

Doctor 1601

Chapter 1601: The Seventh Layer

The Wind Roc killed the Giant Python, and Wu De stepped forward to harvest the Python Core. The two then left Giant Python Valley and found a secluded cave. The Wind Roc stood guard outside while Wu De consumed the Python Core inside, beginning his breakthrough to the Golden Core Realm.

The fierce energy of the Spirit Beast Inner Core was too great for ordinary Martial Artists to handle directly, but Wu De, with his Dual Attribute Innate Spiritual Root and Extraordinary Holy Body, feared not the destructive impact of the Spirit Beast Inner Core's mighty energy on his meridians.

After consuming the Giant Python's Inner Core, within three days, his aura dispersed, and he successfully formed a Core, advancing to the Golden Core Realm.

Although a Golden Core Realm expert is still at the bottom among tens of thousands of experts who entered the Nine-level Linglong Tower, Wu De still danced with joy for a long time.

In the following days, the Wind Roc accompanied Wu De through several perilous places on the first level of the Linglong Tower, harvesting some King Grade cultivation resources. Wu De then went into seclusion for cultivation, while the Wind Roc proceeded to the second level of the Linglong Tower.

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"Reached the seventh level."

Fang Bai stood before the entrance of the seventh level of the Nine-level Linglong Tower, holding the Blood-Drinking Mad Saber, murmuring to himself.

At this moment, his Blood-Drinking Mad Saber was drenched in blood, its evil qi soaring to the sky.

In the previous six levels, Fang Bai, holding the Blood-Drinking Mad Saber, killed his way through, unknown how many Spirit Beasts and opponents fell under his blade, and thus he acquired a vast amount of cultivation resources.

Fortunately, Fang Bai previously obtained a Five Elements Space Ring of immense capacity; otherwise, his previous Spatial Rings might not have held the cultivation resources collected from the previous six levels.

Among the cultivation resources Fang Bai obtained, many were of King Grade medium or even superior quality, making countless Martial Artists covet them.

Some Martial Artists had already secretly focused on Fang Bai, plotting to join forces to seize his Space Ring once he left the Linglong Tower.

Fang Bai was well aware of this but remained fearless.

Among the tens of thousands of Martial Artists training in this Nine-level Linglong Tower, although Fang Bai's cultivation level was not the highest, he could still cut through gods if gods block him, defeat buddhas if buddhas block him.

Even against a high-rank Soul Severing expert like Qingzhu Venerable, Fang Bai dared to give it his all and battle.

Fang Bai's goal in this training was the eighth level of the Nine-level Linglong Tower.

In his previous life, Fang Bai, possessing the Desolate Ancient Divine Body with the Five Elements Innate Spirit Roots, entered the Nine-level Linglong Tower in Soul Severing Realm and ultimately reached the eighth level.

Today, Fang Bai's cultivation level, though lower than in his previous life, exceeded his previous self in terms of constitution with the Chaos True Body, possessing both the Five Elements Innate Spirit Root and Thunder Spirit Root.

Additionally, with the assistance of a few Divine Artifacts today, Fang Bai had confidence in reaching the eighth level, and even held some hope for reaching the top.

For Fang Bai, failing to reach the eighth level of the Linglong Tower would mean a failure in this training.

Only the Royal Grade cultivation resources on the eighth level could provide greater assistance to his cultivation.

In fact, Fang Bai, with Nascent Soul Perfection, stormed through the six levels of the Linglong Tower, already feeling some pressure, but hadn't fully exerted himself yet.

Having climbed through six tower levels, his stamina and spiritual energy were greatly consumed. Fang Bai lingered for a moment at the entrance of the seventh level of the Linglong Tower, then sat cross-legged to the side, placing the Blood-Drinking Mad Saber across his legs, starting to meditate to recuperate, intending to rush to the seventh level once his state returned to its peak.

"Eh?"

A moment later, a green figure dashed near, letting out a gasp upon seeing Fang Bai.

Fang Bai opened his eyes, smiled at the green figure in front of him, and said, "Venerable, we meet again so soon."

The green figure was none other than Qingzhu Venerable.

