

Doctor 1201

Chapter 1201: Really Can't Act!

High-grade Essence Stones, high-grade Fusion Essence Grass, high-grade Swiftwind Flowers...

To the observing martial artists, the fact that Zhuge Lian could easily produce such items that are highly sought after even by Cosmic Level Experts indicates that she must possess even more treasures on her. If they could obtain those, it would be akin to stumbling upon a fortune.

The onlookers, who were primarily martial artists from other ships and largely Cosmic Level Experts, saw that Zhuge Lian was only at the Vast Level and, emboldened by greed, began to covet the cultivation resources she possessed.

However, this is Misty Island, where random killings would result in expulsion from the island by its inhabitants. Therefore, even if they wanted to strike, nobody would choose to do so in broad daylight, instead planning to wait until night fell.

"Xiao Lian, offering two Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruits should be enough to exchange for his Beauty Ganoderma!" Fang Bai spoke from behind Zhuge Lian.

The stall owner was an intermediate Cosmic Level Expert, far more powerful than Zhuge Lian, and had intentionally concealed his martial artist aura. Hence, Zhuge Lian was unable to know his particulars and pander to his preferences.

But Fang Bai, with his acute senses like Fiery Eyes, had long since discerned the details of the stall owner and thus spoke up to remind her.

Upon hearing "high-grade Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruit," the stall owner's eyes sparkled with excitement, and his expression became visibly agitated. He looked at Fang Bai with a hint of surprise, unexpectedly finding that this young man at Vast Level Perfection could discern that he practiced Fire-type Martial Arts.

"This..." Zhuge Lian hesitated at the mention of the Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruit by Fang Bai.

Zhuge Lian possessed an Innate Fire Spirit Root and practiced Fire System Martial Arts, which made the fire-attribute high-grade Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruit an invaluable treasure for her.

Zhuge Lian only had four high-grade Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruits, which Fang Bai had given her after obtaining them from the hidden treasure beneath Swiftwind Valley. She had planned to ask Fang Bai to craft Fire Yuan Pills for her cultivation in the future, but the appearance of the Beauty Ganoderma now put her in a difficult position.

If she used two high-grade Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruits for the exchange, she would only be left with two, which made her feel quite pained and reluctant to part with them.

But if she didn't make the exchange now, who knows when she would have the chance to encounter Beauty Ganoderma again?

It's known that some opportunities in the world, if missed once, might never present themselves again.

After hesitating for a moment, the desire for beauty ultimately prevailed in her heart.

"Two high-grade Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruits, exchange or not?" Zhuge Lian looked at the two Beauty Ganoderma in front of her, clenched her fists tightly, bit her lip lightly, and then said to the stall owner, "If you're not willing to exchange, then I can't do anything! The best things I have are these!"

While she spoke, she stood up, pretending to leave, which looked more like "if you don't trade, I'm walking away." Yet, her eyes were tightly fixed on the Beauty Ganoderma, and her face clearly showed reluctance.

"This girl really can't act!" Fang Bai shook his head with a wry smile.

The stall owner was actually over a hundred years old and had traveled extensively throughout the True Martial Realm. With his wealth of experience, Zhuge Lian's little tricks naturally couldn't escape his eyes.

"Don't leave, miss... don't leave..." The stall owner jovially entreated Zhuge Lian to stay, then pointed at Fang Bai: "The little brother is right. I practice Fire System Martial Arts, so your Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruits are indeed of some use to me. Alright then, let's make the exchange."

Zhuce Lian broke into a delighted smile, as if worried that the stall owner might change his mind. She immediately took out two high-grade Blazing Flame Scarlet Heart Fruits from her Spatial Ring and handed them to the stall owner, then smoothly picked up two Beauty Ganodermas from the stall and put them into her ring.

"Got the Beauty Ganodermas, let's go!"

With the exchange a success, Zhuge Lian couldn't help but rejoice. She cheerfully said to Su Linglong, Dongfang Ruhua, and other ladies, "Sisters, once Brother Fang uses the Beauty Ganodermas to concoct the Youth Retaining Pills, everyone will get a share!"

"Thanks in advance, Xiao Lian!"

Su Linglong and the others knew the effects of the Youth Retaining Pill. Since Zhuge Lian was giving them some, naturally, they were happy.

"Little girl... just wait a moment!"

When the stall owner heard Zhuge Lian mention "Brother Fang will use the Beauty Ganoderma to concoct the Youth Retaining Pill," his eyes flashed with a strange light. He suddenly stood up and stopped Zhuge Lian, who was about to turn and leave.

"What are you trying to do? I've heard that in the True Martial Realm, once an exchange between Martial Artists is complete, it cannot be taken back!"

Zhuce Lian thought the stall owner had regrets about the exchange and was somewhat nervous. As she spoke, she shuffled her feet closer to Fang Bai's side.

Although the stall owner was a Cosmic Level Expert, Fang Bai had once killed a Vast Level Perfection expert. Therefore, standing beside Fang Bai, Zhuge Lian was not afraid that the stall owner would act to snatch the Beauty Ganoderma by force.

Su Linglong and the others also gathered around Zhuge Lian, their beautiful eyes all firmly fixed on the stall owner, united in a common front of indignation.

To Su Linglong and the other ladies, the thought that they could also receive the Youth Retaining Pill concocted from Zhuge Lian's Beauty Ganoderma—a treasure that could make them even more beautiful—meant they would never allow anyone to take it from them.

In fact, even without Fang Bai making a move, Su Linglong and the other ladies, by forming a joint Formation, would not fear any provocation from the stall owner.

The stall owner chuckled, "Don't be nervous, young lady. I am not going back on my word. I just wanted to ask, this 'Brother Fang' you mentioned—who is he? Can he concoct high-grade Elixirs?"

Zhuge Lian, straightforward and guileless, without any scheming, immediately pointed to Fang Bai upon hearing the question: "That's Brother Fang there! Brother Fang can of course concoct high-grade Elixirs, and his success rate is much higher than that of an average Alchemist..."

"Xiao Lian, trouble comes from careless talk. Speak less!"

Linghu Baimei, however, was a clever woman. Worrying that Zhuge Lian would keep speaking without a filter, she immediately interrupted her.

No Martial Artist with an Innate Spiritual Root was foolish, and naturally, Zhuge Lian was not either. She just lacked worldly experience and was naive about the maliciousness of people.

Before Zhuge Lian could finish her statement, she was cut off by Linghu Baimei, causing her to pause in confusion. Her gaze swept across Linghu Baimei's serious face, and suddenly it seemed as if she understood something.

"I..."

Looking somewhat flustered, Zhuge Lian glanced at Fang Bai and then firmly shut her mouth, daring not to speak again.

"It's been said, no big deal..."

Fang Bai smiled wryly to himself but still comforted Zhuge Lian with his words.

Fang Bai knew that although Zhuge Lian's remark was unintentional, it could potentially cause a great deal of trouble for him.

After all, high-grade Alchemists are extremely rare in the entire True Martial Realm. If it were known that Fang Bai was a high-grade Alchemist, how could the islanders of Misty Island and the Martial Artists passing by not go crazy for it?

Fang Bai could imagine that if news of him being a high-grade Alchemist got out, in the next moment, thousands of Martial Artists would swarm around him, requesting him to concoct Pills for them.

Chapter 1202: Madam Linghu

For Fang Bai, Misty Island was enveloped in eeriness and oddity. Whether it was the Martial Artist Aura permeating the island, or the way the islanders looked at them - the outsider warriors, there seemed to be malice and a hint of murderous intent.

Of course, the islanders were powerful and masked their ill intentions and murderous auras well, imperceptible to other visiting Martial Artists, but not to Fang Bai.

Therefore, without a clear understanding of Misty Island, Fang Bai had no intention of being overly conspicuous and becoming the focus of everyone's attention.

Moreover, the several mysterious and powerful auras present on the island made Fang Bai somewhat wary, daring not to make any rash moves.

However, Fang Bai was an adventurer at heart, and the stranger and more mysterious things were, the more he wanted to investigate. He had decided that come midnight, he would set out alone and use the night to scour the entirety of Misty Island, to see what secrets it truly concealed.

While the island did harbor Half-Step Innate Experts, only upon reaching the true Innate Realm could a Martial Artist develop a strand of Divine Sense. Without Divine Sense, a Martial Artist lacked extraordinary sensitivity, so Fang Bai was not worried about his nocturnal movements being detected by these Half-Step Innate Experts.

"This young brother, are you truly a High Rank Alchemist? Can you actually refine high-quality Elixirs?"

The stall owner's gaze followed Zhuge Lian's pointing finger and settled on Fang Bai once again.

Zhuge Lian had claimed Fang Bai was a High Rank Alchemist, but the stall owner was doubtful.

Under normal circumstances, a High Rank Alchemist had to have a strength above the Cosmic Level Realm and possess at least both Fire and Wood Essence Energies.

