Bai. Whatever Fang Bai said, they would do without uttering an extra word.

"Those who want to go to the island to have fun, I'll accompany you. Those who want to stay on the ship, just stay honestly on the ship and don't wander off!"

As Fang Bai spoke, his gaze swept over the Misty Island in front of him, a strange light flickering in his eyes.

For some reason, as Fang Bai approached Misty Island, his first instinct made him feel that this paradise-like island exuded a peculiar and eerie aura, and there seemed to be the smell of blood spreading.

If it weren't for Fang Bai's extremely sensitive senses, far beyond ordinary martial artists, he wouldn't have noticed such abnormalities.

It was precisely because he noticed these abnormalities that Fang Bai became cautious and wanted to accompany Dongfang Ruhua, Zhuge Lian, and others to the island for fun, in case of any unforeseen incidents.

Previously Wu Rongshan mentioned that there were nearly ten thousand Cosmic Level Experts on Misty Island; as Fang Bai approached, he knew this statement was true, and the waves of Cosmic Level aura emanating from the island chilled his heart.

And at the highest peak of Misty Island, there seemed to be several auras that transcended Cosmic Level Experts, which especially alarmed Fang Bai.

Therefore, under Fang Bai's leadership, Dongfang Ruhua, Zhuge Lian, and the others, including Ghost Hand, left the ship and went ashore, walking along a flat avenue towards the deeper parts of the island.

Along the way, they encountered many martial artists, some from past sea ships and some islanders dressed in clothes the same color as the sea.

Fang Bai noticed that the majority of Misty Island's islanders were indeed Cosmic Level Experts, most of them robust and handsome men, with very few female martial artists to be seen.

The islanders of Misty Island, with stern expressions and hurried footsteps, rarely spoke or laughed, their bodies exuding the same eerie aura.

Fang Bai could determine that these islanders practiced some kind of demonic and evil cultivation technique, and each one had their hands stained with a lot of blood.

Initially, Fang Bai and the others were just wandering around, enjoying the beautiful scenery of the island without a specific goal. Later, it was Zhuge Lian who thought of Beauty Ganoderma, a spiritual medicine that could be used to refine Youth Retaining Pills, and so proposed to visit the Martial Artists Trading Market on the island.

The Martial Artists Trading Market on Misty Island is located in a large square at the foot of the highest peak, Immortal Mist Mountain. Since the islanders allowed sea ships to dock at the port, this place has always been the busiest and most bustling spot on Misty Island.

When Fang Bai and others reached the large square, they found over ten thousand people engaging in transactions, most of them being martial artists from various places passing by on sea ships, and a small portion being islanders.

The transactions they were engaged in involved high-grade cultivation resources. Middle-grade and lower cultivation resources were hardly given a second glance here.

Chapter 1198: Beauty Ganoderma

Fang Bai and his group had just appeared in the square at the foot of Immortal Mist Mountain when more than a dozen residents of Misty Island approached them, asking if they needed to exchange cultivation resources.

Although the residents hid it well, Fang Bai, who was extremely sensitive, still caught some oddities in their expressions and gazes.

While striking up a conversation with Fang Bai and the others, the residents' eyes twinkled, their looks shifted back and forth on them, and they quietly released a breath that enveloped Fang Bai and his group, secretly probing their strength.

Upon discovering that Fang Bai and his group were all at the Vast Level of cultivation, the interest of those Misty Island residents seemed to significantly diminish, and they returned to the square one by one to trade with other martial artists.

The vast majority of residents on Misty Island were Cosmic Level Experts, each of them proud and lofty. In their eyes, martial artists at the Vast Level like Fang Bai were no different than ants, unworthy of mention.

Moreover, in the eyes of the Misty Island residents, martial artists like Fang Bai with Vast Level strength were too weak, thus it was naturally unlikely for them to possess any high-grade cultivation resources worth exchanging, so they simply lost interest in them.

"If you have nothing else to do, you can go up to our Immortal Mist Peak on Misty Island to test your strength and physical aptitude. It's okay if your strength is a bit weak, as long as your physical aptitude is good, perhaps our leader will take special care of you and allow you to join Misty Island and become a resident."

