

Doctor 1261

Chapter 1261: Eternal Death Zone

This small town with a population of only around ten to twenty thousand is called "Divine Fire Town".

Although Divine Fire Town is just a small town, it is widely known across the Shenwu Continent, with no one unaware of its reputation. Every year, tens of millions of martial artists come here, seeking fame and a place to rest in the town.

The reason Divine Fire Town is famous is not because of the town itself, but because of an area not far from the town that is considered forbidden land by the countless martial artists of the Shenwu Continent.

This forbidden zone spans a thousand miles, with scorched earth everywhere and not a sprout of grass to be seen. It is said that for millions of years, any living creature that entered the zone has never come back alive.

Therefore, martial artists refer to this area as the "Eternal Death Zone," and the mere mention of it changes people's expressions.

It is said that the reason the Eternal Death Zone is so barren is because at its core, there is a flame that spouts from the ground, emitting extremely high temperatures. Regardless of rain, snow, or ice, the flame never extinguishes year-round, earning it the praise of many martial artists as the "Divine Fire".

The name "Divine Fire Town" thus originates from this.

Although the Eternal Death Zone is a forbidden place for life, and extremely terrifying, perhaps because of the continuous release of Fire Primordial Qi from the Divine Fire, the Fire Primordial Qi in that area is much purer and denser than in other regions, making it a cultivation paradise for Fire System Martial Artists.

Each year, including disciples from Golden Crow Manor, tens of thousands of Fire System Martial Artists would rush from all over the True Martial Realm to Divine Fire Town, approaching the Eternal Death Zone and using the dense Fire Primordial Qi at its edges for cultivation.

Even though the so-called "Divine Fire" is only a legend that no one has seen with their own eyes, there are still a large number of martial artists who firmly believe in its existence. They worship from afar in the direction of the Divine Fire at the core of the Eternal Death Zone, hoping that the Divine Fire will bless their cultivation to achieve great progress and increase their strength.

Divine Fire Town is an important traffic hub within a radius of ten thousand miles. Aside from Fire System Martial Artists who came specifically for cultivation, many other martial artists traveling from the north to the south would pass through, and because it's close to a first-grade large Sect like Golden Crow Manor, Divine Fire Town has become even more bustling.

In Divine Fire Town, there are many inns built for martial artists to rest, as well as a dedicated Martial Artists Trading Market where martial artists can exchange cultivation resources and help each other out.

Being disciples of Golden Crow Manor, Sun Guangyi, Li Jingren, and others often use Divine Fire Town as a stopover point when they go out for training or return from afar, making them regular visitors of the town.

According to people like Sun Guangyi, although Divine Fire Town is always lively, today seems unusually bustling compared to the past. And while martial artists who usually come to the town are mostly Fire System Martial Artists, now it is a mix of all kinds, with various martial artists present.

Sun Guangyi and others keenly observed that among these martial artists, their faces reveal an excitement and agitation that is hard to conceal, despite their tension and seriousness. It is unclear what has nearly caused them to lose their composure.

"Go inquire, see what exactly happened..."

After entering Divine Fire Town, Sun Guangyi gave a meaningful look to Huang Yuanhu, Ye Qingxuan, and other Golden Crow Manor disciples, and said in a deep voice.

Among the martial artists coming and going in the town, Sun Guangyi noticed that quite a number of them were from Sects antagonistic to Golden Crow Manor; hence, he speculated that this gathering of a massive number of martial artists might be related to Golden Crow Manor.

Tens of thousands of martial artists, either in groups of three to five or in dozens, gathered together, whispering and discussing in low voices. Each person held a Spiritual Artifact in hand, with eagerness in their eyes and their aura exposed, as if they were gearing up for a big battle.

Huang Yuanhu, Ye Qingxuan, and other Golden Crow Manor disciples took a round through Divine Fire Town and returned quickly.

Joining them were a few disciples from the Golden Crow Manor.

"Wu Ling, do you know what's going on?"

Sun Guangyi looked around, then inquired in a low voice to a female disciple from the Golden Crow Manor standing before him.

The female disciple, named Wu Ling, appeared only to be in her thirties, but was actually nearing fifty. She was a core disciple of the Golden Crow Manor and possessed the strength of a high-rank Cosmic Level realm.

"Steward Sun, something big has happened..."

With a puzzled look in his eyes, Sun Guangyi heard Wu Ling say in a low voice, "Someone has found a Flame Elemental Stone Vein on the border of the Eternal Death Zone..."

"Flame Elemental Stone Vein?"

Sun Guangyi was momentarily stunned, then became excited, his voice trembling as he asked, "Do you know the extent of the vein's area?"

Wu Ling replied, "The details aren't clear yet... but according to Elder Wu, it's possible that the entire area with a radius of a thousand miles beneath the surface of the Eternal Death Zone is filled with Flame Elemental Stones."

"Really?"

Sun Guangyi's eyes lit up, and he exchanged a meaningful glance with Li Jingren beside him, both of their faces flushing with excitement.

Elder Wu in Wu Ling's words, named Wu Chengzhi, was one of the four Great Elders of the Golden Crow Manor. He had a keen sense for detecting Heaven and Earth Origin Energy, especially Fire Primordial Qi, and was skilled at finding Fire Attribute cultivation resources. If he said so, then it was very likely true.

A Flame Elemental Stone Vein spreading across a thousand-mile radius is rare in the entire True Martial Realm, no wonder Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren were so agitated that they nearly lost their composure.

"The Fire Primordial Qi here is so pure and rich, there must be treasures related to the Fire System hidden here. It seems this trip to the Golden Crow Manor will yield a great harvest..."

Fang Bai glanced in a certain direction outside Divine Fire Town, a sharp light flickering in his eyes and a small smile curling at the corner of his mouth.

Based on his experience from tens of thousands of past lives, Fang Bai felt that the real treasure in the so-called Eternal Death Zone wasn't the buried Flame Elemental Stone Vein, but that cluster of what was called "Divine Fire."

In Fang Bai's past life, among the three thousand worlds, the most powerful flame was known as "Spiritual Fire," and in the Immortal Realm the strongest was "Immortal Fire." It was said that even stronger than the Immortal Fire was the "Divine Fire" from the Divine Realm.

The intensity and purity of the Heaven and Earth Fire Essence Energy that Fang Bai sensed at that time far surpassed ordinary Fire Primordial Qi, yet it was far inferior to the Immortal Fire, leading him to conclude that the so-called "Divine Fire" in the Eternal Death Zone was very likely a type of Spiritual Fire.

Spiritual Fire is formed from the most pure Fire Primordial Qi in heaven and earth after countless millennia of condensation and it is maintained by absorbing Fire Primordial Qi from heaven and earth, never extinguishing over a long period.

In the vicinity of the Spiritual Fire, Fire Primordial Qi is incredibly rich, so much so that over countless millennia, the mountains, stones, flora, and fauna near the Spiritual Fire have absorbed its essence, becoming Fire Elemental Stones or Fire-attribute Spirit Medicine.

If the Eternal Death Zone truly harbors a Flame Elemental Stone Vein spanning a thousand miles in radius, it would prove that the cluster of Spiritual Fire has existed in this place for tens of millions of years.

Other martial artists fear the Eternal Death Zone and dare not enter, worried that they will be reduced to ash under the intense heat. Although Fire System martial artists could enter the Eternal Death Zone relying on their special physique, they wouldn't dare approach that cluster of Spiritual Fire. This shows how powerful the Spiritual Fire is, exceeding the endurance of the vast majority of martial artists within this world.

But Fang Bai was unafraid. With his current cultivation level and the robustness of his physical body, ordinary Spiritual Fire could not pose a threat to his life.

Chapter 1262: More Monks Than Porridge

Martial artists seek life experiences for multiple reasons: first, to broaden their horizons and enrich their knowledge; second, to accumulate actual combat experience and tap into their potential, thereby enhancing their strength; and third, to search for various opportunities, including various cultivation resources.

Fang Bai's trip to Shenwu Continent this time is mainly to reunite with friends and family from the Secular World who are part of Huaxia Sect.

Of course, with an abundance of Heaven and Earth Origin Energy and innumerable cultivation resources, and with martial artists whose strength is unmatched in this era, another purpose of Fang Bai's visit is to seek opportunities.

Since his rebirth, Fang Bai has been consistently diligent in his cultivation efforts, in the Secular World or in one of the three thousand Minor Worlds of the True Martial Realm, striving continually to return to the Immortal Realm. Despite the dangerous and arduous path ahead, he has never shied away and has always faced difficulties head-on, never taking a single step back.

In his previous life, Fang Bai went through ten thousand years of cultivation, achieving the supreme status of Immortal Venerable. He glanced into many mysteries of the Heaven and Earth Dao and knew that the Secular World, the three thousand Minor Worlds, the three thousand Major Worlds, and even the Immortal and Divine Realms that he had not visited in his previous life, were not isolated from each other; rather, they were interconnected by Teleportation Arrays.