Fang Bai, however, was merely a Vast Level Martial Artist at Perfection, and the stall owner could only sense Fire Primordial Qi from him. Coupled with Fang Bai's youth, being just over twenty, it was natural for the stall owner to harbor suspicions.

"Do you think I look like a High Rank Alchemist?"

In response to the stall owner's question, Fang Bai neither confirmed nor denied, instead asking with a smile.

"To tell you the truth, not at all..."

The stall owner shook his head then pointed at Zhuge Lian, adding, "But this young lady claims you are, which makes me uncertain... Young brother, if you can truly refine high-quality Elixirs, I'm willing to pay double the reward to have you make them for me. What do you say?"

As he spoke, his eyes intently searched Fang Bai's face, as if trying to discern something from his expression.

Fang Bai's demeanor remained indifferent, showing no emotional fluctuations, and he did not engage further with the stall owner, simply turning around and walking away.

With his departure, Su Linglong and the others naturally followed.

"A mere Vast Level Martial Artist, yet he shows no fear of a Cosmic Level Expert like myself. Just for this, he is no ordinary individual! That young girl said he was a High Rank Alchemist, yet he didn't even refute it... Hmm, could he really be one?"

The stall owner frowned slightly, watching Fang Bai's receding figure, with a flash of murderous intent in his eyes that quickly disappeared. He thought to himself, "If what that young girl said is true, then he could not possibly be a Vast Level Martial Artist... Could he be concealing his Cultivation Level? That's impossible. If even I can't see through his true Cultivation Level, wouldn't that mean he is more powerful than me, at least a high-rank Cosmic Level?"

He then muttered to himself, "A high-rank Cosmic Level in his early twenties, only a Core Disciple of a first-rate sect could possibly achieve that. Yet this fellow seems to be a Loose Cultivator... Ha, regardless, it is certain that he is extraordinary! And the three young men with him, they all have Innate Spiritual Roots... Four Innate Spiritual Roots, Madam Linghu would most certainly be interested!"

The moment he thought of "Madam Linghu," the image of a seductive, fox-like woman materialized before the stall owner's eyes, causing him to feel parched and feverish all over. He turned his head to glance at the summit of Immortal Mist Peak, his expression one of intoxicated enchantment.

The grand palace atop Immortal Mist Peak is the residence of Madam Linghu, the leader of Misty Island.

Of the tens of thousands of island residents, anyone who makes significant contributions to the island could potentially receive the favor of a close encounter with Madam Linghu.

Madam Linghu, with her peerless grace and innate charm, possesses dual Innate Spiritual Roots in water and fire. Merging with her in dual cultivation not only allows one to experience the ultimate pleasure but also benefits a Martial Artist's cultivation greatly.

According to an islander who once had the honor of entering Madam Linghu's chamber, merging in dual cultivation with her is tantamount to taking a high-quality Elixir.

Therefore, becoming a guest in Madam Linghu's chamber and merging with her in dual cultivation is the dream of every Misty Island resident.

Madam Linghu has a particular penchant for "collecting" young men with exceptional talents.

Even if that young man named Fang Bai wasn't a high-rank Alchemist, he'd surely be no ordinary Martial Artist. Coupled with the three men with Innate Spiritual Roots accompanying him, Madam Linghu would certainly like them very much upon seeing them. Perhaps he himself would thus get the chance to receive her favor.

Thinking this, the stall owner trembled with excitement, hastily packed up his stall, and then soared towards the summit of Immortal Mist Peak.

In fact, before this stall owner, several island residents had already spotted that Fang Bai and his companions with Ghost Hand had exceptional talents, and they had quietly climbed Immortal Mist Peak ahead of him to report to Madam Linghu.

"Brother Fang, I'm sorry..."

After leaving the Martial Artists Trading Market, seeing Fang Bai frowning in silence, Zhuge Lian thought he was angry with her. Her joy from acquiring the Beauty Ganoderma disappeared, and she felt anxious and restless. She lowered her head and apologized to Fang Bai.

What Fang Bai was actually contemplating was the matter regarding Misty Island, which had nothing to do with Zhuge Lian. Suddenly hearing Zhuge Lian apologize to him, he was surprised and then smiled, "What are you sorry for?"

Zhuge Lian said listlessly, "It's because I talked too much just now! If people know you're a high-rank Alchemist, then you won't be able to stay on Misty Island. Even if we return to the ship, you will no longer find peace... Oh, this mouth of mine... needs to be punished..."

Saying this, she raised her slender palm and gently patted her delicate, snow-white cheeks.

"Sister Xiao Lian didn't mean it. Brother Fang, please don't be mad at her, okay?"

Having previously received a promise of a Youth Retaining Pill from Zhuge Lian, Dongfang Ruhua grew fond of her. Seeing her blame herself, Dongfang Ruhua felt sorry and softly pleaded with Fang Bai on her behalf.

Once Dongfang Ruhua spoke up, Su Linglong and the others also joined in pleading on her behalf.

Zhuge Lian bit her lip gently, her eyes pitifully fixed on Fang Bai, with a hint of tears beginning to show.

Her heart was entirely devoted to Fang Bai, determined to follow him for a lifetime. If Fang Bai was angry with her over this matter and refused to forgive her, she would indeed be utterly heartbroken.

"You..."

Fang Bai patted Zhuge Lian's head and said, "What happened, I haven't taken it to heart at all. You're the one overthinking it!"

Chapter 1203: Response

Fang Bai made a head-patting gesture, clearly a sign of affection, causing Zhuge Lian to instantly transform her worries into joy, but she still sounded somewhat uncertain as she asked, "Really, Brother Fang? You're not angry?"

"Really not!" Fang Bai sighed, speaking softly, "Let's go back to the ship first, I have some things to discuss with you all."

Seeing Fang Bai act all mysterious, the others didn't know what he wanted to discuss, carrying their puzzled hearts, they returned to the ship.

"You all... why have you all come back?"

Wu De, who had returned to the ship earlier to take refuge, sensed Fang Bai and others' presence, rushed out from his room, laughing heartily, "I get it now, you must not bear to see Taoist Master staying alone on the ship, bored and lonely, and especially came back to keep me company... That's true loyalty!"

"Don't flatter yourself!"

Fang Bai rolled his eyes and said sternly, "We've come back because there's important business to discuss... very important!"

"What matter is so important that you need to come back here to talk about it..."

Wu De mumbled.

"Someone is after our lives! So you tell me if it's important or not? There are too many people outside, let's all go into my room."

Martial Artists were still standing on the deck, which wasn't the place to talk, Fang Bai made a meaningful glance to Wu De and the others, quickly entering his own room.

"After our lives? Brother Fang isn't trying to scare us, is he?"

Wu De twisted his mouth in disbelief.

Su Linglong and others, however, knew that Fang Bai never lied, and their expressions immediately became serious. They exchanged glances and filed into Fang Bai's room one after another.

"Is... Brother Fang not joking after all?"

Watching the backs of Su Linglong and others, Wu De scratched his head and murmured to himself, starting to believe it somewhat.

If this was true, then it was truly terrifying.

Wu De knew that Fang Bai had once killed a Cosmic Level Expert at the peak of perfection, to pose a challenge to Fang Bai, the adversary had to be at least a Universe Level Expert or represent a tremendously powerful force.

Could it be that there really exists a Universe Level Expert on Misty Island as the legends say? And that this expert was targeting them?

Wu De turned his head towards Misty Island, unsure if it was psychological, but he had thought the island was as beautiful as a hidden paradise before, yet now, it conjured up a sinister and horrifying feeling. A gust of sea breeze brushed past him, making him shiver uncontrollably.

Haunted by unease, Wu De started to suspect everything, feeling as if countless eyes were surreptitiously watching him from the island, like a beast lurking in darkness, ready to pounce and devour him at any moment, sending shivers down his spine, he hastened into Fang Bai's room.

Fang Bai had been standing by the window of the room, gazing toward Misty Island deep in thought. Upon Wu De's arrival, he turned and smiled, asking, "Arrived? Do you believe what I said now?"

Wu De managed a forced laugh and nodded his head.

Fang Bai said, "Good, now that everyone's here, I'll discuss some matters then."

After entering the room, Fang Bai swiftly established an Essence Energy Shield around it, isolating the space from the outside world. This way, nobody outside could hear their conversation.

"My acute perception surpasses each and every one of you."

Fang Bai spoke his first sentence exuding full confidence, yet no one objected.

"Therefore, when I first arrived at Misty Island, I sensed an odd and strange atmosphere everywhere; the island dwellers I met all carried a scent of blood and Killing Qi... Just think about it, Misty Island is isolated out at sea, its residents should be living in peace with the world, so why would they emanate the scent of blood and Killing Qi?"

Wu De and the others were martial artists and knew that one would only carry such an embedded scent of blood after killing many people.

And if someone exuded Killing Qi, it indicated those Misty Island inhabitants harbored murderous intent.