Before leaving, a resident of Misty Island with mid-stage Cosmic Level strength left Fang Bai and the others with these words.

"What's so great about becoming a resident of Misty Island? We're not interested!"

Zhuge Lian stuck out her tongue at the backs of the departing Misty Island residents and snorted.

She now wholeheartedly wanted to follow Fang Bai through the continents of True Martial Realm and search for news of her mother; even if a top-tier sect invited her, she would not be tempted.

Zhuge Lian was merely curious about the mysterious Misty Island and wanted to enjoy its beautiful seascape; she could consider living here briefly, but if asked to become a permanent resident and stay here long-term, she would definitely refuse.

Not just Zhuge Lian, but Dongfang Ruhua and the others felt the same, they had long decided to follow Fang Bai in this life, wherever Fang Bai went, they would follow.

Fang Bai, deep in thought, glanced at the towering Immortal Mist Peak, a flicker of peculiar light flashed in his eyes, then he pointed towards the lively Martial Artists Trading Market ahead and said to Su Linglong and the others, "There are many Cosmic Level experts on this Misty Island, and when they trade among themselves, they must have some good items. Let's go have a look."

Saying this, he took the lead and walked into the Martial Artists Trading Market, where tens of thousands of people had gathered.

Su Linglong and the others, who had never experienced such a grand scene with nearly ten thousand Cosmic Level Experts, felt both nervous and excited, closely following behind Fang Bai.

In the Martial Artists Trading Market, where tens of thousands of people were gathered, eighty percent were Cosmic Level experts. Although no one deliberately released their oppressive aura, Su Linglong and the others could still feel an intangible pressure.

However, Su Linglong and the others soon discovered that as long as they did not stray far from Fang Bai, the invisible pressure would not affect them, so they all tried to keep a relatively close distance to Fang Bai, not daring to wander too far.

"Beauty Ganoderma... Beauty Ganoderma... where is it..."

Zhuge Lian muttered to herself, her gaze sweeping over the stalls of various martial artists, her face full of anticipation.

Zhuge Lian knew Fang Bai was an alchemist capable of refining high-grade elixirs, and she thought that if she could find and acquire a high-grade Spiritual Medicine like Beauty Ganoderma, she might be able to obtain a high-grade Youth Retaining Pill.

Fang Bai's success rate in alchemy is extremely high; according to Zhuge Lian's own words, since she became acquainted with Fang Bai, she has never seen him fail even once. His success rate could be said to be a unique hundred percent in the True Martial Realm.

That is to say, if Zhuge Lian can obtain the Beauty Ganoderma, Fang Bai would be able to craft a bottle of Youth Retaining Pills for her.

Although she has yet to find the Beauty Ganoderma, Zhuge Lian has already begun pondering how to allocate the Youth Retaining Pills.

"One bottle of Youth Retaining Pills contains ten pills; even if I give one each to Su Linglong, Dongfang Ruhua, Linghu Qian Jiao, and Linghu Baimei, I will still have plenty left..."

High-quality Youth Retaining Pills are rare and expensive throughout the world. If it were someone else, Zhuge Lian would definitely not give them away, but for the four ladies including Su Linglong, she would not be stingy.

Zhuce Lian has long harbored feelings for Fang Bai, but she also knows that the four women including Su Linglong knew Fang Bai in the Secular World before her. Being late to the party, Zhuge Lian hopes to use the Youth Retaining Pills to close the distance with these women so she might integrate into their circle rather than be ostracized.

In fact, women like Su Linglong have never thought of excluding Zhuge Lian; it was just Zhuge Lian's own overthinking.

Furthermore, Zhuge Lian does not know that apart from these four women, Fang Bai has a few more female confidantes who have yet to be found; otherwise, her Youth Retaining Pills might not be enough to go around.

"Xiao Lian, the Beauty Ganoderma you're looking for is over there!"