Qingzhu Venerable never expected Fang Bai not only reached the entrance of the seventh level of the Nine-level Linglong Tower but also arrived here before him. The gasp just now represented the shock in his heart.

"Fang Bai, you... did you make your way here by fighting all the way through?"

Glancing at the blood-stained Blood-Drinking Mad Saber on Fang Bai's knees, Qingzhu Venerable did not hide the astonishment on his face.

He knew that for any Martial Artist to ascend each level of the Linglong Tower, they had to face a substantial blockade of fierce Spirit Beasts. Fang Bai being able to stand here naturally meant, like him, he slayed numerous formidable Spirit Beasts along the way.

What puzzled Qingzhu Venerable was that while he was a dignified high-rank Soul Severing expert with tremendous combat power, wielding clones and Spiritual Artifacts for assistance, he ascended the seventh level of the Linglong Tower with relative ease.

However, Fang Bai had yet to cross into the Soul Severing stage, his cultivation level nearly an entire great realm lower, without the help of clones, and his combat power fell far short of his own.

The only possibility for Fang Bai standing here might be the Blood Blade in his hand.

If this were true, Qingzhu Venerable could be certain that Fang Bai's Blood Blade must be a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact and its grade would not be low, or it couldn't have aided Fang Bai in cutting his way to this point.

Thinking of this, Qingzhu Venerable's interest in Fang Bai's Blood Blade grew deeper, intending to discuss exchanging it with cultivation resources after this training ends.

"I can challenge beyond my level, and with the help of the Blood-Drinking Mad Saber, I luckily broke through to here."

Fang Bai noticed Qingzhu Venerable's genuine fondness and appreciation for his Blood-Drinking Mad Saber; his gaze was clear without any greed, understanding the person to be above board with the demeanor of a true strongman, so he answered openly to his inquiry.

Even if Qingzhu Venerable did develop some covetous intention for the Blood-Drinking Mad Saber, Fang Bai was confident in handling it. At worst, he would dash into the seventh level of the Linglong Tower, where mountains and dense forests would conceal him, making it difficult for him to be found.

Qingzhu Venerable praised, "Fang Bai, among the younger generation I've encountered, you are the most outstanding Martial Dao genius. Compared to you, the so-called prodigies and prodigesses from the sects and prominent clans aren't worth mentioning!"

Fang Bai replied, "You flatter me, Venerable!"

Qingzhu Venerable chuckled and said, "Originally, I expected you to reach the fifth level of the Linglong Tower, but I couldn't have anticipated you breaking past the sixth level, standing at the entrance to the seventh, and even doing so before me. This is an incredible miracle! So, do you think you are capable of passing the seventh level?"

Fang Bai ambiguously replied, "I'll do my best!"

Qingzhu Venerable sighed, "To confess, I stopped at the sixth level ten years ago. Returning after a decade, I am not entirely confident in ascending the seventh level myself."

Fang Bai said, "If Venerable wants to obtain the Royal Grade Green Wood Marrow, I'm afraid you'll have to ascend to the eighth level, right?"

Qingzhu Venerable replied, "Though the chance is small, like you, I'll give it my all."

Fang Bai said, "Then, Venerable... let's strive together!"

Qingzhu Venerable laughed heartily, "Good, let's strive together!"

The elder and the youth laughed aloud, striding into the seventh-level space of the Nine-level Linglong Tower.

Chapter 1602: So It Turns Out to Be a Loose Cultivator

Within the second level of Linglong Tower, Wu De and Wind Roc were covered in blood, their battle spirits boiling.

The two fought their way through, destroying many Spirit Beasts and encountering significant danger. In moments of crisis, they relied on the Jade Pendant given by Qingzhu Venerable to turn peril into safety.

Of course, Wind Roc was the main force between them, with at least seventy percent of the slain Spirit Beasts falling by his hand. However, Wu De obtained more Spirit Beast Inner Pills.

Wu De felt embarrassed, but Wind Roc said, "Brother Wu, with these Spirit Beast Inner Pills to assist, you can advance quicker. Once your cultivation level improves further, becoming a Nascent Soul Realm Expert, the master will surely be pleased. So, there's no need to feel embarrassed."