However, the Teleportation Arrays between worlds are typically set up in dangerous and hidden places, beyond the perception of ordinary martial artists. Only martial artists who have reached a certain realm and are proficient in Formation secret techniques have the hope of finding and activating a Teleportation Array, thus entering a whole new world through it.

When Fang Bai initially led hundreds of martial artists from the Secular World into the True Martial Realm through a Teleportation Array, it was just so.

The deployment of Teleportation Arrays between parallel planes is relatively easy; Fang Bai of the previous life, who possessed the combat strength of an Immortal Venerable and was well-versed in Formation secret techniques, had this capability.

But Teleportation Arrays that connect different planes can only be established by those supreme beings that possess the power to open the heavens and reshape the cosmos. Once a Teleportation Array is established, it becomes incredibly durable, remaining undamaged even after thousands or tens of thousands of years.

Fang Bai is confident that once his strength reaches the realm of Innate perfection, and he finds the Teleportation Formation in this world, he will be able to enter the three thousand Major Worlds and continue his cultivation on the Martial Dao, thus possibly returning to the Immortal Realm and regaining his peak strength.

However, Fang Bai's current Cultivation Level is only equivalent to the Cosmic Level perfection realm in this world. To reach the realm of Innate perfection and cross over the Universe Level realm is no easy feat.

Therefore, for Fang Bai, the journey back to the Immortal Realm is long and arduous. What he must do now is to search for various opportunities to enhance his own strength.

The cluster of Spiritual Fire located near the Eternal Death Zone, not far from Divine Fire Town, has piqued Fang Bai's strong interest.

In Fang Bai's view, if he can find and consume that cluster of Spiritual Fire, his Cultivation Level will surely breakthrough significantly with the help of the Heaven and Earth Origin Energy contained within the Spiritual Fire. His strength will advance rapidly, and the power of his Fire-type Martial Arts when executed will become even more formidable.

"...After learning that the Eternal Death Zone harbors a Flame Elemental Stone Vein, within just half a month's time, tens of thousands of martial artists have gathered in Divine Fire Town. Using this as a foothold, they explore the Flame Elemental Stone Vein, all hoping to get a share of the bounty... Among these martial artists are Sect Disciples as well as Individual Cultivation Martial Artists from various sects..."

While Fang Bai was silently attuning to the Fire Primordial Qi from the Eternal Death Zone, Wu Ling, a Core Disciple of the Golden Crow Manor, incessantly conveyed the recent happenings to Sun Guangyi with a tone brimming with indignation, her eyes looking at the martial artists in the town filled with malice.

In the view of Wu Ling and almost all Golden Crow Manor Disciples, the Eternal Death Zone lies adjacent to the edge of Golden Crow Manor's territory. The Flame Elemental Stone Vein discovered there should rightfully belong to Golden Crow Manor. Now, these external martial artists trying to tap into the Essence Stone Mine is equivalent to infringing upon the interests of the Golden Crow Manor.

As a first-class sect that commands over ten thousand disciples, Golden Crow Manor is seldom provoked, but the Essence Stone Vein spanning a thousand miles under the Eternal Death Zone is enough to drive martial artists into a frenzy, making them disregard all consequences.

Ordinary sect forces indeed find it difficult to confront a behemoth like Golden Crow Manor, but if many sects form an alliance and agree to advance and retreat together, they could give Golden Crow Manor a headache.

As for the individual cultivation martial artists who are weak and alone, they naturally also use the method of forming alliances, small groups of thirty to fifty people, or larger groups of up to hundreds or thousands. Gathering together, they elect a temporary leader to contend with Golden Crow Manor, resolved not to rest until they have divided up some benefits among themselves.

Thus, tens of thousands of martial artists formed dozens of small or large sect alliances and individual cultivation martial artist alliances, with Divine Fire Town as their base. Every day, each alliance sends out some martial artists to the edge of the Eternal Death Zone to investigate the Essence Stone Vein and discuss how to mine the Essence Stones.

Although Golden Crow Manor is strong and has many disciples, the Eternal Death Zone is simply too vast to effectively prevent other martial artists from approaching. The occasional encounters between the two sides, leading to standoffs or conflicts, hardly leave Golden Crow Manor at an advantage.

At the same time, those sect forces that are as powerful as Golden Crow Manor but in a hostile position also began to stir, seizing the opportunity to cause trouble for Golden Crow Manor. Even some major sects reached an agreement in secret, planning to take advantage of the situation to eliminate Golden Crow Manor and divide its stored cultivation resources and the Essence Stone Vein of the Eternal Death Zone.

As a first-class sect, Golden Crow Manor was naturally well-informed. After the high-level members learned about this, they discussed and decided to release a message claiming that they were willing to share the Essence Stone Vein with all the martial artists, but Golden Crow Manor must hold the majority share.

Although Golden Crow Manor showed a sign of softening, it did not lead to the retreat of the martial artists from all sides. After all, although the Essence Stone Vein stored underground in the Eternal Death Zone is colossal, it is not easy to mine, and with the resources divided among tens of thousands of martial artists, there would be very little left. Moreover, martial artists continue to arrive at Divine Fire Town, making the situation even more like a case of too many monks and not enough porridge.

Uneven distribution of benefits naturally led to dissatisfaction, especially since Golden Crow Manor wanted to take the lion's share, which was condemned by other martial artists. Coupled with some sect forces with ulterior motives fanning the flames in the dark, standoffs and conflicts kept occurring, leaving the disciples of Golden Crow Manor overwhelmed and without peace.

"It's the disciples of Golden Crow Manor!"

"Golden Crow Manor has severely damaged many of our martial artists from the Justice Alliance; let's surround them and demand justice!"

"Don't let them get away!"

"Capture them, let Golden Crow Manor exchange them for cultivation resources!"

...

Suddenly, the crowd not far away stirred up, and along with the shouts, over a hundred martial artists surged out from the alleys of Divine Fire Town, encircling Fang Bai and about a dozen others.

"Disciples of Tianji Sect? Heh, to think that they have also gotten involved in this matter..."

Fang Bai's gaze swept over the martial artists who had surrounded them. He sensed the same martial artist aura as Ying Guangping and Feng Peilan, his mouth twitching slightly as his eyes emitted a chilling sharpness.

Chapter 1263: He is Fang Bai!

Speaking of which, Fang Bai's history with Tianji Sect is rather deep.

Back in Tiansheng Continent, when Fang Bai, together with Green Bamboo Stronghold, launched an attack on Swiftwind Valley, he encountered obstruction by Feng Lingtian's sister and Tianji Sect's Direct Disciple, Feng Peilan, and ended up killing her with his own hands.

Afterward, Fang Bai took a sea vessel to Shenwu Continent, and when the ship docked at a port controlled by Tianji Sect, he faced difficulties from a group of Sect Disciples led by Ying Guangping. Fang Bai struck again, killing Ying Guangping with a blow of his palm.

For a prestigious first-grade Sect to have both a Direct Disciple and a Steward killed consecutively, especially by an obscure Martial Artist, this news incited fury in Sect Master Xuan Tianji of Tianji Sect. He immediately dispatched several high-ranking members of his Sect to hunt down Fang Bai.

Additionally, Xuan Tianji offered a bounty of ten million top-grade Essence Stones to the entire True Martial Realm, declaring that whoever could bring back Fang Bai's head would claim all ten million top-grade Essence Stones for themselves.

Ten million top-grade Essence Stones is no small sum; even Universe Level Experts are tempted, so the bounty offered by Tianji Sect caused quite a stir in the True Martial Realm. Tens of thousands of Sect Disciples and Loose Cultivators were mobilized, searching for Fang Bai's whereabouts everywhere.

Martial Artists from Shenwu Continent have always been proud, never considering Martial Artists from other continents a threat. Even if someone like Fang Bai, an Individual Cultivation Martial Artist from Tiansheng Continent, had once killed Ying Guangping—a beginner Universe Level Expert—he still couldn't catch the eye of Shenwu Continent's Martial Artists.

Those who wished to claim the bounty of ten million Essence Stones were full of confidence, believing that as long as they could find Fang Bai, they could easily dispatch him to his doom.

Although Fang Bai killed Ying Guangping, a Cosmos Level Martial Artist at the early stage, his strength should not be underestimated. However, according to some Tianji Sect Disciples who had encountered Fang Bai, the latter was only in his early twenties. Many Shenwu Continent Martial Artists thought that, as a young Loose Cultivator from Tiansheng Continent without the full support of a Sect behind him, even if his talent was against heaven's will, reaching a midpoint Universe Level Cultivation would already be incredibly impressive.

In the history of the True Martial Realm, it's rare for Martial Artists in their early twenties to achieve the Universe Level Realm. The most prodigious one is said to be a gifted individual from the legendary Innate Sect, who reached the high Universe Level Realm by the age of twenty-five and eventually ascended to the Innate Realm, becoming a peerless powerhouse.