With tens of thousands of island dwellers, the majority being Cosmic Level Experts, such power was frightening. Whom they aimed to kill, how could the target possibly escape?

"I get it... I understand now... For many years, ships have gone missing on the Purgatory Sea, numerous martial artists have perished. Everyone thought it was due to sea beast attacks or severe weather, but no one imagined that these incidents were happening right here on Misty Island..."

Muttering to himself, Wu De suddenly conceived a terrifying possibility. His face turned pale instantly, and cold sweat began to seep from his forehead.

Upon reflection, he realized indeed that the gazes of many islanders he encountered on Misty Island were different; even gazes of joy weren't the kind from "joyful about visitors from afar," but rather the delight of a Hungry Wolf spotting its prey.

What Wu De had reasoned, Su Linglong and the other women had thought of too, and immediately their pretty faces changed color, pondering that if their guesses were correct, wouldn't that mean they had entered a lair of tigers and a den of wolves?

"All this is still speculation at this point; I need to confirm it..."

Fang Bai's expression turned serious as he intoned, "I'll go ashore to find Steward Wu Rongshan and inform him of the situation, so he can prepare. As for you... from this moment on, stay on the ship and do not leave under any circumstances."

"Brother Fang, I'll go with you!"

As if reading each other's minds, Su Linglong and the other women responded in unison.

"Master, we will accompany you!" said the three disciples of Ghost Hand.

Seeing that Su Linglong and the others all insisted on rejoining Fang Bai to visit Misty Island, Wu De, feeling embarrassed to stay silent, blurted out, "We share our fortunes and face our troubles together. If we're going, we go together!"

Fang Bai waved his hand and shook his head, "If I go alone, even if I encounter Universe Level Experts, I can find a way to escape. If you accompany me, you'll do nothing but slow me down."

Considering his words, Su Linglong and the others no longer insisted but reminded Fang Bai to be very careful.

Fang Bai leaped off the ship and after setting foot on Misty Island again, he noticed several watchful eyes in the shadows following him. Aware that his action of bringing people back to the ship might have aroused the suspicion of the islanders, he grew more vigilant.

"Steward Wu!"

Arriving at the base of Immortal Mist Peak, Fang Bai found Wu Rongshan descending from the summit and stepped forward to intercept him.

Initially beaming with joy, Wu Rongshan felt embarrassed upon seeing Fang Bai, halting in his tracks with a sheepish laugh, "Elder Fang, you... Are you also preparing to head up to the peak to participate in the tests?"

Fang Bai had heard from Wu Rongshan about the tests; any martial artist from anywhere, if they passed the strength and qualification test conducted by the higher echelons of Immortal Mist Peak, might become a resident of Misty Island, settling on the island to cultivate. Intrigued, he asked with a smile, "Steward Wu looks radiant. Could it be that you have caught the fancy of the leader of Misty Island?"

With a hearty laugh, Wu Rongshan then whispered, "To tell you the truth, indeed that is the case. I am now about to return to the ship and hand over my position as shipmaster to another disciple of Green Bamboo Stronghold, then send a message to Stronghold Head Gu, expressing my apologies, and from that moment on, stay on Misty Island to cultivate in peace. I hope that within my lifetime, my strength can reach the Universe Level Realm, and thus I may borrow another few decades of life from heaven..."

Chapter 1204: Night Exploration

As Wu Rongshan spoke, he thought of how the Stronghold Chief of Green Bamboo Stronghold, Gu Li, had always treated him generously, yet he harbored other intentions and left Green Bamboo Stronghold to join Misty Island, feeling somewhat guilty in his heart.

"Climbing to greater heights in the Martial Dao is the wish of countless martial artists in the True Martial Realm. I left Green Bamboo Stronghold to join Misty Island for a better cultivation environment, and I absolutely will not harm any interests of Green Bamboo Stronghold. I believe that Gu Li, as well as the tens of thousands of disciples of Green Bamboo Stronghold, can understand me."

Wu Rongshan comforted himself with these thoughts.

"Congratulations to Steward Wu on becoming a citizen of Misty Island!"

Fang Bai obviously didn't care much about Wu Rongshan joining Misty Island and congratulated him casually before he looked up at the lofty peak of Immortal Mist Peak and asked, "By the way, Steward Wu, have you seen the Island Master of Misty Island?"

"I have... I have..."

When Fang Bai mentioned the Island Master of Misty Island, the shame on Wu Rongshan's face faded away, replaced by a look of infatuation as he absentmindedly said, "However, when Madam Linghu appeared, she covered her face with a light veil, so I couldn't see her true face, only the general outline. But just that outline alone was enough to captivate the soul, making it hard for one to control themselves."

Fang Bai knew that the Madam Linghu Wu Rongshan spoke of must be the Island Master of Misty Island, and he raised an eyebrow, "Oh. In other words, Madam Linghu is a woman of unparalleled elegance and charm?"

Wu Rongshan was well over eighty years old and was no longer a hot-blooded young man, yet having seen Madam Linghu only once, he was captivated to such an extent. Fang Bai thus surmised that Madam Linghu must indeed be a woman of mesmerizing charm and allure.

Wu Rongshan was ecstatic, murmuring, "Eyes like autumn waters, brows like spring hills, skin as icy as snow, demeanor as ethereal as an immortal... Though I could not see Madam Linghu's full countenance, her grace and temperament are the likes of which I've never seen in my life. One glance from her spirited my mood away, leaving me feeling light as a feather; when she didn't look at me I felt forlorn and lost..."

He suddenly came back to his senses midway, noticing Fang Bai smiling at him, his face flushed red and he coughed, saying, "Elder Fang, please don't make fun of me. If a young man like you were to see Madam Linghu, I'm afraid you would be even more infatuated... If you don't believe it, you can see for yourself! With your strength and talents, if you were to be tested, you would most certainly gain Madam Linghu's favor and almost assuredly become a citizen of Misty Island!"

Fang Bai chuckled and looked up towards the peak of Immortal Mist Peak, feeling the aura of a Half-Step Innate Expert emanating from the great hall atop the peak. He knew that this aura must come from Madam Linghu, the Island Master of Misty Island, and his brow furrowed deeply.

Within Madam Linghu's aura was a thick scent of slaughter and blood, clearly indicating that numerous martial artists had died by her hand. Wu Rongshan couldn't have imagined that the woman of peerless elegance he spoke of would be a ruthless killer, drenched in fresh blood.

"Half-Step Innate... If Madam Linghu wanted to kill us, she would indeed be a formidable opponent!"

Fang Bai thought to himself.

"Ahem, no more of this! No more! Elder Fang, I must return to the ship and discuss this matter with the disciples of Green Bamboo Stronghold, excuse me..."

Wu Rongshan said, clasping his fists at Fang Bai, then swiftly headed towards the ship at the harbor.

"Steward Wu, wait up, I'll come back with you!"

Fang Bai wanted to learn more about Madam Linghu from Wu Rongshan, in order to understand both his ally and enemy better, so he turned and caught up with Wu Rongshan.

Wu Rongshan, although having stopped at Misty Island numerous times over the years, didn't know much about the island, and this was the first time he had caught a glimpse of Madam Linghu, the Island Master, without understanding her character or temper at all.

Therefore, on the return journey by ship, Fang Bai wasn't able to get much information out of Wu Rongshan, which left him somewhat disappointed.

"Gentlemen, if a ship from Green Bamboo Stronghold passes by here and encounters any trouble, you're welcome to come to the island and seek me, Wu Rongshan, for help. I will do my best to assist you!"

After boarding the ship, Wu Rongshan gathered all the crew members and informed them of his status as a resident of Misty Island. He then arranged the follow-up matters before cupping his fists in a salute and said aloud.

All of the crew members were disciples from Green Bamboo Stronghold. Hearing that Wu Rongshan had become a resident of Misty Island and would no longer accompany them sparked no resentment or annoyance. Instead, they were full of envy and continuously offered their congratulations.

For many among them, becoming a resident of Misty Island was a goal, and Wu Rongshan's success was a massive encouragement. It further solidified their determination to join Misty Island.

"Gentlemen, this is where we part ways! I, Wu, must take my leave!"

Wu Rongshan said, then cupped his fists again, gave a deep bow to the multitude of martial artists on deck, and without hesitation, soared off the ship and dashed towards Misty Island.

Fang Bai watched Wu Rongshan's quickly receding figure, the corners of his mouth slightly turning upwards, revealing a faint, almost imperceptible smile.

He had secretly left a wisp of his Essence Energy on Wu Rongshan. From that moment on, Wu Rongshan's movements were destined to not escape his surveillance. With Wu Rongshan as a lead, come nightfall, he could follow the vine to get to the melon and investigate the situation on Misty Island.

In the following time, Fang Bai did not leave the ship but instead stayed in his room to meditate and recuperate, to store up energy. In case his actions tonight alerted anyone, he wanted to be in peak condition to respond.

The night wind grew cold, and the moon hung high.

When Fang Bai emerged from his cultivation state, it was the middle of the night.