Wu De grinned and said, "That's right! I have a great relationship with your master! Now that he's stronger, it's his duty to help out his brother, right? Anyway, I must thank you. After all, you're the one who stayed by my side and helped me succeed in Core Formation!"

Wind Roc, without arrogance, smiled gently and said, "Ninety-nine days of training have already passed several days. Let's seize the time and try to ascend another level!"

After a pause, he added, "The master is strong with unparalleled aptitude. Who knows which level he's reached now."

Wu De said, "He has the ability to challenge above his level, able to contend with Soul Severing experts. He should be able to reach the fifth level."

Wind Roc said, "I think he can at least reach the sixth level."

Wu De laughed and said, "You're really confident in him!"

Wind Roc also laughed, saying, "How about we make a bet?"

Wu De immediately became cautious, clutching his Space Ring tightly, shaking his head like a rattle, saying, "No betting! I won't bet with you!"

He knew he didn't understand Fang Bai as well as Wind Roc did, thinking that Martial Artists betting is often about cultivation resources, which he had gained some Spirit Beast Inner Pills with great effort and planned to use them to reach higher realms. Losing them would not be worth it.

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The seventh level space of the nine-story Linglong Tower had denser Spiritual Energy than the first six levels, but the pressure was heavier too.

Qingzhu Venerable was here for the first time.

Although his cultivation qualified him to train in this level, he had not been here before, making him somewhat tense, fully focused, and alert.

On the contrary, Fang Bai had reached even the eighth level in his previous life, so he didn't feel nervous.

However, Fang Bai knew that each opening of the nine-story Linglong Tower would bring significant changes to the environmental and situational aspects of each tower level, vastly different from before. Even though he trained once, he couldn't let down his guard.

"I'm heading east, do you want to come along?"

After observing the surroundings, Qingzhu Venerable asked with a smile.

Though Fang Bai reached the seventh level, Qingzhu Venerable believed it didn't truly reflect Fang Bai's strength but rather the assistance from a Spiritual Artifact.

A Martial Artist seeking true strength must not merely rely on external aids; personal actions must improve.

Qingzhu Venerable valued Fang Bai's aptitude. He had no intention of taking on disciples but wished to guide him.

He invited Fang Bai to join him to better protect Fang Bai, allowing him to gain something from training in the seventh level space.

To his surprise, Fang Bai declined his offer, choosing to head west, directly opposite his direction.

Qingzhu Venerable smiled wryly, thinking this young man was indeed extraordinary.

Since Fang Bai didn't wish to accompany him, Qingzhu Venerable didn't insist. He gave Fang Bai a deep look, advised him to be cautious, and then flew alone toward the eastern mountains in the seventh-level space.

As of now, only Fang Bai and Qingzhu Venerable had entered the seventh level space of Linglong Tower, but Fang Bai believed several more experts would follow.

These experts, with cultivation levels equal to Qingzhu Venerable, included sect experts and loose cultivators. Their goal was likely the same as Qingzhu Venerable, to acquire Royal Grade cultivation resources.

To obtain Royal Grade cultivation resources, reaching the eighth level of Linglong Tower was necessary.

However, including Qingzhu Venerable, Fang Bai had little hope for them, unless aided by Royal Grade Spiritual Artifacts; otherwise, reaching the eighth level would be as hard as ascending to heaven.

At that moment, another expert swiftly flew by like lightning, pausing beside Fang Bai, his eyes revealing surprise.

"A mere Nascent Soul Perfection Martial Artist can reach the seventh level?"

The man sneered with a triangular eye, furrowing his brows, murmuring incredulously.

Seeing the man didn't seem like a kind person, Fang Bai paid him no heed and prepared to leave.

"Stop!"

The man's gaze swept over the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade in Fang Bai's hand, his heart stirred. In a flash, he blocked Fang Bai's path and asked, "Where is your sect home?"

"Another one coveting the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade."

The fleeting greed in the man's eyes didn't escape Fang Bai's sharp senses, prompting a cold smile as he casually replied, "I'm not affiliated with any sect, just a loose cultivator."