As for an Individual Cultivation Martial Artist like Fang Bai, who lacks the continuous supply of Cultivation Resources provided by an Innate Sect and doesn't have access to high-level Martial Arts Techniques, how could he possibly be compared with the chosen ones from the large Sects without some incredible stroke of luck?

What if Fang Bai is a Universe Level mid-stage expert? Just rally more compatriots, outnumber him, and he can be killed, winning that ten million top-grade Essence Stones.

Many Martial Artists shared this line of thinking and set out to track down Fang Bai.

Of course, if those Martial Artists knew about what Fang Bai had done in the Forest of Myriad Medicines, the vast majority of them would likely turn into scared turtles, hiding their heads.

Having slain hundreds of Spirit Beasts, including two three-thousand-year-old ones, and being a formidable existence comparable to those of a first-grade Sect, Fang Bai was not someone an average Martial Artist could afford to provoke?

Even first-grade Sects with immense overall strength had to weigh the consequences when facing a free-spirited Loose Cultivator like Fang Bai, who was bound by no constraints and possessed formidable strength.

Because any smart Loose Cultivator facing a powerful Sect would never choose open confrontation. Instead, they would resort to all sorts of tactics to launch surprise attacks, causing headaches for any Sect.

Tianji Sect's bounty had been issued, and tens of thousands of martial artists in the True Martial Realm desired to exchange Fang Bai's head for ten million Essence Stones. However, Fang Bai seemed to have vanished into thin air, with no one able to find him.

Little did they know, ever since Fang Bai arrived in the Shenwu Continent, he had delved into the deep forests, searching for various cultivation resources. Whenever he encountered martial artists who wished him harm, he would swiftly suppress them with his power. Thus, it was only now, when he showed up in Divine Fire Town, that his whereabouts were finally revealed.

However, at this moment, the hundreds of martial artists who surrounded him were actually targeting Sun Guangyi and other disciples of Golden Crow Manor, paying no attention to the young and seemingly low-cultivation level Fang Bai.

"What do you want to do?"

Sun Guangyi scanned the surrounding martial artists with a sharp gaze, bellowing in a heavy tone while his Essence Energy pushed outward, forcing back several martial artists who were slowly encroaching.

The group of over a hundred martial artists surrounding Sun Guangyi and the other disciples of Golden Crow Manor was a mixed bunch, including Sect Disciples as well as Individual Cultivation Martial Artists. They had been temporarily cobbled together to form the so-called "Justice Alliance" to contest other alliances gathered near Divine Fire Town, vying for a share of spoils in the upcoming struggle for the Essence Stone Vein in Eternal Death Zone.

Among the hundreds of martial artists in the "Justice Alliance," the majority were Cosmos Level Martial Artists, with more than a dozen Universe Level beginners, and the strongest were two Universe Level mid-rank martial artists.

Such a force was more than sufficient to deal with Sun Guangyi and the other dozen or so disciples from Golden Crow Manor, but Sun Guangyi and his companions seemed fearless, their eyes on the martial artists of the "Justice Alliance" even carried a hint of schadenfreude.

In the eyes of Sun Guangyi and the other Golden Crow Manor disciples, Fang Bai, who had slaughtered hundreds of fierce Spirit Beasts all the way in the Forest of Myriad Medicines, was just like a god of slaughter. They believed that if these clueless martial artists around really dared to make a move, it could very likely infuriate Fang Bai.

The moment Fang Bai's blood-colored long knife, brimming with sky-high Evil Qi, was drawn, a scene of Corpse Mountain Blood Sea Killing would surely unfold, and it was uncertain how many would survive in the end.

Just thinking about that terrifying blood-colored long knife, which could release Evil Qi and influence people's will, even Sun Guangyi felt a chill run down his spine.

"What are we doing? Heh heh... Of course, we're capturing you to exchange for some cultivation resources from Golden Crow Manor! In the past, we wouldn't dare to provoke the Golden Crow Manor, but now it is beleaguered and could hardly save itself. So why not take advantage of this opportunity?"

A Cosmos Level mid-rank martial artist, with strength comparable to Sun Guangyi, sneered with a sinister smile. Suddenly bringing his Spiritual Artifact across horizontally, his eyes filled with a menacing glare, he said to Sun Guangyi, "I advise you to surrender without any resistance, to avoid suffering! Otherwise... you all will die! Don't keep any hope—look around, all the martial artists consider your Golden Crow Manor as enemies! Even if we spare you, other martial artists will target you just the same!"

Sun Guangyi looked around and indeed found that many martial artists in Divine Fire Town were eyeing him and the other Golden Crow Manor disciples with hostility.

"He... he..."

Just then, one of the Tianji Sect disciples suddenly pointed at Fang Bai and exclaimed in shock: "He's the one who killed Steward Ying! He is Fang Bai!"

Chapter 1264: A Hundred Martial Artists, What Difference Do They Have From A Hundred Ants?

Claim Fang Bai's head, and ten million Essence Stones will be yours.

Ever since the Heavenly Secrets Sect issued this bounty, the name "Fang Bai" has become a hot topic of discussion among the countless Martial Artists of the Shenwu Continent.

Even some Martial Artists who shared the same name and surname as Fang Bai were innocently implicated, cruelly slain by other Martial Artists, their heads delivered to the Tianji Sect.

At this moment, a disciple from the Tianji Sect suddenly cried out the name "Fang Bai." Most of the Martial Artists in Divine Fire Town were keen and sharp, hearing it loud and clear, causing immediate turmoil. Countless Martial Artists, fearing being left behind and losing the chance to claim the ten million Essence Stones, executed their movement techniques and swiftly flew toward this direction.

Thus, within just dozens of breaths, thousands of Martial Artists had surrounded Fang Bai and his companions, layer upon layer, their greedy gazes fixated on Fang Bai, like hunters eyeing prey soon to be grasped.

Although these Martial Artists had never seen Fang Bai before, as soon as the Heavenly Secrets Sect issued the bounty of ten million Essence Stones, they also distributed many of Fang Bai's portraits based on descriptions from a few Tianji Sect disciples who had seen him, all over the True Martial Realm, with many Martial Artists possessing a copy.

After being surrounded, some Martial Artists took out the portrait of Fang Bai and carefully compared it with the young Martial Artist in white robes pointed at by that Tianji Sect disciple, discovering a high degree of match in both age and appearance.

Fang Bai frowned and glanced at the Tianji Sect disciple who had recognized him, then flashed him a grin, asking, "Do you recognize me?"

In the eyes of that Tianji Sect disciple, Fang Bai's smile appeared chilling and filled with Killing Qi, recalling that this young man had previously killed Steward Ying Guangping, he involuntarily stepped back in fear.

"Third Mo, we outnumber and overpower them, what are you afraid of?"

The gray-robed elder standing behind the Tianji Sect disciple spoke in a deep voice.

The gray-robed elder had white hair and a gaunt face. His eyes carried a sinister look, and though he appeared to be slightly over sixty, he was actually over a hundred years old and possessed Universe Level mid-rank strength. He was one of the leaders of the Justice Alliance.

Upon hearing this, the disciple named Third Mo, feeling assured, puffed up his chest and pointed at Fang Bai, shouting loudly, "I certainly recognize you! When you killed Steward Ying at our Tianji Sect's port, I was there! Even if you turned to ashes, I would still recognize you! Today, our 'Justice Alliance' vows to kill you, to avenge Steward Ying!"

"Kill me?"

Fang Bai snorted with laughter, his gaze sweeping over the hundreds of Justice Alliance Martial Artists around him, his expression full of disdain, "With just you shrimp soldiers and crab generals? Far too inferior! If you don't want to die, roll back home and go to sleep!"

Disciples from Golden Crow Manor like Sun Guangyi, already unafraid of this so-called "Justice Alliance," and hearing Fang Bai's mocking tone, couldn't help but burst into loud laughter.

"Senior Fang is right, you are just a bunch of shrimp soldiers and crab generals!"

"A motley crowd, not worth a single blow!"

"Senior Fang is telling you to roll, aren't you rolling yet?"

"Believe it or not, Senior Fang could slap you to death with a single slap?"

"A nest of snakes and rats, in cahoots with each other, that's what you are! Calling yourselves the 'Justice Alliance'... pah, utterly shameless!"

"Clearly just a bunch of people temporarily cobbled together to divide the Primordial Vein, and you dare to call yourselves 'Justice Alliance'? Disgusting!"

"It should be called 'Disgusting Alliance' instead!"

"I feel like throwing up!"

...

Apart from Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren who remained calm and collected, the younger disciples of Golden Crow Manor such as Huang Yuanhu and Ye Qingxuan couldn't hold their tongues, and they also engaged in mockery as soon as Fang Bai finished speaking.

Over a hundred Martial Artists from the "Justice Alliance", their hair and beards bristling with anger, could barely contain their rage. They gripped their Spiritual Artifacts tightly, ready to attack on their leaders' command.