Knowing Zhuge Lian's eagerness to get the Beauty Ganoderma, Fang Bai had already expanded his Divine Sense to cover the entire market, and suddenly pointed towards the central area of the Martial Artists Trading Market.

"Wow! Brother Fang, is there really Beauty Ganoderma here?"

Zhuce Lian lit up upon hearing this, and seeing Fang Bai nod with a smile, she could no longer restrain her excitement and immediately walked briskly towards the direction Fang Bai pointed.

Women naturally cherish beauty, and the number of women crazy for beauty is not few.

Su Linglong and the other three women also knew that Beauty Ganoderma was the main ingredient in crafting Youth Retaining Pills, which have a miraculous effect on women's appearance. Seeing Zhuge Lian going to look for Beauty Ganoderma, they glanced at each other and followed her, leaving Fang Bai and the other men behind.

"Let's not join in the excitement of the women!"

Fang Bai watched as Su Linglong and the others quickly walked away, then shook his head helplessly. He then said to Ghost Hand, Niu Ben, and Xiong Yingxiong, "It seems Wu De is in some trouble, let's go have a look!"

At this moment, Fang Bai's Divine Sense was covering the whole Martial Artists Trading Market. Even if Su Linglong and the others encountered danger, Fang Bai would be able to protect them immediately.

Though Wu De is somewhat selfish and always prioritizes personal interests, he still comes from the Secular World like Fang Bai and has shared both joys and sorrows with him. If Wu De is in trouble, Fang Bai won't just stand by and watch.

The four men swiftly moved past various stalls, and within a few moments, they arrived at a stall on the east side of the Martial Artists Trading Market, where they saw Wu De, his face red with exertion, arguing with an inhabitant of Misty Island.

The inhabitant from Misty Island was a Cosmic Level initial stage expert, tall and robust, making Wu De look quite small in front of him, barely reaching his chin.

The two stood face to face, Wu De significantly shorter and weaker than his opponent, looking rather like a child arguing with an adult, obviously at a severe disadvantage.

Chapter 1199: Capsized in the Gutter

During the quarrel between Wu De and the robust-bodied Misty Island villager, other nearby villagers quietly assumed positions encircling Wu De. Each exuded a strong aura, their eyes tiger-like and seemingly ready to attack at any moment.

Some martial artists, engaged in transactions, distanced themselves for fear that they would be dragged into the fight should it break out.

"Give us enough cultivation resources and you're free to leave! Otherwise, don't think about getting away!"

The muscular Misty Island villager looked down from above at Wu De, who was shouting loudly with a red face and red ears, his face indifferent as his eyes dripped with mockery.

"You think you can con Taoist Master with this Yellow Core Stone that isn't high grade? No way!"

Wu De shouted as he stamped his foot.

"You yourself asked to exchange for this Yellow Core Stone! It's your own fault for being short-sighted, who can you blame?"

The villager sneered: "According to the rules of the True Martial Realm's various trading markets, once both parties have agreed on a price, they must pay in full and cannot back out! Those who renege are shunned by martial artists all over the world!"

Wu De was at a loss for words, knowing indeed that such a rule existed.

However, Wu De had originally thought the Yellow Core Stone he was interested in was high grade, but after agreeing on the price and taking a closer look, he discovered that only the surface layer of the stone was high grade; the interior was all middle grade.

Yellow Core Stone is a main material used in crafting Earth Element Spirit Weapons. A high-grade Yellow Core Stone can be worth ten to several tens of times more than a mid-grade one. Naturally, after realizing his mistake, Wu De was unwilling to exchange at such a high cost.

The obstinate Misty Island villager, unable to get the cultivation resources they had negotiated, refused to let Wu De leave. Thus, the dispute began and was sensed by Fang Bai's Divine Sense.

Seeing several Misty Island villagers gathered around, Wu De wanted to leave but didn't dare to, yet was reluctant to hand over the cultivation resources as he stood there with his face alternating between shades of pale and flushed.

"Ha ha... Wu De, I didn't expect you to make a mistake in judgment too!"

Fang Bai rarely saw Wu De embarrassed and laughed loudly as he stood next to him.