The man was pleased, saying, "So, a loose cultivator. Who is your master?"

His cultivation was similar to Qingzhu Venerable's, also a high-rank Soul Severing expert, immediately recognizing Fang Bai's Blood-Drinking Mad Blade as no ordinary Spiritual Artifact, thus becoming interested.

He initially thought Fang Bai, so young yet possessing Nascent Soul Perfection cultivation, must have come from a powerful sect, yet unexpectedly he was a loose cultivator.

Since he was a loose cultivator, dealing with him would be much easier. The man asked about Fang Bai's master to assess if he could handle the master.

If he could, he could recklessly snatch his Spiritual Artifact.

If he couldn't, he'd steal the Artifact and flee, returning when stronger.

The man decided he would take Fang Bai's Blood Blade to boost his strength no matter what.

"I have no master."

Although the man tried his best to hide his rising killing intent, Fang Bai felt it, gripping his Blood-Drinking Mad Blade tighter.

"That's perfect!"

The man was delighted, immediately enveloping Fang Bai in murderous intent, reaching for him with ferocity and saying, "Hand over your Spiritual Artifact!"

Fang Bai said, "Oh? You fancy my Spiritual Artifact and plan to snatch it?"

The man replied, "If you willingly give it to me, it's not snatching! If I take it by force, that's snatching!"

Fang Bai snickered and said, "Why should I give you my belongings?"

The man gazed at Fang Bai with murderous eyes, laughing "Heh heh" and saying, "Because I like it!"

Fang Bai laughed "Haha" and said, "Just because you like something, should I give it to you? Then if I say I like your head, would you cut it off for me?"

Chapter 1603: Two Soul Severing Experts

Fang Bai's last words completely infuriated the man.

The man's ferocious look was exposed, and he stretched out his large hand, intending to summon a Spirit Qi Big Palm to capture Fang Bai and force him to yield.

But as soon as his hand stretched out, he retracted it again, his gaze looking towards the distant vast ancient forest.

Fang Bai's gaze also turned in that direction.

"Haha, Qu Rui, my dear friend, I never expected your speed to be faster than mine, to arrive ahead of me!"

The aura fluctuated in the forest, and soon a purple figure shot out from the woods, arriving before them in the blink of an eye.

The purple figure was an elder dressed in a purple robe.

The purple-robed elder was slightly plump, with hair and beard resembling snow, his complexion extremely pale, and his small eyes gleamed with sharp light, giving a shrewd impression, like a businessman.

But Fang Bai knew that this person, like the elder named Qu Rui, was also a High Rank Soul Severing Expert, an extremely dangerous character.

“Hehe... Zhu Jingze, you’re not slow either!”

Qu Rui squinted at the expert named Zhu Jingze, speaking with a smile that didn’t reach his eyes.

Fang Bai could tell at a glance that although the two addressed each other as “dear friend” and “brother,” their relationship was actually not good.

Zhu Jingze’s glance casually and deliberately swept over Fang Bai’s Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, coughed, and exclaimed, “This Blood Blade... tsk tsk... really not bad!”

Seeing Zhu Jingze paying attention to Fang Bai’s Blood Blade, Qu Rui couldn’t help but become tense, saying in a deep voice, “I was the first to fancy this Blood Blade. Zhu Jingze, don’t meddle, or we’ll be mortal enemies from now on!”

Although Zhu Jingze eyed Fang Bai’s Blood Blade, he wasn’t sure of what kind of Spiritual Artifact it was or if it was worth the risk of falling out with Qu Rui, so he hesitated.

“It seems my Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact is quite popular! However, this Spiritual Artifact was obtained through my hard effort, none of you should even think about taking it!”

Fang Bai raised the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade in his hand, speaking harshly and sternly.

If only Qu Rui wanted to snatch the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, Fang Bai might have a chance to fight him, but with Zhu Jingze added, Fang Bai was not at all their match.

Therefore, only by stirring conflict between Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze and letting them fight could Fang Bai have a chance to escape.

As soon as Fang Bai said “Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact,” the eyes of the two Soul Severing Experts, Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, became somewhat red, and their breathing became rapid and heavy.