The Tianji Sect disciple called Third Mo, his face flushed red and his eyes malevolent, stared at Fang Bai and shouted angrily, "See how arrogant you can be! Today will be your day of death!"

He glanced at Sun Guangyi, Li Jingren, and other disciples standing by Fang Bai, still thinking Fang Bai had the backing of Golden Crow Manor, and sneered viciously, "Don't think just because you're under Golden Crow Manor's protection, you can rest easy. Let me tell you the truth, this time Golden Crow Manor cannot even save itself, let alone you!"

"That's right!"

The gray-robed elder behind Third Mo laughed out loud, clapping Third Mo on the shoulder and then stepped forward, looking at Fang Bai with a smile and said, "Young man, daring to kill a Steward of Tianji Sect, you not only have strength but also courage! Honestly, I, He Rushan, admire you a lot as I wouldn't dare to provoke a major sect like you did!"

"I've killed Ying Guangping; I can kill you too. Do you believe it?"

Fang Bai glanced sideways at He Rushan with a look of disdain, as if he didn't take him seriously at all.

He Rushan's expression changed suddenly, his smile freezing in place.

He relied on having a superior number at his side, thinking Fang Bai had no escape this time, feeling content. He momentarily forgot that the young Martial Artist in front of him, much younger than himself, was an exceedingly dangerous opponent who had once killed Tianji Sect's Steward Ying Guangping, whose strength was comparable to his own.

He Rushan was aware enough to realize that while his Cultivation Level was at the same rank as Ying Guangping's, he would still be slightly inferior if they were to compete all out.

Thus, as Fang Bai said, if he could kill Ying Guangping, then He Rushan certainly wouldn't be his match.

With this thought, He Rushan moved like lightning, retreating several meters backwards. When he stopped, he was already covered in a cold sweat, secretly relieved Fang Bai hadn't taken the moment to strike, otherwise, at such a short distance, it was questionable whether he could avoid his attack.

While He Rushan harbored some fear of Fang Bai in his heart, he still maintained a tough exterior, sneering, "What an arrogant lad, facing death yet still strong in words! Today it's not just me, He Rushan, you're facing, but a hundred Martial Artists from the 'Justice Alliance'! If you surrender quietly, you may suffer less, otherwise..."

"A hundred Martial Artists, how are they different from a hundred ants?"

Fang Bai interrupted He Rushan, his eyes filled with contempt, and pointing to his head, he said, "I heard my head is worth tens of millions of high-grade Essence Stones, you want it, don't you? Then come and take it!"

He Rushan really dared not to advance alone, making eye signals towards the several Universe Level Experts by his side. Hence, the several Universe Level Experts gripped their Spiritual Artifact, encircled by True Yuan, their eyes fierce, and began to approach Fang Bai in a fan-shaped formation.

Together, several Universe Level High Rank Experts, including a few mid-ranked Universe Level Experts, had the combined strength comparable to a single high-ranked Universe Level Expert. Their combined pressures overlapped, like furious waves, surged towards Fang Bai.

Chapter 1265: Four Cute Girls in Black Dresses

The oppressive aura bore down, and those standing next to Fang Bai, like Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, felt as if mountains were pressing down on them. They could barely last a few breaths before their blood surged and their faces turned pale, forcing them to retreat rapidly, lest they be injured.

Only Fang Bai, under the impact of this overwhelming pressure, although his clothes fluttered wildly, stood unshakable like a mountain, his expression as usual, with a slight smirk playing at the corners of his mouth, hinting at a mocking smile.

Fang Bai had even slain a Half-Step Innate Expert like Madam Linghu; this pressure, comparable to that of a High Rank Universe Level Expert, was simply child's play to him, not worth a sneer.

"So many old fools bullying a junior, truly shameless!"

Just as Fang Bai was about to strike back fiercely to teach He Rushan and the others a lesson, suddenly, a crisp voice like that of a yellow oriole reached his ears.

Fang Bai turned his head to look and saw four strong, youthful girls dressed in black long skirts, pushing through the crowd of Justice Alliance Martial Artists blocking them with a look of disdain on their faces.

This disdain was obviously directed towards the Martial Artists of the Justice Alliance, and from the tone of the girl who spoke among the four, it was clear they disapproved of He Rushan and others bullying Fang Bai, hence they stood up for him.

The four black-dressed girls were surrounded by a faint Water Element Qi, evidently practicing Water System Martial Arts Techniques, and from their attire, it was clear they came from the same Sect.

The most surprising thing was that the four black-dressed girls not only dressed alike but also had nearly indistinguishable heights, looks, and ages as if they were carved from the same mold.

Everyone present understood that these four black-dressed girls were indeed quadruplets, although it was impossible to tell who was the eldest sister and who was the youngest.

These four sisters, each with fair skin and beautiful looks, big eyes and cherry lips, looked adorably youthful; Fang Bai was reminded of the youthful beauties in anime from the Secular World at his first glance.

In terms of looks, stature, and temperament, the four sisters were undoubtedly top amongst the Female Martial Artists of the True Martial Realm.

The four sisters, only about seventeen or eighteen years old, were the youngest among the thousands of Martial Artists present, yet no one dared to underestimate them upon their arrival.

Except for Fang Bai, none of the Martial Artists present could discern the Cultivation Level of the four sisters.

This indicated that the strength of the four sisters surpassed almost everyone present, at least reaching the Middle-Level Universe Realm.

Universe Middle-Level Experts who are merely sixteen or seventeen years old, even the top first-class Sects of the True Martial Realm, despite using all their Cultivation Resources, would find it difficult to nurture such talents.

From this, one could infer the staggering strength and mysterious origin of the Sect these four powerful sisters belonged to, a thought that was frightful.

Although He Rushan was a Loose Cultivator and Universe Level Expert with broad experiences, upon seeing the four black-dressed girls appear, he immediately thought of the legendary Innate Sects.

In the entire True Martial Realm, probably only the secluded and mysterious Innate Sects could possess sufficient Cultivation Resources and profound heritage to nurture such young Universe Level Experts.

Thinking of the Innate Sects and seeing the disdainful looks from the four black-dressed girls, He Rushan couldn't help but shudder and began to reconsider his actions.

Clearly, the four black-dressed girls had stepped forward for Fang Bai; if he persisted recklessly in trying to kill Fang Bai, it could lead to a conflict with these four girls.

Not to mention whether the hundred Martial Artists of his Justice Alliance were a match for the four black-dressed girls; even if they could suppress the opposition, if the Innate Sect behind them knew about it, the outcome would only be tragic.

Although He Rushan had never witnessed the full strength of an Innate Sect, according to various legends, even ten first-rank sects combined might not be able to contend with a single Innate Sect. This illustrates just how formidable the Innate Sects are.

As an Individual Cultivation Martial Artist, He Rushan might be powerful, but if he provoked an Innate Sect, running to the ends of the earth would hardly help him escape their wrath.

"Hey, don't be afraid, with us here, they won't dare to bully you anymore."

Four black-dressed young girls, each holding a Sword-Type Spirit Weapon, walked up to Fang Bai and stood firm in front of He Rushan, the girl who spoke earlier turned her head to Fang Bai and said earnestly.

"Me, afraid?"

Fang Bai touched his nose with a bitter smile, looking at the four charming and pretty girls dressed in black, exuding a cool aura, which was somewhat amusing.

Fang Bai indeed grew fond of these four girls who wouldn't stand injustice and would unsheathe their swords to help, and he also developed a keen interest in their identities.

"You better leave now! If you don't, we are going to start hitting!"

Among the four black-dressed girls, only one spoke while the other three remained silent, only nodding repeatedly like chicks pecking rice after the talking girl finished speaking.

This also indicated that the black-dressed girl who spoke was the eldest among the four sisters, acting as the big sister to the other three.

Although the four sisters appeared harmless, He Rushan felt an unprecedented immense pressure in facing them. Hearing their command to leave, he reluctantly complied without daring to utter a word of refusal, giving the sisters a deep look before turning to swiftly flee, not daring to stay a moment longer.

Once He Rushan left, the other Martial Artists of Justice Alliance scattered like birds and beasts.

However, most of these Martial Artists did not go far but hid in the distance watching Fang Bai.

Those Martial Artists thought that the four sisters only intervened because they couldn't stand seeing Fang Bai being "bullied"; they wouldn't keep an eye on him indefinitely, and once the girls left, these people could still find an opportunity to attack Fang Bai.

Watching as all the surrounding Martial Artists dispersed, the four black-dressed girls also turned to face Fang Bai.

"Hey, your name is Fang Bai, right? I heard here in Divine Fire Town that a lot of people want your head to exchange for Essence Stones with the Tianji Sect!"

The always-talking black-dressed girl blinked her big, adorable eyes, speaking with concern to Fang Bai, "You better be careful from now on, don't let those people kill you... Hey, Rou Ling, why are you pulling my skirt?"