"Brother Fang, come and judge this!"

As soon as Wu De saw Fang Bai, as if seeing a family member, he grabbed Fang Bai's sleeve and pointed at a Yellow Core Stone displayed on the stall saying, "Just this fist-sized mid-grade Yellow Core Stone, how many high-grade Essence Stones do you think it's worth?"

Fang Bai said, "If it's a mid-grade Yellow Core Stone... at most it's worth ten thousand high-grade Essence Stones!"

"I think so too! Ten thousand, not a stone more!"

Wu De vigorously nodded in agreement, then pointed angrily at the opposing villager, fuming, "But this guy, he actually wants a hundred thousand high-grade Essence Stones from me... Such extortion! Damn it's criminal!"

Fang Bai's strength, known to Wu De, once easily defeated a Cosmic Level Perfection martial artist, likely not far from the Universe Level Realm. This Misty Island villager, merely at the beginner's stage of the Cosmic Level, could show off in front of him, but was nothing in front of Fang Bai. Just a hint of pressure from Fang Bai could make him wet his pants.

Fang Bai glanced at the Misty Island native opposite him, then Wu De said, "Logically speaking, since you had already negotiated, you should pay a hundred thousand high-grade Essence Stones and exchange them for that Yellow Core Stone!"

"What... what?"

Wu De was stunned, and looked at Fang Bai incredulously, then suddenly jumped up, shouting excitedly, "Fang Bai, we are on the same side! Why are you siding with outsiders? Where is the old Fang Bai who was full of pride and integrity, and would run through fire for friends? I... I'm so disappointed in you!"

"Take out fifty thousand yourself, and I'll pay the remaining fifty thousand!"

Facing an emotional Wu De, Fang Bai seemed very calm and spoke indifferently.

"I... you... forget it, let's just give him that! Ah, to think that Taoist Master me would capsized in the gutter and suffer a big loss this time! If I ever get a chance in the future, I will definitely get my revenge! Definitely!"

Wu De glared fiercely at the sturdy Misty Island native opposite him, gritted his teeth and said, and took out several Spatial Rings, from which he transferred fifty thousand high-grade Essence Stones into the other party's Spatial Ring.

Fifty thousand high-grade Essence Stones was not a small number, it was already half of Wu De's entire savings. Originally, he had planned to exchange these high-grade Yellow Core Stones and then resell them in Shenwu Continent to make a profit. Unexpectedly, he now had to lose tens of thousands of high-grade Essence Stones, making this a huge loss for him.

Despite Wu De's loud complaints, he had already prepared himself mentally; if the opposing party attempted to fight, he would immediately give in and hand over the required amount of Essence Stones graciously. However, Fang Bai appeared just in time and agreed to pay half on his behalf, which somewhat comforted Wu De's deeply wounded spirit.

Moreover, Wu De knew well that Fang Bai possessed far more rare cultivation resources than he did, and even if he took on half the high-grade Essence Stones, it would not cripple him.

"A high-grade Space Stone and five bottles of high-grade Gathering Yuan Pills should be worth fifty thousand high-grade Essence Stones, right?"

Instead of taking out any high-grade Essence Stones, Fang Bai threw five bottles of high-grade Gathering Yuan Pills and a high-grade Space Stone onto a stall at their feet, then said to the Misty Island native.

The eyes of the Misty Island native brightened upon hearing this, and he immediately picked up the five Gathering Yuan Pills and the Space Stone to inspect them; confirming they were all high-grade, he became slightly excited and nodded at Fang Bai.

Fang Bai picked up the mid-grade Yellow Core Stone, casually stuffed it into Wu De's hands, then gave Wu De a look and called Ghost Hand and others to leave the scene.

The sturdy Misty Island native squinted his eyes, watching the quickly receding figures of Fang Bai and his companions and suddenly used the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique to whisper to a companion at his side, "Go report to the leader immediately, tell them a young Martial Artist has arrived on the island. Though his cultivation level is at Vast Level Perfection, he seems to possess a lot of valuable items!"