For experts of their realm and Cultivation Level, they came to practice within the Nine-Layered Linglong Tower to reach the eighth layer and acquire some Royal Grade Cultivation Resources.

However, with their Cultivation Level, they do not have the confidence to reach the eighth layer, so obtaining Royal Grade Cultivation Resources is difficult indeed!

Yet now, Fang Bai said that the Blood Blade in his hand was a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact, and hearing this, Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze became uncontrollably excited.

To experts of their realm and Cultivation Level, a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact can be of great auxiliary use, enhancing combat power directly by thirty percent, making it extremely tempting.

“Qu Rui, if it were anything else, I wouldn’t compete with you. But I’ve also set my eyes on this Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact!”

Zhu Jingze blinked his reddened eyes, a surge of fighting spirit arising in his body, as he spoke to Qu Rui, whose eyes were equally red.

Qu Rui said angrily, “Everything goes by order of arrival! I saw it first, so don’t interfere!”

Zhu Jingze laughed oddly and said, “In our world, what matters is strength, not reasoning! Qu Rui, have you lost your mind?”

Qu Rui took a deep breath and gloomily said, “Zhu, do you really intend to fall out with me completely?”

Zhu Jingze said, “Qu, if you give up the Blood Blade Spiritual Weapon to me, we will still be friends!”

Qu Rui burst out, “You want me to give up? You’re talking nonsense!”

Surging with spiritual energy and overflowing with fighting spirit, Zhu Jingze loudly declared, “Then... we can only have a duel...”

Qu Rui firmly responded, “Fight if you must, who’s afraid of you?”

He was the first to discover that Fang Bai’s Blood Blade was not ordinary and wanted to claim it for himself, but Zhu Jingze intervened strongly to contest it, and he couldn’t hold back his anger. As soon as he finished speaking, he swung his fist towards Qu Rui.

Being a High Rank Soul Severing Expert, the power of Qu Rui’s punch was formidable. The sound of “boom boom” echoed as if the snow were crashing down from a mountain. A massive fist, condensed from Spirit Qi, charged toward Qu Rui in the air.

Zhu Jingze did not show weakness and countered with his palm.

Seeing the two begin to fight, Fang Bai’s mouth curled into a cold smile. He put away the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade and exerted all his strength to circulate the Wind System Technique, flying toward the towering peaks in the distance, disappearing in a blink.

Though Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze erupted in intense combat, they each sent out a wisp of aura to lock onto Fang Bai, to prevent him from escaping.

Expecting that Fang Bai would have difficulty escaping, they didn’t anticipate that the aura would be useless against him, allowing him to flee easily.

The two were furious, too busy to fight each other. They punched to shake each other away and then simultaneously used their movement techniques to pursue in the direction Fang Bai disappeared.

Two High Rank Soul Severing Experts chasing a Nascent Soul Perfection Expert— if he escaped, it would be an absolute disgrace, nothing short of a laughingstock when told.

In this world of Martial Artists, wherever they go, they leave behind traces of aura. Some aura persists for long periods without dissipating, while some dissipate quickly.

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze thought they could easily catch up with Fang Bai by following his aura, but unexpectedly, Fang Bai was like a drop of water into the sea, blending with nature and vanishing entirely, leaving them no target for pursuit.

“Old Zhu, it’s all your fault! If you hadn’t interfered, how could that kid have escaped?”

Qu Rui, unable to suppress his anger, said to Zhu Jingze.

Zhu Jingze, also full of regret, responded with a cold laugh, “Treasure is tempting; you wanted to seize it, and so did I! If you hadn’t competed with me, he wouldn’t have escaped either!”

“You... we’ll settle this account once we’re out of Linglong Tower!”

Qu Rui, swallowing his fiery anger, said hatefully.

Zhu Jingze sneered, “Bring it on, I’m ready anytime!”

The two exchanged harsh words but ignored each other afterward, carefully searching the mountainous area where Fang Bai’s aura vanished.

Fang Bai, holding a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact, considered it was a worthwhile trip even if he didn’t make it to the eighth layer of Linglong Tower.