Some martial artists gathered on the deck had gradually returned to their rooms, leaving no one on the deck.

Fang Bai extended his Divine Sense, circulated his cultivation technique, and hid all traces of his presence; he left his room as silently as a shadow, blending into the night. He managed to avoid a few Misty Island residents who were covertly monitoring the movements of the martial artists on the ship, making his departure from the ship unnoticed, and stealthily headed towards the direction of Immortal Mist Peak following the Essence Energy left on Wu Rongshan.

The Martial Artists Trading Market at the foot of Immortal Mist Peak, bustling and crowded during the daytime, was now desolate and silent. Blasts of howling sea wind added to the eeriness of the place.

Fang Bai moved like a startled swan, quickly passing through the vast empty Martial Artists Market and arriving at the back of Immortal Mist Peak. Although there were stone steps to the summit at the front of Immortal Mist Peak allowing easy access to the top, that path was narrow and had several

checkpoints along the way. Each checkpoint was guarded by several Cosmic Level Experts. For Fang Bai to reach the summit undetected would be challenging.

No stone steps existed at the rear peak, and the cliff walls were almost perfectly vertical, the peak rising more than a thousand yards high. Even Universe Level Martial Artists, if they didn't practice Wind System Martial Arts Techniques, couldn't possibly scale to the summit, so it was left unguarded.

Fang Bai possessed the Chaos True Body, and the Chaos Origin Energy in his Qi Sea contained seven different types of pure Essence Energy, allowing him to utilize any type he needed. His Wind Essence Qi was much richer and purer than that of other Wind System Martial Artists at the same realm, which made climbing this thousand-yard-high peak not much of a challenge for him.

Chapter 1205: Island of Sin

Fang Bai looked up at the peak of Immortal Mist Peak, took a deep breath, and began to circulate his cultivation technique, driving the Wind Essence Qi to flow within his body.

In an instant, Fang Bai's clothes bulged as if filled with wind, lifting his body like a soaring swallow, rushing towards the peak. In just a few moments, he had already reached the top of Immortal Mist Peak.

Fang Bai's figure shifted to the side and landed on a large rock at the peak, using the faint starlight to scan ahead, only to see a majestic and grand hall standing atop the peak, with two Martial Artist Auras emanating from inside, carrying a faint oppressive force.

One of the auras, belonging to a Cosmic Level Expert, came from Wu Rongshan, while the other, the aura of a Half-Step Innate Expert, unmistakably belonged to Madam Linghu.

"What are Wu Rongshan and Madam Linghu doing alone in a room in the dead of night?"

With curiosity in his heart, Fang Bai moved stealthily to hide in the dark behind the grand hall, cautiously releasing his Divine Sense, slowly penetrating into the hall.

Soon, his Divine Sense relayed back all the details inside the hall, and an unsightly scene emerged in Fang Bai's mind, leaving him stunned.

Inside the spacious and bright hall, there was a huge bed, and on that bed, a man and a woman were engaged in dual cultivation. The Essence Energy surrounding them, misty like smoke, enveloped both figures, rendering them faint and blurred.

However, Fang Bai still recognized from their auras that the man was Wu Rongshan, and the woman was Madam Linghu.

Fang Bai had never imagined that Madam Linghu, a dignified Half-Step Innate Expert, one of the top-tier experts of this era, would engage in such an act with Wu Rongshan, a mere mid-level Cosmic Realm expert.

However, in the next moment, Fang Bai understood everything.

Dual cultivation between male and female Martial Artists was supposed to be a joyful and pleasurable activity. If both were harmonious and empathetic, it could greatly benefit both parties' cultivation.

But at this moment, Wu Rongshan's face was pale, his expression pained, and his body twisted continuously, showing no sign of pleasure.

Fang Bai could clearly sense that the Essence Energy within Wu Rongshan was being continuously absorbed by Madam Linghu. Moreover, despite being conscious, Wu Rongshan was completely unable to control the rapid loss of his own Essence Energy.

From the eyes of Wu Rongshan, Fang Bai saw terror, fear, and regret.

Fang Bai knew that at this rate, within a few moments, Wu Rongshan would become a lifeless, withered old tree. Even if he didn't die, he would be entirely debilitated.

Having lived for thousands of years and seen countless cultivation techniques and martial arts, Fang Bai knew that Madam Linghu practiced an extremely evil cultivation technique, specifically designed to bewitch male Martial Artists into dual cultivation, absorbing their Essence Energy for her own use, thus enhancing her power.

Once a male Martial Artist was bewitched, all the Essence Energy they had painstakingly cultivated could be completely absorbed, resulting in a utterly tragic fate.

"I understand now... I understand..."

Fang Bai withdrew his Divine Sense, murmured to himself, thinking no wonder he felt an eerie and murderous aura permeating the island when he first arrived at Misty Island. As the Island Master, Madam Linghu practiced such an evil technique, surely causing harm to many Martial Artists and staining her hands with blood, causing the stench of blood and killing intent to linger around her, not escaping Fang Bai's keen sense.

If the leader is crooked, the subordinates will be askew. With the Island Master like this, how could the other residents of Misty Island be any better?

Recalling his encounters with the residents of Misty Island upon his arrival, each of their gazes strange and peculiar, Fang Bai, having lived through two lifetimes and possessing extensive experiences, guessed that these residents were scouting for exceptionally strong and talented foreign Martial Artists to fulfill Madam Linghu's cultivation needs.

""""This means, the whole Misty Island, seemingly peaceful and like a utopian paradise on the surface, is in fact an island of sin filled with evil intentions.""""

Fang Bai even felt that the ships and Martial Artists that had disappeared over the years in the Purgatory Sea could not entirely be attributed to bad weather and attacks from Sea Beasts, but perhaps were the doings of the residents of Misty Island.

"Madam Linghu is indeed extremely beautiful..."

Fang Bai's Divine Sense penetrated through the Essence Energy that was condensed around Wu Rongshan and Madam Linghu, and soon, the appearance of Madam Linghu was clearly etched into his mind.

On the surface, Madam Linghu seemed to be a young woman, but Fang Bai knew from the flowing Qi and blood within her that this woman had already surpassed the age of a hundred.

Madam Linghu's Cultivation Level was at Half-Step Innate, such experts would inevitably use rare Spiritual Medicines and Elixirs to maintain their youthful appearance, which Fang Bai found unsurprising.

Fang Bai even maliciously wondered, what would Wu Rongshan's reaction be if he knew that Madam Linghu was actually an old lady over a hundred years old.

However, if he did not step in to save Wu Rongshan who was already in deep trouble, Fang Bai knew he could not escape Madam Linghu's poison.

What Fang Bai couldn't understand was why, given Wu Rongshan's Qi and blood was no longer in prime condition and he was neither handsome nor dashing, Madam Linghu would so desperately unite with him to cultivate together?

"Perhaps she is eager to break through a Cultivation bottleneck, hence she would do so?"

Fang Bai thought to himself.

Suddenly, Wu Rongshan's body began to twist violently, and his bloodshot eyes revealed a color of intense pain and despair.

"Not good!"

Seeing the changes occurring on Wu Rongshan's face and body, Fang Bai knew his life and death were at a critical juncture, possibly unable to preserve even the last strand of Essence Energy within his Qi Sea. By then, even if Wu Rongshan possessed incredible abilities, he could not escape the fate of death.

"Tyr!"

Fang Bai's tongue cracked like spring thunder, issuing a fierce shout.

The shout, like roaring thunder, shook the entire hall, and even the light inside dimmed for a moment.

"Who?"

Madam Linghu could have never anticipated that someone was lurking near her Immortal Mist Peak's great hall. The loud shout startled her, and she pushed Wu Rongshan away immediately. Her eyes sparkled like lightning, filled with lethal intent, as the oppressive aura of a Half-Step Innate Expert enveloped towards Fang Bai at the back of the hall.

Madam Linghu reacted quickly. If it were any other Martial Artist, they would not be able to escape the envelopment of Madam Linghu's oppressive aura, and once covered, their movement techniques would be severely obstructed, with predictable consequences.

But Fang Bai had anticipated such a response from Madam Linghu, and at the same time he issued the fierce shout, he had already once again activated the Wind Essence Qi, his figure rapidly descending towards the bottom of Immortal Mist Peak.

"The Island Master of Misty Island is debauched, murderous, and malicious... If these messages were to spread out, who knows what consequences would arise. Haha..."

Fang Bai laughed out loud, his figure landing, he fully exerted his movement technique, racing towards the core area of Misty Island.

Chapter 1206: Madam Linghu Overwhelmed with Surprises

Fang Bai embarked on a sea journey from Tiansheng Continent to Shenwu Continent. Along the way, he had become well-acquainted with Wu Rongshan and could not bear to watch him fall to Madam Linghu. Thus, at the critical moment, he shouted out loud.