That person nodded slightly, indicating understanding, immediately turned and left the Martial Artists Trading Market, heading towards Immortal Mist Peak.

"Brother Fang, you let him off too easy! If you ask me, one high-grade Space Stone would have been enough! Those five bottles of high-grade Gathering Yuan Pills were definitely excessive!"

After walking a few hundred meters, Wu De looked back and noticed that the group of Misty Island natives was no longer paying attention to them, and then spoke reproachfully to Fang Bai.

"Are cultivation resources more important, or is life more important?"

Fang Bai kept walking, asking as he went.

Wu De casually responded, "Of course, life!"

Fang Bai said, "Then that settles it! You made the other party satisfied, and that saved your life! Otherwise, you might have really struggled to leave Misty Island alive."

Chapter 1200: What Happened to Loyalty?

Wu De knew that the incident at the Martial Artists Trading Market was his own fault. Even if that resident of Misty Island had killed him on the spot, no onlooker would have felt sorry for his death. Instead, they would think that he had broken the rules and deserved to die.

"Always heard that the inhabitants of Misty Island are overbearing and tyrannical. Seeing it firsthand today, it's truly so! That big guy just now should count himself lucky for not laying a hand on me, the Taoist Master, otherwise, he would have been spattered with blood on the spot... huh, the Taoist Master is not easy to provoke..."

Wu De walked with his head held high and chest out, constantly muttering to himself.

Su Linglong and the others knew that Wu De was just bluffing, merely wanting to get a kick out of talking big. They couldn't help but secretly laugh.

Fang Bai's expression turned serious, and he used the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique to Wu De: "Wu De, I'm telling you the truth. When you were arguing with that Misty Island resident just now, he already harbored killing intent. He just hid it very well, and you couldn't sense his killing intent. It will be very dangerous for you to stay on Misty Island tonight."

When Fang Bai first arrived on Misty Island, he sensed several powerful presences. Among them, one even came from a Half-Step Innate Expert.

A Half-Step Innate, whose strength is above a Universe Level Expert but slightly below an Innate Expert. With Fang Bai's current combat ability, he can only withstand Universe Level novice experts. Facing a Half-Step Innate, he wouldn't even have a chance of winning; escaping with his life would be considered lucky.

With such a powerful presence on the island, Fang Bai naturally spoke cautiously to avoid being detected by the opponent and bringing disaster. Hence, he used the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique when speaking to Wu De.

Wu De knew that Fang Bai's sensory abilities were sharper than his own, and seeing his grave expression, Wu De knew he wouldn't be joking about such a matter, making him panic slightly inside.

"When soldiers come, block them; when water comes, cover it with soil. Taoist Master fears no one!"

Despite feeling scared inside, Wu De refused to lose face and sent the transmission with a fierce yet fearful expression to Fang Bai.

Fang Bai knew Wu De's character well; he knew that if a powerful expert really confronted him, Wu De would surely run faster than anyone. Therefore, he rolled his eyes and said, "Stop boasting. Just be careful tonight... uh, staying aboard the ship is the best option. There are many Cosmic Level experts on our side on the ship, and it's protected by a Defensive Array, you should be quite safe. But if you leave the ship, I can't guarantee your life and death."

Wu De said, "Who has Taoist Master ever been afraid of? Taoist Master fears no one! Forget it... Taoist Master is benevolent, doesn't want conflicts with those guys, might as well stay on the ship..."

Deep down, Wu De was truly scared; with thousands of Misty Island residents, the majority being Cosmic Level Experts, if they really wanted to kill him and he didn't seek refuge, he might indeed perish here.

Wu De valued his own life more than anything, so upon knowing that the Misty Islanders harbored killing intent towards him, he decided that the best plan was retreat.

Wu De left immediately and rapidly walked towards the harbor.

"What about you all? Do you want to come back to the ship with me?"

After walking a dozen steps, Wu De turned his head back and asked Fang Bai and the others.

Fang Bai shrugged and smiled, "We haven't offended these Misty Island residents, so naturally, we're not worried about our safety. Misty Island is large enough, we plan to wander around and look around, we can return to the ship tomorrow!"