Before she could finish, the girl standing next to her known as Rou Ling, reached out and tugged at her skirt, then pointed to her own little mouth, her rosy cheeks bearing a pleading look.

"Alright, alright, I won't punish you! Go ahead and speak! But remember, no causing trouble for no reason next time, or I will forbid you from speaking for ten days! Did you get that?"

The always-talking black-dressed sister said with a stern face.

The girl named "Rou Ling" nodded vigorously, then let out a relieved sigh and patted her chest, saying, "I got it, Sister Rou Fu, I won't cause trouble without reason anymore. But if we come across unfair situations like today, I can still intervene, right? You won't punish me, right?"

Chapter 1266: Fortune's Blessing

Rou Fu and Rou Ling, the two sisters, chatted incessantly in front of Fang Bai and the others, seemingly oblivious to their surroundings.

Their voices were crisp and sweet, exceptionally pleasing to the ear, and coupled with their tender and pretty appearance and their cute expressions, they were a sight to behold, naturally endearing themselves to others.

"Rou Fu... Rou Ling... Could it be that the names of the other two girls are Rou Zhi and Rou Xin? Haha, that would make the four sisters' names together read as 'Fortune's Blessing'!"

Fang Bai smiled at the corners of his mouth, looking with interest at the four young ladies in black dresses before him, speculating about their identities and origins.

Although he had not been in the True Martial Realm for long, Fang Bai's understanding of this world was already more extensive than most martial artists here, knowing that a first-rate sect couldn't cultivate these young ladies in black dresses, who were young yet possessed Universe Level High Rank abilities.

Just like He Rushan, who had left earlier, Fang Bai also believed that these four young ladies in black dresses very likely came from an Innate Sect.

"When encountering injustice on the road, it is natural to draw one's sword and render assistance, but before assisting, one must also gauge the strength of the other party. If they are more formidable than us, then we should not rashly intervene, otherwise we would suffer... This is what the Palace Master personally instructed us before we came out to gain experience..."

Rou Fu, referred to as the elder sister, earnestly told Rou Ling, the youngest among the four sisters.

Rou Ling nodded continuously, then glanced in the direction where He Rushan and the others had retreated, wrinkling her straight nose, revealing a playful demeanor as she said, "The Palace Master said that there are many bad people in this world. The ones who just left who bully the few with the many and the weak with the strong, they are bad people! Fortunately, they knew to leave, otherwise, these fists of mine would have made them cry for their parents and scurry away cradling their heads!"

Rou Fu rolled her eyes and huffed, "When it comes to fighting, I am the eldest sister so I should go first! Rou Ling, you are the youngest, so you should be the last! Rou Zhi, Rou Xin, am I right?"

Rou Zhi and Rou Xin, the two sisters, obviously looked up to their eldest sister, nodding vigorously when they heard her words.

"As your elder sisters, we should indulge you, the youngest sister!"

Rou Ling, unconvinced, argued her case.

"Rou Ling, have you forgotten what the Palace Master cautioned us about when we left?"

"The Palace Master said that Rou Fu is the eldest sister, and we three must listen to her, otherwise she has the authority to punish us!"

"If you don't listen to your elder sister, be careful or she might again punish you by forbidding you to speak!"

"Last time, you were punished to not speak for a whole day; this time it could be two days!"

"So, you must listen to your elder sister!"

...

Rou Zhi and Rou Xin, taking turns, said this to Rou Ling.

Thinking about how she was nearly unable to speak for a day because of the punishment before, Rou Ling's little face instantly filled with gloom, no longer daring to argue with her eldest sister Rou Fu, only able to puff her cheeks and pout her rosy lips, using such expressions to convey her inner grievances and dissatisfaction.

Fang Bai, listening to the four black-dressed young ladies conversing, knew that they lacked life experiences and were as pure-hearted as blank slates. Fortunately, their strength was formidable; otherwise, they would inevitably suffer significant losses, truly making him wonder how the high echelons of their sect could rest assured letting them go out to gain experience.

"I think when it comes to fighting, it would definitely be best if all four sisters acted together! Sisters united can cut through gold. Don't you agree?"

Fang Bai interjected with a chuckle.

"Yes, yes, yes..."

Rou Ling nodded vigorously, like listening to celestial music, and gratefully glanced at Fang Bai with an expression of having met a kindred spirit.

Rou Fu thought for a moment, feeling that Fang Bai made sense, so she also nodded, then said to Fang Bai: "Those people just now wanted your head. Once we leave, you must be careful on your own!"

"Sister Rou Fu, why don't we let him come with us, and we protect him? That way, no one will target him anymore."

Earlier, Fang Bai had spoken up for Rou Ling, which greatly increased her fondness for him, inspiring her to also want to help Fang Bai.

Fang Bai's combat power was already able to contend with Half-Step Innate Experts, unless he encountered a real Innate Expert, he wasn't worried about his safety at all, hearing Rou Ling offer protection made him smile.

"I appreciate the kindness, but I still have matters to attend to and cannot accompany you," he replied.

Fang Bai bowed with cupped fists towards Rou Fu and the others.

"In this area of Divine Fire Town, many martial artists want to take your head to the Tianji Sect in exchange for ten million Essence Stones! Aren't you afraid?"

Seeing Fang Bai refuse her kindness, Rou Ling couldn't help but feel a bit disappointed.

"I am a bit scared, but... I still have some strength, and with so many friends around me, I should have no large problem protecting myself. Besides, we are on our way to Golden Crow Manor, and it should be safe when we arrive there."

Rou Fu pursed her lips, unconvinced, and said, "Although Golden Crow Manor is a first-class Sect, and its overall strength is not bad, this time many martial artists intend to target the Essence Stone Vein beneath Eternal Death Zone. If Golden Crow Manor interferes, it might provoke public anger and face serious trouble. At that time, they might not be able to protect themselves, let alone you."

Before Fang Bai could reply, she added: "Oh well! Since you're not coming with us, we're leaving now! The edge of Eternal Death Zone has already gathered tens of thousands of martial artists, and the number is still increasing. We are going to join the excitement too! Rou Zhi, Rou Xin, Rou Ling. Let's go!"

Saying this, she put her long sword into a spatial ring, called to the other three women, and then turned to leave.

"Hey, be careful on your own! If Golden Crow Manor can't protect you, come find us at the edge of the Eternal Death Zone! We are weak... ah no, our Sect is very powerful, we can definitely protect you from harm!"

Before leaving, Rou Ling crisply said to Fang Bai, then waved her dainty little hand to Fang Bai who was standing, and rushed to catch up with her three sisters.

"Rou Fu, Rou Zhi, Rou Xin, Rou Ling... Fortune's Blessing, I indeed guessed right just now..."

Fang Bai watched the distant figures of the Rou sisters as they left, standing with his hands behind his back, a smile filling his face.

Fang Bai initially wanted to subtly inquire more about the Rou sisters' Sect, but then he thought better of it. Since the sisters had already declared their intent to go to the edge of Eternal Death Zone, there would likely still be a chance to meet them.

Although warriors from the Justice Alliance like He Rushan seemed like ants in Fang Bai's eyes and were not a concern, the Rou sisters had come to his support out of goodwill.

Fang Bai, as a person, always repaid respect with greater respect, mindful of small kindnesses. With the discovery of an Essence Stone Mine in Eternal Death Zone sure to attract a large number of martial artists, including likely Universe Level Experts, anything could happen. If the sisters faced peril, Fang Bai wouldn't mind assisting them.

"Senior Fang, it's not advisable to stay long in Divine Fire Town. Let's hurry along!"

Sun Guangyi, worried both about the return of Justice Alliance's warriors and other eagerly watching martial artists potentially moving to attack, urged Fang Bai immediately after the Rou sisters left.

Chapter 1267: Tracking

Fang Bai surveyed his surroundings and saw that although the martial artists who had previously surrounded them had retreated to a distance, most had not left. Covetousness and drooling greed still shone in their eyes; they were clearly still thinking about claiming the bounty on his head.

However, they might be wary of the Rou family's four sisters, concerned that they might suddenly return, and thus no one dared to come forward and cause trouble for the time being.

"Let's go!"

Seeing the anxious expressions on Sun Guangyi and the others, Fang Bai knew they were worried about the safety of Golden Crow Manor and also afraid of being besieged again by the martial artists of Divine Fire Town, making it difficult to break free. Therefore, he strode forward, leading the way towards Golden Crow Manor.

Xia Chenyu, Sun Guangyi, Li Jingren, and a dozen other disciples from the Golden Crow Manor, spiritual artifacts in hand, remained vigilant and closely followed behind Fang Bai, swiftly leaving Divine Fire Town.

Perched atop a hill outside Divine Fire Town, led by He Rushan, over a hundred martial artists from the "Justice Alliance" crouched within the tall weeds, watching Fang Bai and the others quickly traverse the mountain path a kilometer away, with fierce, eager, and restless eyes.

"Senior He, those four stinking girls have already gone to the Eternal Death Zone. We can make our move now!"