The strength of a Half-Step Innate Expert far surpassed that of a Cosmic Level Expert at perfection. Although Fang Bai was capable of slaying Cosmic Level Experts at perfection, he had no confidence in contending against a Half-Step Innate Expert.

Therefore, after that roar, Fang Bai immediately fled. Before leaving, he deliberately provoked Madam Linghu, aiming to draw her pursuit onto himself, and thereby creating a sliver of a chance for Wu Rongshan.

As for whether he could escape death, that depended on Wu Rongshan's own fortune.

Fang Bai moved like lightning; upon touching the ground, he turned into a shadow and was a kilometer away in an instant.

"Who is this brat daring to disrupt my cultivation? You're truly courting death!"

A woman's furious shout suddenly rang by his ear; when the shout began, it was still atop the thousand-zhang high Immortal Mist Peak, but by the time it had ceased, it had already reached the foot of the peak, the speed of which was astonishingly fast.

Fang Bai sensed a Martial Artist Aura rapidly approaching from behind and knew that Madam Linghu was catching up, with the distance between them quickly closing.

"It seems like I'll have to go through a tough battle today if I want to break free."

Fang Bai was self-aware. He knew that with his current Cultivation Level, even if he exerted his full strength, he was no match for Madam Linghu, who possessed the Half-Step Innate Realm. Escaping from her pursuit would not be easy.

Immortal Mist Peak was situated at the center of Misty Island, dozens of miles away from the seaside. Previously, such a distance meant nothing to Fang Bai, but now with an infuriated, murderous Madam Linghu in pursuit, these dozens of miles felt incredibly long, as if he wished to reach the seashore immediately.

Once he reached the seaside and leapt into the sea, then circulating the Water Element Qi, Fang Bai could merge with the seawater and escape far away beneath the surface like a fish. At that point, Madam Linghu would have no way to deal with him.

Although Madam Linghu was powerful, as a Wood Element Martial Artist, she could use Wood Element Qi to enhance her strength on land lush with vegetation. However, in the sea surrounded by Water Element Qi, her strength would be greatly limited, rendering her unable to exert even half of her full power. It thus became significantly harder for her to kill Fang Bai, who would be like a fish in water.

Therefore, the journey from Immortal Mist Peak to the seaside became crucial for Fang Bai's safe escape. As long as Madam Linghu did not intercept him, Fang Bai had a chance to escape unscathed.

However, seeing Madam Linghu's alarmingly fast speed in pursuit, instantly closing in, Fang Bai bitterly smiled, knowing that the situation wasn't optimistic. He could only fully circulate Wind Essence Qi and continue to dash forward, using the Dragon Soaring to the Heavens Technique.

Fang Bai had thousands of movement techniques stored in his mind, many of which were far more exquisite than the Dragon Soaring to the Heavens. However, those techniques required more robust Essence Energy to sustain, and the current Fang Bai was unable to perform them. The Dragon Soaring to the Heavens was the fastest technique he could execute at the moment and matched his current power level the best.

Fang Bai inwardly groaned, unbeknownst to him that Madam Linghu, who was closely pursuing him, was both surprised and delighted.

She was surprised that this escaping man appeared quite young, yet his strength was formidable, comparable to several of her subordinates in the Misty Island hierarchy with Universe Level power.

She was delighted because not only was the man a male, but the pure Essence Energy emanating from him indicated that he was one of the rare Innate Spiritual Roots among Martial Artists. If she could perform the Evil Cultivation Technique and dual cultivate with him, it would yield doubly effective results.

To expedite the elevation of her own realm and cultivation level, Madam Linghu previously had her subordinates on Misty Island secretly watch passing martial artists. If they spotted one with outstanding talent, they would capture them and bring them to the grand hall at the peak of Immortal Mist Peak, where they would forcefully engage in dual cultivation with her.

In recent years, Madam Linghu changed her strategy and began openly recruiting martial artists from Misty Island under the guise of a selection test for strength and talent. This approach uncovered many martial artists with exceptional talent, whom Madam Linghu then ensnared using her evil techniques, making them willingly engage in dual cultivation with her.

The previous approach involved Madam Linghu coercing others into dual cultivation, but now they consented willingly, which naturally resulted in much more effective outcomes.

However, what troubled Madam Linghu was that she most eagerly anticipated dual cultivating with martial artists possessing Innate Spiritual Roots. These individuals, however, were exceedingly rare, one in a million, and finding them was no easy task.

With no other choice, Madam Linghu settled for the next best thing. Among the martial artists passing through Misty Island, any decently talented and relatively handsome man would be monitored by her subordinates, and any particularly outstanding ones would be reported to her.

Today, a subordinate reported that a ship from Weixiang Nation of Tiansheng Continent passing by Misty Island had several male martial artists on board with extraordinary talent, who might possess Innate Spiritual Roots.

Especially among them was a young, handsome martial artist with considerable strength, who might also be an alchemist with both Wood and Fire Innate Spiritual Roots.

Overjoyed by the news, Madam Linghu knew that if it were true, utilizing those with Innate Spiritual Roots for cultivation would be akin to consuming high-rank Spirit Pills, potentially allowing her to blast through her bottleneck and achieve the dreamt-of Innate Realm.

Millions of martial artists in this world believe that the Universe Level is the peak of Martial Dao, where one not only reigns supreme in the True Martial Realm but also adds decades to their lifespan.

However, the vast majority of martial artists are unaware that beyond the Universe Level in the Martial Dao Realm lies the Innate.

Innate Experts will manifest Divine Sense, undergoing a qualitative leap in strength and completely overpowering Universe Level Experts.

Madam Linghu herself was exceptionally talented and had been a Universe Level Expert decades ago. She had fallen in love with an Innate Martial Artist, who thoroughly guided her, leading to rapid progress in her strength and elevating her to a Half-Step Innate Expert.

Later on, Madam Linghu accidentally obtained an Evil Cultivation Technique that advanced one's rank through absorbing the Essence Energy of male martial artists. She became addicted to it and could not extricate herself.

The Innate Expert who loved Madam Linghu tried to dissuade her time and again but eventually left her in a rage. From love to hate, Madam Linghu's personality dramatically changed. She cultivated the evil technique even more fanatically, aiming to reach the Innate Realm and then seek vengeance on the Innate Expert who abandoned her.

But achieving the Innate Realm is easier said than done. Despite decades of arduous cultivation and an incalculable amount of Cultivation Resources spent, Madam Linghu was always just a half-step away from the Innate Realm.

Madam Linghu knew that her inability to break through wasn't due to a lack of talent but rather the low grade of the Cultivation Resources she used. Therefore, she dispatched numerous subordinates to every corner of the True Martial Realm to gather high-grade resources. Concurrently, she used the evil technique to dual cultivate with martial artists of extraordinary talent, hoping to leverage their Essence Energy for her advancement.

However, recently, there have been few martial artists with exceptional talent passing through Misty Island. Out of desperation, Madam Linghu was not discerning in her choices, not even sparing someone like Wu Rongshan, whose talent was only mediocre.

As for the few martial artists reported by her subordinates who might have Innate Spiritual Roots, Madam Linghu planned to recuperate tonight and at her peak strength, subdue them thereafter.

Chapter 1207: Thunderclap Black Ape

At the peak of Immortal Mist Peak stood a grand hall, the dwelling of Madam Linghu and also the forbidden zone of Misty Island. Should anyone dare to intrude without permission, they would be mercilessly slain by Madam Linghu herself, and that included even the high-ranking members of Misty Island.

Hence, without the express consent of Madam Linghu, no one on Misty Island dared to approach the grand hall atop Immortal Mist Peak, where Madam Linghu often indulged uninhibitedly in dual cultivation with others.

But on this very night, as Madam Linghu was engaging in dual cultivation with Wu Rongshan, she had not anticipated that someone would dare to break into the peak of Immortal Mist Peak, interrupting her pleasant affair.

Enraged, Madam Linghu donned her robe and charged down the mountain, vowing to tear the intruder to shreds.

Although unaware of the intruder's identity, in the midst of the pursuit, she sensed the rich and pure Essence Energy emanating from him and was overjoyed, recognizing that this was an extremely rare encounter with a young Innate Spirit Root Martial Artist, with vigorous vitality, an ideal candidate for her Evil Cultivation Technique.

"Listen up, young man ahead: all around Misty Island lies the Myriad Miles Ocean; you have no path to escape! If you stop and obediently come back with me to the grand hall atop Immortal Mist Peak, I will spare your life; if you persist in your folly and continue to flee, once I catch up to you, you will beg for life in vain, and yearn for death that won't come!"

Madam Linghu's seductive and charming voice once again resounded by Fang Bai's ear, her tone filled with threatening intent.

Fang Bai turned a deaf ear to Madam Linghu's words; his speed seemed to increase even as he ran and soared through the air.

After some chasing, Madam Linghu found herself only tens of meters behind Fang Bai and within a few dozen breaths, he would be overtaken and intercepted.