"You guys... Taoist Master stays on the ship while you all enjoy yourselves freely on the island! What about sharing fortunes and facing difficulties together as agreed? What about advancing and retreating together, sharing honor and disgrace? What about loyalty?"

Wu De wore a "grieved" expression, incessantly complaining and pointing at Fang Bai and the others. Seeing them laughing and ignoring him, frustratedly sighed deeply and reluctantly left.

Fang Bai and the others once again entered the Martial Artists Trading Market to help Zhuge Lian exchange for Beauty Ganoderma.

To avoid conflicts with the Misty Island residents like Wu De, Fang Bai had Su Linglong and others follow closely, not allowing them to act alone.

"Wow, there really is Beauty Ganoderma!"

Zhuge Lian took the lead and quickly walked to the Martial Artists Trading Market. At a difficult stall set up by a resident of Misty Island in the central area, she saw the long-desired two high-quality Beauty Ganoderma plants.

High-quality Beauty Ganoderma is rarely seen in the world, one alone is already rare to find, and unexpectedly there are two here, making all the women including Zhuge Lian starry-eyed with excitement.

Although Beauty Ganoderma is a treasure, it is something used by women, and it has no benefits for cultivation. Therefore, men are not very interested in it.

There are few female martial artists on Misty Island, and the price of the two Beauty Ganoderma plants is too expensive, therefore though there are quite a few martial artists watching the Beauty Ganoderma at this stall, no one steps forward to trade for a while.

"May I ask, senior, how can these two Beauty Ganoderma plants be traded?"

Suppressing the joy in her heart, Zhuge Lian pointed at the two Beauty Ganoderma plants and asked the stall owner.

The stall owner was a mid-level Cosmic Level Expert, appearing to be around fifty years old, with a kind and gentle look, making him seem harmless to humans and animals.

Compared to other Misty Island residents who appear cold and arrogant, this person clearly seemed more approachable and likable.

"For this Beauty Ganoderma, I'm not concerned about the price. As long as you bring something that intrigues me, you can trade for it."

The stall owner spoke with a cheerful smile.

"So... would high-quality Essence Stones do? Would ten thousand high-quality Essence Stones suffice to trade for these two Beauty Ganoderma plants?"

After thinking it over, Zhuge Lian, who had plenty of good items in her Spatial Ring but mostly high-quality Essence Stones, thought that even though she herself didn't have ten thousand high-quality Essence Stones, she could borrow some from Fang Bai or Su Linglong, who likely wouldn't refuse her.

Before the stall owner could respond, other martial artists laughed and said, "Young girl, are you joking? Don't you know how precious the high-quality Beauty Ganoderma is? Ten thousand high-quality Essence Stones... it's amusing that you'd even say that!"

Zhuce Lian also knew her offer was somewhat low. Hearing this, her pretty face turned slightly red, and she asked the stall owner, "Senior, what do you think?"

The stall owner smiled and shook his head, "I myself already have quite a few high-quality Essence Stones, so I'm not interested in that."

Zhuce Lian then asked, "What about Spiritual Medicine? How about trading two high-quality Fusion Essence Grass for your two high-quality Beauty Ganoderma?"

"High-quality Fusion Essence Grass..."

The stall owner's eyes lit up slightly, looked Zhuge Lian over a few times, then shook his head and sighed, "Although high-quality Fusion Essence Grass is good, it can easily be found in the True Martial Realm. Its value simply cannot compare to my high-quality Beauty Ganoderma. So... I'm sorry!"

"What about high-quality Swiftwind Flower?"

Zhuge Lian asked again.

"Swiftwind Flower, although comparable to Beauty Ganoderma, I am unfortunately not a Wind System Martial Artist, so it's useless to me!"

A flicker of light flashed in the stall owner's eyes, but he still shook his head.

At this time, the watching martial artists' gazes towards Zhuge Lian changed a bit, with envy, desire, jealousy... Almost everyone's eyes carried a bit of malice.