Crouching beside He Rushan, Third Mo, a disciple of the Tianji Sect who was determined to kill Fang Bai for the glory of his sect and to gain favor with the higher-ups, was eagerly persuading He Rushan to take action.

Currently a disciple of the Inner Court of Tianji Sect, Third Mo held a mid-level Cosmic Rank strength, which was nothing but mediocre on the Shenwu Continent.

Third Mo, being of moderate talent and overlooked by the high-ranking officials in his sect, would likely see his martial dao path come to a halt here without some fortuitous opportunity.

Third Mo was a man with lofty pride and unwilling to resign himself to mediocrity. Like many other disciples from the sect, he often went on adventures hoping for opportunity to defy the heavens and change his fate.

This time, upon the discovery of an Essence Stone Vein in the Eternal Death Zone, and coincidentally while Third Mo and some fellow disciples were undergoing trials nearby, they rushed over to Divine Fire Town hoping for a chance to get their share of the treasure.

Because Tianji Sect was so far away from the Eternal Death Zone, requiring several months of travel, Third Mo and the other disciples had no way to alert their sect for reinforcements. After discussion, they joined forces with He Rushan and a few other Universe Level martial artists to form the "Justice Alliance," hoping to muddy the waters and seize some high-quality Fire Elemental Stones or other cultivation resources.

If they obtained high-grade Fire Elemental Stones or other cultivation resources that they couldn't use themselves, they could also bring them back to the sect. They hoped to exchange them for urgently needed cultivation resources or martial arts techniques, or even an opportunity to receive guidance from the highest ranks of the sect.

What Third Mo did not expect was that, while they initially came for the Essence Stone Vein, they stumbled upon Fang Bai, a man so despised by the Sect Master and high-ups that they offered a bounty of ten million Essence Stones for his head. This ignited wild ecstasy among Third Mo and the Tianji Sect disciples, who were overjoyed.

If they could leverage the "Justice Alliance" to kill Fang Bai, even if they didn't claim the ten million Essence Stones from the sect, they would certainly receive praise from the sect's high-ups. As per tradition, this would lead to urgent supplies of cultivation resources or guidance in martial arts techniques, and potentially allow them to make a breakthrough.

Of course, all of this depended on their ability to bring Fang Bai's head back to the sect. If Fang Bai slipped away, everything would be illusory.

"Not yet, wait a little longer... just a little longer..."

Third Mo coveted Fang Bai's head, and so did He Rushan. However, He Rushan's mind was much cooler. His eyes fixed on the distant figure of Fang Bai, he gently twirled his beard and said in a deep voice, "Let's wait for them to get further from Divine Fire Town before we make our move. Better safe than sorry, lest others intervene!"

"Just now in Divine Fire Town, if not for those four brats in black dresses causing trouble, ruining our good fortune, we might have already succeeded! Damn it! Truly infuriating!"

Thinking of the Roushi sisters, Third Mo's eyes gleamed with ferocity as he clenched his teeth in anger.

"Heh heh, those four girls are fair-skinned and beautiful, tender enough to draw water. If only they weren't so powerful, taking them as martial companions would be delightful!"

A sleazy smile played across the face of a chubby martial artist beside Third Mo.

Apart from the chubby martial artist, other members of the Justice Alliance also harbored such thoughts, believing those four black-dressed maidens were extraordinarily talented and rare beauties. If they could really subdue them as martial companions, this trip to the Eternal Death Zone wouldn't be in vain.

However, although the four black-dressed maidens seemed naive and unsophisticated, their strength was profound and unfathomable. Even He Rushan, the strongest in the Justice Alliance, could not discern their cultivation levels. Under their deterrence, they had obediently left Divine Fire Town, and these martial artists, being weaker, had no capacity to covet their beauty and figure.

For now, the best course was to join forces to kill Fang Bai and then wait at the edge of the Eternal Death Zone, hoping to reap some benefits from the disputes over the Essence Stone mines, and then take Fang Bai's head to Tianji Sect to exchange for millions of Essence Stones.

Fang Bai had killed Tianji Sect's steward Ying Guangping, leading others to speculate that his cultivation level should be mid-Universe Level. In He Rushan's opinion, fighting Fang Bai alone might be tricky, but

with the combined strength of a hundred Justice Alliance martial artists, killing Fang Bai should not be difficult.

If those dozen or so disciples from Golden Crow Manor who followed Fang Bai don't know what's good for them and decide to fight alongside Fang Bai against them, then they would all be killed together.

Although Golden Crow Manor is a first-grade sect with daunting overall strength, they were now so preoccupied with defending the Essence Stone mines in the Eternal Death Zone against countless covetous martial artists that they couldn't spare any attention for this matter.

At worst, after killing Fang Bai and claiming some benefits from the Essence Stone mines, they would travel tens of thousands of miles to Tianji Sect to exchange for Essence Stones, then find a secluded place to enter secluded cultivation, eluding Golden Crow Manor's pursuit.

"Let's go, follow them! Make your move inside Black Wind Gorge, thirty miles from here!"

Watching Fang Bai and his party gradually moving away and almost out of sight, He Rushan waved his hand and led the martial artists of the Justice Alliance to follow from a distance.

At the same time, several other temporary alliances with the same intentions as the Justice Alliance martial artists were tracking Fang Bai and his party from different directions, ready to play the role of the mantis stalking the cicada, unaware of the oriole behind, hoping to reap the fisherman's gains.

These several forces, harboring murderous intent and following behind, naturally could not escape Fang Bai's perception. He didn't show any reaction and couldn't be bothered to care, only sneering in his heart.

"We've entered Black Wind Gorge; everyone, heighten your vigilance!"

"With spiritual artifacts in hand and Essence Energy Protective Body, beware of beast attacks!"

Fang Bai and his group vaulted over mountains and rivers, speeding along their way. Unknowingly, they entered a narrow and long gorge, where Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren successively shouted aloud.

Chapter 1268: Lurking Crisis

Black Wind Gorge is a north-to-south canyon stretching a thousand miles long and roughly a hundred miles wide. Towering mountain peaks stand on both sides, rising over a thousand feet, with cliffs as steep as if cut by a knife. The gorge features complex terrain with swamps, pits, and other treacherous landforms in abundance, while the continuous dense forests and underbrush hide countless fierce birds and ferocious beasts.

After exiting the thousand-mile Black Wind Gorge, the distance to Golden Crow Manor is only two to three hundred miles away.

Black Wind Gorge is a shortcut to many regions; despite being filled with dangers, many Martial Artists still choose to pass through it.

Especially for Sect Disciples and Individual Cultivation Martial Artists, who come to challenge Black Wind Gorge alone or in teams every year specifically to temper their resolve and improve their combat abilities.

Golden Crow Manor is very close to Black Wind Gorge, making it a fixed location where its Disciples go to undergo trials. In certain months of each year, a large number of Golden Crow Manor Disciples will enter Black Wind Gorge together for training.

However, this season is not a good time for trials; first, the temperature in the gorge is the highest of the year with poisonous mists lingering and not dispersing; second, it is the mating season for fierce birds and ferocious beasts, causing all Spirit Beasts to become incredibly active and highly aggressive.

Consequently, the weaker Martial Artists who enter Black Wind Gorge during this season face a fate of nine deaths and one survival, possibly never able to make it out again.

Therefore, when Fang Bai and the others entered Black Wind Gorge, they saw no other Martial Artists around.

Although Black Wind Gorge is fraught with dangers, Fang Bai and his group do not take them to heart; after all, even the weakest among their group of more than a dozen is of early Cosmic Level strength, and the strongest has slain mid Universe Level adversaries. United, this power could hold its own even against a Spirit Beast comparable to a high-rank Human Universe Level Martial Artist.

Moreover, over the years, thousands of Martial Artists have been tested in Black Wind Gorge, and the strongest Spirit Beast they encountered was only equivalent to a Human Universe Level beginner. Therefore, when Fang Bai and the others entered Black Wind Gorge, Golden Crow Manor Disciples like Huang Yuanhu and Ye Qingxuan were a bit nervous but not at all afraid.

"Chenyu, stay behind me!"

Fang Bai looked back and saw Xia Chenyu walking with Ye Qingxuan, and he gestured to her.

Xia Chenyu blinked, puzzled by his intention, but still followed his instruction and moved behind him.

"There are crises lurking everywhere in this gorge; everyone be careful!"

Fang Bai's voice echoed in the ears of his companions.

The "crisis" Fang Bai referred to was not the pursuit of forces like the Justice Alliance; although these forces had strength in numbers, Fang Bai never really took them seriously.

Fang Bai had a keener intuition about the looming danger than other Martial Artists. After leading Sun Guangyi and the others into Black Wind Gorge, he faintly sensed the presence of two formidable Spirit Beasts within, surmising they could be a match for high-rank Human Universe Level adversaries.