Despite her formidable strength, Madam Linghu had pursued him from the peak of Immortal Mist Peak for some ten to twenty miles already. With her full effort, her True Yuan was significantly depleted, her speed no longer as swift as the onset.

"That boy has been running for so long, and yet his True Yuan has hardly been depleted. His speed hasn't slowed down but has gotten even faster – truly puzzling!"

Madam Linghu marveled at the sight of Fang Bai's retreating figure, speculating that he must be cultivating a remarkably high-rank Cultivation Technique, allowing his Essence Energy to remain inexhaustible. Greed ignited within her, she hastened her pursuit of Fang Bai.

Fang Bai sensed Madam Linghu's presence getting closer behind him, the oppressive might of a Half-Step Innate Expert almost enveloping him, and he couldn't help but inwardly lament his plight.

It was at that moment, a stretch of forest appeared before him, followed by a proud, cold laugh from Madam Linghu.

"Boy, let's see where you can run to now!"

Madam Linghu slowed down, no longer in a rush to chase after Fang Bai, seemingly unconcerned about him escaping.

Fang Bai's brows furrowed, and as his Divine Sense spread out, he instantly detected the presence of two Spirit Beasts, with beast years of a millennium, within the forest.

Considering Madam Linghu's recent statement, Fang Bai knew that the two millennium-old high-rank Spirit Beasts must undoubtedly have been tamed and kept by Madam Linghu.

The presence of these two high-rank Spirit Beasts was incredibly formidable, clear evidence they were among the mightiest within their rank, with attack capability surpassing the average Universe Level Expert.

Suddenly, Madam Linghu let out a long howl, which upon reaching the forest ahead, caused the foliage to tremble. In response, two tower-like black shadows burst out like lightning, one to the left and another to the right, brimming with killing intent, standing in Fang Bai's direct path.

These two shadows, human-like in shape yet covered in black fur and towering over seven feet tall, appeared exceedingly robust. Their eyes shone like stars in the night sky.

"To think it's the Thunderclap Black Apes! That old witch must be proficient in Beast Taming Technique to be able to command such high-rank Spirit Beasts. Heh heh... She thinks that with the aid of Spirit Beasts, she can halt me, but little does she know, fortune is truly siding with me!"

Facing the blockage of two high-rank spirit beasts, Fang Bai felt not worry but delight, his figure not slowing down, but instead, he sped up and charged forward.

"Has that kid gone insane? The power of the two Thunderclap Black Apes, though not as great as mine, is far superior to his; him charging like this is tantamount to seeking his own death!"

Madam Linghu watched Fang Bai's accelerating figure with surprise, shortly afterwards, she let out another howl.

Upon hearing Madam Linghu's howl, the bodies of the two Thunderclap Black Apes shuddered, their eyes revealing a touch of madness. They forcefully beat their chests several times with their long arms and, with a roaring sound, charged at Fang Bai.

The two Thunderclap Black Apes were huge and burly. As they charged, they were like two giant bullets fired in anger, bringing a terrifyingly powerful force at high speed towards Fang Bai.

Despite the massive size of the two Thunderclap Black Apes, they were far from clumsy; on the contrary, their speed was astonishingly fast. The space where their figures passed through seemed to ripple with long afterimages.

Just as the two Thunderclap Black Apes were about to collide with Fang Bai, a sharp gleam flashed in his eyes and his lips moved slightly as he let out a long howl.

Once his howl sounded, the forward charge of the two Thunderclap Black Apes halted abruptly, their killing qi vanished in an instant, and confusion appeared in their eyes as they looked at Fang Bai.

"How... how is this possible?"

Madam Linghu saw the two Thunderclap Black Apes no longer under her control, not only was she taken aback, but disbelief also flickered in her gaze as she looked at Fang Bai.

With a cold smirk, Fang Bai's lips moved slightly and he let out another howl. It was shrill, high-pitched, short, and abrupt, subtly imbued with an intent to kill.

Upon hearing Fang Bai's howl, the two bewildered Thunderclap Black Apes' eyes immediately filled with blood, their features becoming twisted and ferocious as they roared and, instead of attacking Fang Bai, charged towards Madam Linghu.

"Damn it!"

Madam Linghu did not expect Fang Bai to also be skilled in the art of beast taming—and even more adept than herself. She cursed resentfully as the two Thunderclap Black Apes rapidly approached her. A fierce light flashed in her beautiful eyes as she let out a cold snort, her hands slicing through the air like knives, swinging out to her left and right.

Two green blade lights formed from condensed Wood Element Qi, tearing through the air, struck down upon the two Thunderclap Black Apes.

With blood splashing, even the incredibly tough bodies of the two Thunderclap Black Apes sustained deep wounds, revealing chilling white bones.

The skins of high-rank spirit beasts are hard and their muscles and bones robust. Even high-grade spiritual artifacts, sharp enough to slice through iron like mud, have difficulty inflicting serious damage on them, yet Madam Linghu's casual strike achieved such an effect, demonstrating the immense power of a half-step Innate expert.

Spirit beasts, being sentient, understand the ideas of seeking benefits and avoiding harm, often bullying the weak and fearing the strong. Madam Linghu thought her strike would scare away the two Thunderclap Black Apes, but she didn't expect that instead of showing any fear or retreat, the two severely injured Thunderclap Black Apes, ignoring their wounds, came at her even more ferociously.

Madam Linghu knew the two Thunderclap Black Apes were firmly under Fang Bai's control, and amidst her shock and anger, she took a keen interest in Fang Bai's beast taming technique. She thought, if Fang Bai, as a Vast Level expert, could manipulate two Thunderclap Black Apes comparable to Universe Level experts, then what if she acquired his beast taming technique? Could she not control spirit beasts comparable to those at the Innate Realm?

"Even if I cannot reach the Innate Realm in my cultivation in this lifetime, if I can control spirit beasts on par with the Innate Realm, who in the True Martial Realm would be able to contend with me?"

With this thought, Madam Linghu was greatly excited.

Chapter 1208: Minor Demon Trapping Array

Madam Linghu had already guessed by this time that the person fleeing ahead must be Fang Bai, whom she had previously ordered to be closely monitored.

Since receiving the message from her subordinates that Fang Bai was possibly a high-tier Pill Master, Madam Linghu had added him to her list of must-have assets and was determined not to let him leave Misty Island.

However, how Fang Bai managed to escape her subordinates' surveillance and stealthily reach the peak of Immortal Mist Peak, disrupting her and Wu Rongshan's plans, puzzled Madam Linghu. Still, she did not ponder too deeply, attributing it to her subordinates' negligence, which gave Fang Bai a chance to exploit.

Now, after briefly encountering Fang Bai, Madam Linghu gained a deeper understanding of him, her heart filled with even more surprise.

This Fang Bai was not merely a Martial Artist at Vast Level Perfection as her subordinates had described. Judging by the speed of his movement technique and the pure Essence Energy emanating from him, even ordinary Cosmic Level Experts were not his match.

For a moment, Madam Linghu could not fathom the true extent of Fang Bai's power and guessed that he must have concealed his strength.

Possessing an Innate Spiritual Root, possibly a high-tier Pill Master, knowledgeable in Beast Taming Techniques, able to hide his own strength, and at the prime age of vigorous youth...

For Madam Linghu, Fang Bai was not only her ideal dual cultivation partner but also someone whose numerous secrets were worth exploring.

Madam Linghu's eyes gleamed, feeling as if she had stumbled upon a treasure. She was eager to capture Fang Bai immediately, extract all his secrets, and then bring him back to the grand hall at the peak of Immortal Mist Peak for dual cultivation. By leveraging his uniquely pure Essence Energy of Innate Spiritual Root, she aimed to enhance her own strength, laying a solid foundation for her future assault on the Innate Realm.

As for the two Thunderclap Black Apes that had lost control and entered a frenzied state, Madam Linghu didn't take them to heart. Although killing them meant losing significant supports, acquiring Fang Bai would sufficiently compensate for this loss.

Madam Linghu's eyes shone with a cold light, her expression stern. Facing the charging Thunderclap Black Apes, she did not dodge or evade; instead, she twisted her waist and met them head-on, her speed even faster than the apes'.

On one side was her delicate, seemingly boneless small body, and on the other, the robust huge bodies of the apes. Any Martial Artist without keen insight would think Madam Linghu was foolishly obstructing a vehicle with a mantis arm, striking a stone with an egg.

They were unaware that within Madam Linghu's small body was a power resembling a long-brewing, soon-to-erupt volcano from the depths of the earth, harboring a terrifying strength several times stronger than the two Thunderclap Black Apes combined.

"Boom!"

"Boom!"

Amid two dull thuds, Essence Energy explosively spread out, sending the two giant-bodied Thunderclap Black Apes flying backward in the air, falling over ten meters away and crashing onto the ground, causing the earth to tremble and dust to fly up.

The two Thunderclap Black Apes, with broken bones and muscles, let out agonized roars. Just as they struggled to stand, they saw Madam Linghu's figure rapidly approaching from afar, appearing ghost-like in front of them, her delicate jade hands imprinting on their abdomens.

The force of this strike was even more ferocious than the previous impact, sending the two Thunderclap Black Apes tumbling out once again.

Although the Thunderclap Black Apes were extremely tenacious in life, under Madam Linghu's lightning-fast and thunderous attacks, they eventually collapsed to the ground within a few breaths and lay lifeless.

"What a cunning lad!"

After killing the two Thunderclap Black Apes and looking back at Fang Bai, Madam Linghu saw that his figure had already disappeared into the forest ahead. Only then did she realize that Fang Bai had merely used the two Thunderclap Black Apes to block her, buying time for his escape.

"Do you think you can escape like this? Naive!"

Madam Linghu's lips twitched slightly as she sneered.

Madam Linghu thought that even if Fang Bai could temporarily escape from her sight, the entire Misty Island was surrounded by an endless ocean. The ship Fang Bai was on was heavily monitored by her subordinates, making it impossible for him to escape.

With this thought, Madam Linghu was no longer in a hurry and looked at the forest ahead with a mocking gaze, moving leisurely towards it.

"Misty Island is only so big, where can you hide? Surrender obediently and enjoy the bliss, otherwise, I will make you suffer and wish for death!"

Before Madam Linghu reached the forest, she sensed that Fang Bai's Essence Energy was still inside. It was somewhat unexpected; she did not think that Fang Bai would stop escaping.

Fang Bai, who was in the forest, remained silent. Instead, the Essence Energy in a certain part of the forest rapidly intensified, as if a large amount of Cultivation Resources had suddenly appeared.

Madam Linghu was secretly puzzled, thinking that after staying on Misty Island for decades and entering this forest countless times, she had never sensed such dense Essence Energy. Where could this suddenly appearing Essence Energy be coming from?

"It must be the Cultivation Resources carried by the lad. Perhaps knowing he cannot escape, he wants to offer up his Cultivation Resources to plead for mercy?"

The more Madam Linghu thought about it, the more likely it seemed, a smug smile appearing on her face.

She originally thought that Fang Bai would come out on his own and submit, but as she waited left and right, no one appeared. However, Fang Bai's Essence Energy was continuously present in the forest, and the surrounding Essence Energy became increasingly denser.

"Old witch, do you dare to fight me in the forest?"

Just as Madam Linghu was about to lose her patience, Fang Bai's voice suddenly came from inside the forest.

Although Madam Linghu possessed a high Cultivation Level and maintained her youthful appearance, she was actually over a hundred years old. The thing she detested most was being called "old" to her face.

The words "old witch" from Fang Bai were like a steel needle harshly stabbing into Madam Linghu's heart, making her furiously enraged.

"Fine, since you wish to die, I will fulfill your wish!"

Madam Linghu's eyes emitted a cold gleam, her Killing Qi soared, and light green Wood Element Qi intertwined around her, her hands crossed, she dashed into the forest ahead.

Upon entering the forest, Madam Linghu immediately sensed something was wrong.

Initially, her vision was filled with thick tree trunks, but in the blink of an eye, those trees seemed to turn into robust and tall Martial Artists, each wielding a Spiritual Artifact, their Killing Qi surging.

"What Formation is this?"

Madam Linghu herself was an Array Master, a high-grade one at that. Seeing the sudden transformation of the surroundings, she knew she had fallen into a peculiar Formation.

Always proud, Madam Linghu thought she was the top Array Master in the True Martial Realm, confident that no Formation could trap her. However, she unexpectedly felt helpless in the Formation hastily laid out by Fang Bai around her.

"This is the Minor Demon Trapping Array. Although trapping you in this Formation isn't easy, you won't be able to break it for a couple of hours. I won't entertain you any longer!"

Fang Bai's voice gradually faded away, clearly moving further and further from Madam Linghu.

Only then did Madam Linghu realize that Fang Bai had been silently setting up a Formation in the forest earlier. The diffuse dense Essence Energy was the substantial amount of Essence Stones needed to set up the Formation.

Chapter 1209: Trapped

The Demon Trapping Array was a formation of the Immortal Rank that Fang Bai created himself during his time in the Immortal Realm, which included the Minor Demon Trapping Array and the Greater Demon Trapping Array, both profoundly ingenious.

The power of the Minor Demon Trapping Array and the Greater Demon Trapping Array were incomparable; the former could only trap the opponent and was a type of defensive array, while the latter was versatile in both offense and defense, capable of trapping and killing the opponent.

During his dominating days in the Immortal Realm, Fang Bai used the Greater Demon Trapping Array to trap and kill countless powerful demonic spirits and ghosts.

However, now Fang Bai's strength had greatly diminished, and he no longer had high rank Essence Stones; with all he had, he could only barely set up a weakened version of the Minor Demon Trapping Array.

Despite its weakened state, this version of the Minor Demon Trapping Array was still comparable in power to the most formidable high rank formations in the True Martial Realm.

Madam Linghu prided herself on being proficient in various formations. Although she had never seen this Minor Demon Trapping Array and found it somewhat tricky, she arrogantly believed that deciphering it would not be difficult. After hearing what Fang Bai said, she couldn't help but scoff.

"I wanted to give you a way out, but you don't know what's good for you! Just wait, once I break this trivial formation and capture you, I will crush your bones and scatter your ashes!"

Madam Linghu shouted fiercely but could no longer sense Fang Bai's aura, knowing he might have already escaped far.

"This youngster is not weak and understands formations; if I get trapped in this array for a couple of hours, perhaps he might truly escape!"

Thinking this, Madam Linghu became even more anxious and began searching for flaws in the Minor Demon Trapping Array.

Although the Minor Demon Trapping Array was significantly weakened, it was still an Immortal Rank formation—how could it be easily broken?

After half an hour, Madam Linghu wandered back and forth within the Minor Demon Trapping Array without finding anything, anxiety and impatience causing beads of sweat to form on her forehead.

"If I can't find the flaw, then I must attack forcefully!"

An hour later, Madam Linghu still couldn't find any flaws in the Minor Demon Trapping Array and reluctantly abandoned the least effort-consuming method of breaking the formation. She concentrated Essence Energy in her palms and repeatedly struck at the illusions surrounding her, trying to use her near-Innate strength to forcibly breach the Minor Demon Trapping Array.

Every formation has its flaws, and even the most perfect formation in the world cannot be completely flawless without vulnerabilities.

However, the flaws of a formation are usually very elusive, and the stronger the formation, the harder it is to find those flaws. Thus, when a Martial Artist is trapped within a formation, if he cannot find the flaw, he must rely on brute strength to forcibly break it.

The weakened version of the Minor Demon Trapping Array that Fang Bai set up was equivalent to a high rank formation, not only capable of creating illusions but also possessing strong defensive powers. If an ordinary Universe Level Martial Artist were trapped within, they would be powerless and could only wait for the Essence Energy in the Essence Stones that formed the array to be exhausted before they could escape.

Although Madam Linghu possessed nearly Innate strength, and could forcibly break the formation in less than two hours using all her power, doing so would almost exhaust her Essence Energy, leaving her powerless to capture Fang Bai and potentially allowing Fang Bai to counterattack.

So, after a few ineffective attempts at bombarding the formation, Madam Linghu decisively abandoned this crude method, sitting cross-legged on the ground, swallowing an Elixir, and patiently waited for the Essence Energy in the Essence Stones to deplete.

Maintaining a formation's operation requires a significant amount of Essence Energy from the Essence Stones formatting it. As the Essence Energy within the stones continued to deplete, the defensive power of the formation would correspondingly weaken.

Madam Linghu was waiting for the Minor Demon Trapping Array to weaken, then she would strike with all her might to break the formation and escape.

While Madam Linghu found herself at a loss in the Minor Demon Trapping Array, Fang Bai had already sped through the woods and reached the seashore tens of miles away, continuing along the coast toward the Mist Island Port where ships were docked.

"Hopefully, the Minor Demon Trapping Array can hold Madam Linghu back for a bit longer so we have time to leave Misty Island and set sail far away."

Fang Bai thought to himself, speeding up his movement.

Although Fang Bai hated evil, knowing that Misty Island was filled with bloodshed and malevolence, he assessed that he was no match for Madam Linghu. Since his friends and family were not harmed, he decided to leave this place quickly without engaging in futile resistance.

After half a two-hour period, the port was in sight, and so was the sea vessel.

Fang Bai let out a sigh of relief, his Divine Sense spreading in all directions. It didn't take long for him to detect several Martial Artist Auras in the woods and weeds near the port, realizing that the islanders were monitoring the movements aboard the ship at noon.

Most of these auras belonged to Cosmic Level Experts, and among them, a few even belonged to experts at Cosmic Level perfection.

Although Fang Bai now had the strength to easily kill Cosmic Level perfection experts and had no fear of those surveillants, he did not rush impulsively towards the port's sea vessel.

"Plonk!"