Spirit Beasts possess a natural advantage over human Martial Artists in terms of physical strength. If a human Martial Artist of the same Cultivation Level fought a Spirit Beast, the likely loser would be the human.

This is a common understanding among all Martial Artists of the True Martial Realm; hence, when human Martial Artists encounter Spirit Beasts of the same realm, it's better to flee than to confront them head-on.

The two powerful Spirit Beasts lurking within Black Wind Gorge could overwhelm even a Human Universe Level Martial Artist at perfection, and if Fang Bai's group were to encounter a sudden attack

while inside the gorge, Fang Bai himself wouldn't be concerned, and he could protect Xia Chenyu, but he might not be able to ensure the safety of the other Golden Crow Manor Disciples.

All Fang Bai could do was issue an early warning to them to be cautious and vigilant.

Not long after Fang Bai and others entered Black Wind Gorge, several forces including the Justice Alliance followed suit one after another.

Those groups were aware of each other's intentions and did not interfere with one another; instead, they quietly gathered their strength, preparing to show their powers when they would finally attack Fang Bai, to see who would have the ability to claim Fang Bai's head.

Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren had been disciples of Golden Crow Manor for several decades and had undergone numerous trainings in Black Wind Gorge, making them extremely familiar with the terrain here. Hence, after entering Black Wind Gorge, the two took the initiative to lead the way, avoiding many swamps, pitfalls, and the territories of slumbering Spirit Beasts.

After covering more than two hundred li, having encountered no danger along the way, the disciples of Golden Crow Manor, who had been somewhat tense, completely relaxed. Some of the younger disciples even started chatting and laughing in low voices.

"This swamp has been free of Spirit Beasts for a thousand years and is considered the safest place in the entire Black Wind Gorge."

When they reached the swamp stretching out before them, Sun Guangyi said to Fang Bai and the others with a smile.

The swamp in front of them was over ten li wide, completely blocking their path. It was filled with silt and turbid water of unknown depth. Fortunately, there were dead trees and weeds scattered everywhere, and small islands peeked out, which Martial Artists of similar strength could cross.

"I'll take the lead, follow me!"

Without much hesitation, Sun Guangyi leaped onto a piece of driftwood in the swamp, then using it to continue springing forward.

"This guy really has a death wish..."

Fang Bai watched Sun Guangyi's departing figure and muttered under his breath.

"Fang Bai, what did you say?"

Xia Chenyu turned her head towards Fang Bai, asking with a puzzled expression.

Her attention had been on Sun Guangyi, and Fang Bai's voice had been almost inaudible, so she did not hear clearly.

Fang Bai pointed to Sun Guangyi, who had just leaped onto an island tens of zhang away, and said, "I said that Steward Sun has no fear of death."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

Xia Chenyu blinked and asked, uncomprehending.

Fang Bai said, "There is a Spirit Beast in this swamp... a very powerful one!"

Xia Chenyu's eyes suddenly widened, and she looked into the swamp. Seeing no movement and unable to sense the presence of a Spirit Beast, she said, "That can't be right? Steward Sun said earlier that this swamp has never had Spirit Beasts appear and is very safe!"

Although she said this, recalling that Fang Bai had never lied to her since they met, she couldn't help but worry for Sun Guangyi.

"Not good! Steward Sun, be careful!"

Just as Xia Chenyu's words fell, Li Jingren urgently shouted out to alert Sun Guangyi.

"Boom!"

Coming along with Li Jingren's urgent shout was a booming sound. Amidst the flying spray and mud, a dark shadow several zhang long suddenly shot out from under a patch of weeds in the swamp, pouncing towards Sun Guangyi who had just landed on the island and had not yet stabilized.

Sun Guangyi heard Li Jingren's urgent cry by his ear and hadn't reacted yet when he heard the booming sound. As he turned his head, he saw a dark shadow suddenly enlarging in his vision, and an immense oppressive force surged towards him, enveloping him.

Chapter 1269: An Ant Trying to Shake a Tree, Overestimating One's Own Abilities!

"It's a Spirit Beast! Damn it!"

Sun Guangyi, sensing the formidable aura of a Spirit Beast from that shadowy figure, couldn't help but turn pale with shock.

However, as a Universe Level mid-rank expert who had experienced countless battles, even though he was caught off guard by the sudden attack, he did not panic. His eyes burst forth with a sharp glint as he roared and mustered all his strength to strike with his palms.

From the aura emitted by the Spirit Beast that was pouncing towards him, Sun Guangyi knew that its strength was no less than his own. As he struck with his palms, he wasn't hoping to repel the Spirit Beast, but only to slow its lunging momentum, to snatch a brief respite for himself.

At that moment, Sun Guangyi suddenly recalled Fang Bai once saying "This gorge is full of dangers, everyone be careful" when their team entered Black Wind Gorge. At the time, he didn't take it seriously, but now, regret was futile.

Sun Guangyi never imagined that in the marsh, which had not seen a Spirit Beast emerge for a thousand years, one would suddenly burst out and launch an attack on him, its strength far exceeding his expectations.

Faced with the oppressive force so immense it almost suffocated him, Sun Guangyi was certain that the Spirit Beast attacking him was at least on par with a high rank Universe Level human expert. Despite giving his all, dodging its attack would be no easy feat.

Just then, another loud boom resounded behind him; on the other side of the small island, a dark figure surged forth—it was another Spirit Beast lunging at him, its aura as potent as the first.

Two equally powerful Spirit Beasts, one attacking from the front and one from the back, almost at the same time. The mere pressure of their combined assaults was nearly too much for Sun Guangyi to bear.

Moreover, this small island was dozens of feet away from the marsh's edge, where Fang Bai and the others were located. Even if they wanted to come to his aid, they simply couldn't make it in time.

This time, it seemed he was doomed to fall in this marsh.

"It's over!"

Sun Guangyi's face ashen, his heart chilled with despair, he even gave up the will to resist.

"Steward Sun!"

At the edge of the marsh, Li Jingren and the other disciples from Golden Crow Manor shouted in unison, eyes wide with rage and helplessness.

As onlookers, they saw things even more clearly; the two Spirit Beasts attacking Sun Guangyi were several zhang in length, with bodies as black as ink and eight claws on their undersides, looking hideously terrifying.

"Who would have thought that within this small marsh, there would lurk an Eight-Clawed Giant Lizard of about three thousand years..."

Fang Bai muttered to himself, then let out a clear whistle.

All this way, both Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren had treated Fang Bai with great respect, leaving a good impression on him. Fang Bai naturally could not bear to watch Sun Guangyi perish here, so that whistle was the Beast Taming Secret Technique, an attempt to bail out Sun Guangyi.

"Steward Sun, if not now, when would you escape?"

After the clear whistle from Fang Bai, he immediately alerted Sun Guangyi with the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique, urging him to quickly leave the small island in the marsh.

With the combined attack power that could even match a Universe Level expert at perfection, two Eight-Clawed Giant Lizards were formidable adversaries. Although Fang Bai could exercise the Beast Taming Secret Technique on them, such a technique consumed a significant amount of concentration, so he couldn't control them for an extended period.

In the immediacy of the situation, Fang Bai decided to first create an opportunity for Sun Guangyi to escape, leaving the slaying of the two Spirit Beasts for later.

"Boom!"

"Boom!"

There was another two thunderous booms, but this time it wasn't the spirit beasts charging out—it was the two eight-clawed leviathans that were swooping down on Sun Guangyi, now temporarily under Fang Bai's control due to the influence of a howling sound emitted through the beast taming secret technique. Their bodies plummeted sharply, falling back into the marsh.

Sun Guangyi was quick to react. Hearing Fang Bai's voice beside his ear, he then saw the two spirit beasts attacking him suddenly fall into the marsh. How could he not understand that this was Fang Bai lending a hand?

Sun Guangyi was a man of wide experience and knowledge, aware that Fang Bai must have performed some kind of beast taming secret technique, briefly disrupting the two spirit beasts, buying himself a chance to escape. Without stopping to marvel at Fang Bai's mysterious methods, he immediately leapt up, using the floating logs on the marsh to return to Fang Bai and the others' side.

"Whew..."

After landing on his feet, Sun Guangyi let out a breath, looking back at the two eight-clawed leviathans that had fallen into the swamp, and couldn't help feeling a cold shiver of fear.

"Senior Fang, I can't thank you enough. If you ever need my assistance in the future, please don't hesitate to ask, I'll never shun death in fulfilling my duty!"

Sun Guangyi wiped the cold sweat from his forehead and gave Fang Bai a deep, respectful bow, his attitude even more deferential.

At this moment, Sun Guangyi was utterly in awe of Fang Bai.

An unaffiliated martial artist, Fang Bai was in his mere twenties, not only possessing extraordinary strength capable of slaying Universe Level mid-rank experts, but he was also versed in alchemy, and now exhibited a beast taming secret technique. Among the countless young martial artists in the True Martial Realm, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to consider him one of the very few outstanding talents, a rare breed that would make most of the privileged scions in various large sects feel ashamed.

"Steward Sun is too kind," Fang Bai said with a wave of his hand, then looked back toward a dense forest in the distance, a trace of coldness crossing his eyes. He then pointed to a pile of large rocks on the left and said to Xia Chenyu and the others, "You all hide behind those rocks first. After I take care of that bunch, we'll continue on our way!"

Upon hearing Fang Bai's words, Xia Chenyu and the others were taken aback, their gazes instinctively following the direction Fang Bai had just glanced over.

Ultimately, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren were Universe Level experts, and hadn't noticed anyone tailing them amidst the distractions. But now, focusing their attention, they sensed hundreds of martial artist auras, strong and weak, emanating from that forest, their expressions turning serious and concentrated.

Among those hundreds of martial artist auras, there were about a dozen that were clearly from Universe Level experts, and even the weakest was from a Cosmic Level expert. They had followed stealthily, evidently with bad intentions and meant no good.

"They're all here for me, and it looks like they want this head of mine!" Fang Bai said, pointing to his own head with a chuckle.

"Ants trying to shake a tree, utterly overestimating themselves!" Xia Chenyu bit her lip and her beautiful eyes exuded a frosty coldness as she voiced a cold snort.

Sun Guangyi and the others also felt those pursuers were simply courting death. Although they outnumbered them, given Fang Bai's displayed strength, dealing with them wouldn't be difficult; it was just a matter of how long it would take.

The two eight-clawed leviathans that had fallen into the marsh regained their clarity the moment Fang Bai retracted his beast taming secret technique, and with blood-red eyes, they began to swim toward the shore where Fang Bai and others were located.

Despite their enormous size, they were not at all clumsy. Their swimming speed was extremely fast, and in a blink of an eye, they reached the shore.

Even with Fang Bai by their side, Xia Chenyu and the others couldn't help but tense up upon seeing the eight-clawed leviathans rapidly approaching. They immediately took cover behind a pile of large rocks nearby as Fang Bai had instructed.

"I'm not interested in dealing with those small fry... consider them a feast for you! And perhaps, this will be your last glorious meal!" Fang Bai said with a smile, as another howl issued from his mouth.

The two eight-clawed leviathans' movements paused for a moment, their blood-red eyes once again clouded with confusion. Then, with a fierce and murderous aura, they charged past Fang Bai and pounced toward those followers hidden in the distant forest.

Chapter 1270: The Thoughts of Two Stewards

"Strange, those two Spirit Beasts didn't attack Senior Fang!"

"Senior Fang is powerful, perhaps those two Spirit Beasts are afraid of him!"

"The pressure exerted by those two Spirit Beasts just now is comparable to several of our manor's Elders. Does that mean Senior Fang's strength is on par with our Manor Master?"

"Very likely. Anyway, the impression Senior Fang gives me is unfathomable!"

"Chenyu, you are familiar with Senior Fang, do you know what realm his Cultivation Level is?"

"Ah? I... I have been separated from Fang Bai for a while now, and I'm not too sure either..."

...

Hidden behind a distant large rock, more than a dozen disciples of Golden Crow Manor watched in amazement as two fiercely formidable octopods swiftly passed by Fang Bai, pouncing towards the dense forest far away, then began whispering among themselves in low voices.

Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren already knew that the dense forest harbored numerous followers, but at this moment, all their attention was focused on Fang Bai, their expressions complex.

"This Senior Fang... I understand him less and less!"

Sun Guangyi suddenly sighed and started conversing with Li Jingren using the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique, his tone carrying a hint of emotion.

Li Jingren, deeply agreeing, nodded and also spoke through the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique: "A Universe Level perfection powerhouse in his early twenties is frightful enough, yet he also claims to know the Alchemy Technique... I previously doubted his ability to refine high-grade Elixirs, but now it seems, his words were true. Not only that, he even knows the Beast Taming Secret Technique. If it wasn't for his intervention just now, Steward Sun, you might have been in mortal peril!"

"Not might have been, but definitely would have been!"

Sun Guangyi replied with a bitter smile, "When those two Spirit Beasts attacked, I was filled with despair, already giving up resistance. Fortunately, Senior Fang made his move in time, reigniting my desire to live!"

He glanced towards Fang Bai's figure and continued, "This discovery of the Essence Stone Vein in Eternal Death Zone represents both a rare opportunity and a significant risk for our Golden Crow Manor. Speaking of opportunities, the underground Essence Stone reserves within a thousand miles of Eternal Death Zone are astonishing. If we could seize it all... even just half of it, Golden Crow Manor's overall strength would surely advance further, becoming a leader among first-rank Sects..."

He spoke here, visibly excited, took a few deep breaths before calming down, and continued, "Speaking of challenges, this time tens of thousands of Martial Artists have come for the Essence Stone Vein, and more continue to arrive. Each one wants a share. If our Golden Crow Manor wants to monopolize the Essence Stone Vein, those Martial Artists will surely not agree, and it will inevitably lead to a fierce struggle..."

"Although our Golden Crow Manor is a first-rank Sect with rich heritage, over ten thousand Disciples, and formidable strength, fearing no Sect power. But those tens of thousands... perhaps even over a hundred thousand Martial Artists gathered together, their strength is only stronger than ours. Moreover, some scheming Sects want to take this opportunity to undermine our manor. Once our manor cannot hold out, it might be a disaster of complete destruction..."

Li Jingren knew that Sun Guangyi was not exaggerating. This discovery of the Essence Stone Vein in Eternal Death Zone poses even greater challenges than opportunities for Golden Crow Manor. If mishandled, Golden Crow Manor might truly face irreversible doom.

"Senior Fang's strength is comparable to the Manor Master; if we could gain his assistance, our chances of winning in this struggle would greatly increase."

After a few moments of silence, Sun Guang Yi suddenly said.

Li Jingren's heart stirred, just as he was about to ask Fang Bai how he was willing to lend a hand to Golden Crow Manor, he suddenly thought of something and looked contemplatively at Xia Chenyu.

"Do you mean..."

"That's right."

Sun Guangyi, knowing that Li Jingren had guessed his thoughts, smiled and said, "Along the way, you must have noticed the profound relationship between Xia Chenyu and Senior Fang. Even the fact that Senior Fang agreed to come with us to the manor to treat Manor Huang's son was for Xia Chenyu's sake. Once we are at the manor, we should first communicate privately with Xia Chenyu, then let Xia Chenyu plead with Senior Fang..."

While saying this, he showed a helpless and bitter smile on his face, sighing, "Though I know this approach is somewhat improper, for the safety of the manor, many concerns must be set aside."

Li Jingren said, "If Senior Fang helps us, it's equivalent to being enemies with tens of thousands of martial artists. Would he agree? I'm afraid that Xia Chenyu might not even be able to persuade him!"

Sun Guangyi said, "Then we'll promise Senior Fang a significant amount of cultivation resources... enough to sway him!"

Upon hearing this, Li Jingren nodded his head.

Although martial artists value cultivation resources above all else while practicing the Martial Dao, ordinary resources would hardly catch Fang Bai's discerning eye. Convincing him would require Golden Crow Manor to make a substantial sacrifice.

Luckily, as a premier sect that has been established for thousands of years, Golden Crow Manor is rich in resources. It isn't hard to produce a considerable amount of cultivation resources. Moreover, if they

could obtain the astonishingly rich Essence Stone Vein beneath the Eternal Death Zone with the help of Fang Bai, the cost would be negligible.

"This matter will still require Manor Huang's approval."

"Of course. Once we return to the manor, we will discuss this matter in detail with Manor Huang immediately."

"Good."

Meanwhile, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren were conversing through the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique, a few screams incessantly pierced the air in the dense forest afar, amidst chaos.

Two eight-clawed giant lizards, with astonishing speed, charged into the forest like mad, attacking the few martial artist teams lying in ambush within, waiting to strike at Fang Bai and others.

Although there were several hundred martial artists in the forest, the strongest were only at the middle stage of Universe Level, and they were a minority. Yet, those two eight-clawed giant lizards dared to directly confront even those at the perfection stage of Universe Level. As they plunged into the group of martial artists, it was like stepping into a land with no resistance, and in the blink of an eye, over a dozen martial artists fell under their attack.

The most unlucky was Third Mo from the Tianji Sect recognized from Divine Fire Town, one of the weakest, he was slow in dodging, and one of the lizards bit off half of his body, his organs and blood spilled on the ground, dying slowly and painfully amidst agonizing screams.

"Everyone, don't panic! With our collective effort of hundreds, we can surely slay two Spirit Beasts!"

He Rushan, one of the leaders of the Justice Alliance, saw that the few martial artist teams including his own "Justice Alliance" were in disarray, and especially suffering heavy losses, became both angry and anxious. Knowing that if this continued, the casualties would quickly increase and they would lack the strength to compete for their share of the Essence Stone Vein, thus, he let out a stern shout.