With a slight sound, Fang Bai, who had already started circulating Water Element Qi inside his body, leaped into the sea. He snuck from beneath the waters to the other side of the sea vessel facing the ocean, then stealthily climbed aboard and entered his room, being careful to conceal his aura.

Since it was late at night, most of the crew and passengers had already returned to their rooms aboard the ship to rest, preparing to re-embark on Misty Island the next day.

Using the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique, and citing urgent matters to discuss, Fang Bai gathered a few key crew members inside his room. He then waved his hand to condense a layer of True Essence Barrier around the room to isolate any noise from inside and outside, preventing others from overhearing.

"Elder Fang gathered us here, what urgent matter do we need to discuss?"

A crew member, around fifty years old with Universe Level perfection strength, asked.

"What I have to discuss with you naturally concerns our life and death!"

Fang Bai's expression was grave, his gaze sweeping over the few crew members as he recounted what had happened earlier.

"I heard that the Island Master of Misty Island was a woman of unparalleled beauty. I thought it was true and always wanted to meet her... Now it seems, she's a lethal beauty. It's best to stay as far away from such a woman as possible!"

Another crew member said with lingering fear.

Fang Bai, as the Elder of Tribute of Green Bamboo Stronghold, was deeply respected by all disciples, and his words were completely trusted by the crew.

Knowing that the power of Madam Linghu was even superior to the strongest Universe Level Experts in the world, the crew on the ship were all terrified, fearing that Madam Linghu might fancy them as part of her cultivation Furnace Cauldron.

"I have been targeted by Madam Linghu, who pursued me all the way here. Luckily, I know some Formation techniques and temporarily trapped her with one along the way..."

Fang Bai paused to estimate the time, then continued, "Madam Linghu's strength is immense. She could break the Formation at any moment and reach this ship. We must not delay; count the number of people who have returned. If most have returned, we will leave this place of contention."

Next, Fang Bai discussed briefly with the few key crew members on how to start the ship and leave the port. He then instructed each of the crew members to attend to their respective tasks while he himself conserved energy to face any potential crises.

Chapter 1210: Leaving the Island

On a small hill a kilometer away from the port, several Misty Island residents crouched in the weeds, their gazes piercing through the gaps in the grass, staring intently at the sea vessel where Fang Bai and others were located.

"Brothers, something seems off!"

One of the Misty Island residents spat out a blade of grass from his mouth with a "puh" sound and suddenly raised his hand to point at the sea vessel where Fang Bai and the others were.

The other residents hurriedly looked in the direction he pointed, only to see that the vessel was bustling with activity, as if the martial artists onboard were busying themselves with something.

"Why aren't they cultivating or resting in the middle of the night? What are they up to?"

Muttered another Misty Island resident.

At that moment, Essence Energy permeated above the sea vessel, and the massive hull began to tremble.

"Damn it! They're starting the vessel!"

"Starting the vessel in the dead of night, what for?"

"It looks like they're intending to leave Misty Island!"

"The island master ordered us to keep a close watch on that vessel, to not let the ship leave the port! Brothers, it's time to take action!"

"There's no time to delay, send out the signal and call over other brothers to rush onto the vessel and take control! Those who resist, show no mercy!"

Several Misty Island residents with Cosmic Level strength suddenly stood up, Spiritual Artifacts tightly grasped in their hands, charging toward the sea vessel where Fang Bai and his group were with a frightening Killing Qi.

One of the Misty Island residents leapt atop the peak of a mountain and let out a long howl with a mouthful of air.

This howl transmitted for miles, and upon hearing it, hundreds of Misty Island residents hidden in the nearby mountains and bushes revealed themselves, each armed with a Spiritual Artifact as they shot toward the vessel.

Hundreds of Misty Island residents, all Cosmos Level Martial Artists, had a collective strength comparable to a premier Sect.

However, among the thousand martial artists on the vessel, even the strongest were merely a few early and mid-stage Cosmic Level Martial Artists.

Thus, to the hundreds of Misty Island residents rushing toward the vessel, using such an overwhelming force to deal with the thousand martial artists on the ship seemed like an overkill, somewhat of a misuse of their strength.

However, when they approached the side of the vessel and leapt towards it, they found that the situation was far from as simple as they had thought.

The martial artists on the vessel seemed to have already prepared; those Misty Island residents who tried to leap onto the ship were blocked by an invisible, yet flexible Defense Qi Shield in mid-air, and no matter whether they attacked with fists and kicks or slashed with Spiritual Artifacts, they could not break through that thin layer of Qi Shield.

Hundreds of Misty Island residents took turns attacking the vessel, with Essence Energy continuously bombarding the Defense Qi Shield, causing ripples of Essence Energy.

That Defense Qi Shield was a Formation quietly set up by Fang Bai after sneaking back to the vessel, intended to prevent the Misty Island residents surveilling them from attacking and damaging the ship.

Most of the thousands of martial artists who had boarded the sea vessel had returned before nightfall, with only a small number remaining and not returning from Misty Island. But at this moment, with the situation being urgent, the ship needed to set sail and leave Misty Island immediately without waiting for the others.

Originally, the martial artists on the vessel felt it was strange to leave overnight and many were dissatisfied; though Fang Bai provided an explanation, saying Misty Island was an evil place and every resident's hands were stained with blood, few believed him, deeming Fang Bai alarmist.

It was only at this moment, when they saw hundreds of powerful Misty Island experts suddenly appear, frantically attacking their ship, that the martial artists on the vessel realized that what Fang Bai had said was true.

"Misty Island is home to numerous Cosmic Level Experts, with formidable overall strength and fame that spreads far and wide. The martial artists aboard the ship Fang Bai was on thought they were doomed to be captured, each of them consumed by fear.

However, seeing the Defensive Array Fang Bai had laid out stopping the hundreds of Mist Island inhabitants from approaching, the martial artists onboard went from worry to joy. Some urged the ship

to start up faster, to leave this evil Mist Island, while others stood on the deck and hurled abuse at the islanders on shore.

Finally, the ship left Mist Island Port just before Fang Bai's Defense Qi Shield was about to shatter, quickly heading into the depths of the sea.

The martial artists on the ship breathed a sigh of relief and cheered.

"Don't rejoice too soon, we are not out of danger yet..."

Fang Bai's gaze turned to the sea on the east side of the port, his brows tightly knitted, his expression solemn.

Following Fang Bai's gaze, the martial artists on the ship saw several ships vaguely visible a kilometer away on the sea surface, quickly approaching them.

Each of those ships was larger than the one Fang Bai and the others were on, with sleeker hulls. Judging by the richness of the Essence Energy released from the ships and their speed, there were many high-grade Essence Stones powering them, providing strong propulsion to the ships.

"Those are Misty Island's ships! They've caught up to us!"

A martial artist pointed at the incoming ships, his voice trembling.

The assembled martial artists on the deck became restless, their faces which were just showing joy now replaced by despair.

They knew that the ships of Misty Island, whether in terms of speed or endurance, far outclassed their own. Unless the pursuers gave up the chase, there was no hope of escape.

"Full speed ahead, spare no Essence Stones!"

Fang Bai shouted to the crew members from Green Bamboo Stronghold, who were responsible for controlling the ship.

Although Fang Bai appeared calm on the surface, inside he was full of worry.

From the ships approaching, Fang Bai sensed Madam Linghu's presence and knew she had broken through the Minor Demon Trapping Array he had set up in the forest and was now in pursuit.

Fang Bai knew that by exposing the evil deeds of Misty Island, ruining the intimate cultivation session that Madam Linghu had planned with Wu Rongshan, killing the Thunderclap Black Ape tamed by Madam Linghu, and trapping Madam Linghu in the Minor Demon Trapping Array for a long time... These actions combined meant she must despise him to the core.

With Madam Linghu personally in pursuit by ship, if she didn't catch him, she would certainly not let things go. And since the ships built by Misty Island were extremely fast, Fang Bai was certain that his ship would be overtaken within a hundred miles.

By then, a fierce battle would be inevitable.

On the side of Misty Island, whether in overall strength or number of personnel, they completely overwhelmed Fang Bai's side. Thus, the outcome of the impending battle could be anticipated.

In this vast and boundless ocean, Fang Bai had many life-saving means. Even if Madam Linghu caught up, he had a chance to escape, but Su Linglong and the others would fall into peril.

And to ensure the safety of Su Linglong and the others, one must repel Madam Linghu and her subordinates.

The enemy possessed a Half-Step Innate Expert and hundreds, if not thousands, of Cosmic Level Experts, while his own side, aside from himself, was basically defenseless—a daunting prospect to overcome.

Fang Bai stood at the stern deck of the ship, watching the Misty Island ships in hot pursuit, his mind racing, pondering strategies.

The Green Bamboo Stronghold disciples controlling the ship also knew that once overtaken by the ships behind, their lives would not be spared, and thus they took out the highest grade Essence Stones at any cost to power the ship's voyage, pushing its speed to the limit."