Fang Bai hid himself atop a dense ancient tree in the mountains, completely concealing his aura. His body was tightly pressed against a giant branch, his eyes fixed on Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze searching nearby.

Though he was confident in his concealment technique, facing two High Rank Soul Severing Experts, he dared not be careless, knowing that the slightest hint of his aura could be detected by the other party.

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze searched back and forth several times, still unwilling to give up. The two, seeming to have a tacit understanding, simultaneously released their own clones to continue searching within a hundred-mile radius.

Chapter 1604: Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass

The two Soul Severing Experts released their clones, equating to having four Soul Severing Experts conducting the search simultaneously.

No matter how well Fang Bai concealed himself, within this area of a hundred-mile radius, under such a blanket-like search method, unless he constantly changed his position, he would ultimately be discovered.

"Roar!"

As Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze got closer to Fang Bai, suddenly a tiger roar came from the distant mountains and forests.

"It's a high-rank Unihorn Tiger!"

The two Soul Severing Experts, Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, upon hearing the tiger's roar and sensing the spirit beast's presence, both became apprehensive.

"Let's team up to kill the Unihorn Tiger. You'll take the inner core, and I'll take the rest. Are you satisfied now?"

Zhu Jingze said to Qu Rui.

"Are you serious?"

Earlier, because of Zhu Jingze's interference, Fang Bai had escaped, which greatly angered Qu Rui. Now, hearing Zhu Jingze's words, his anger subsided a bit, and he asked with narrowed eyes.

Zhu Jingze raised his eyes and glanced quickly at an ancient towering tree before speaking, "Of course, it's true! If I lie, let me be struck by lightning!"

For a Martial Artist, being struck by lightning was akin to a curse. Qu Rui nodded and said calmly, "Fine, let's go!"

The two rode on their Spiritual Artifacts, turning into streams of light, flying towards the direction of the tiger's roar, and disappeared into the horizon in an instant.

"That Zhu, he seemed to have noticed me earlier."

After the two Soul Severing Experts, Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, flew far away, Fang Bai thought of the glance Zhu Jingze gave before leaving, causing his heart to flutter, and he quickly fled in the opposite direction.

After fleeing a thousand miles, he discovered a small lake spanning a few miles below. On the northern side of the small lake stood a figure in green—who else but Qingzhu Venerable?

"Fang Bai, you've arrived?"

Just as Fang Bai landed behind Qingzhu Venerable by the lakeside, Qingzhu Venerable sensed his presence and spoke without turning his head.

"Senior."

Fang Bai walked to Qingzhu Venerable's side, following his gaze towards the small lake ahead, and said, "Is it possible, Senior, that you've discovered some rare cultivation resources here?"

Qingzhu Venerable turned his head slightly, looked at him, and smiled, gesturing towards the lake with his mouth, "Guess what might be in this lake?"

Fang Bai focused his gaze on the lake surface, noticing that the lake water was interwoven with blue and red, his heart stirred, and his Divine Sense extended to the lake's bottom. He sensed two pure and rich Spiritual Energies of wood and fire attributes, raising his eyebrows, he said, "Heart-Shaped Leaf Fruit?"

Qingzhu Venerable looked quite surprised and said, "You actually know about the Heart-Shaped Leaf Fruit? Quite impressive knowledge for someone so young!"

The Heart-Shaped Leaf Fruit grows under extremely harsh conditions underwater and contains both fire and wood Spiritual Medicines, making it a very rare and wondrous Spiritual Medicine. Once refined into Spirit Pills, it's suitable for those with Dual Attribute Innate Spiritual Roots of fire and wood. In his previous life, Fang Bai had collected it and personally refined it into Spirit Pills in the three thousand great worlds.

"I've traveled to many places and have heard about the various phenomena associated with where this Spiritual Medicine grows, but today is my first encounter."

Fang Bai chuckled and explained.

Qingzhu Venerable said, "The Heart-Shaped Leaf Fruit grows under water yet contains both fire and wood attributes, which is indeed quite a spectacle. Do you perhaps know the grade of the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass growing at the bottom of this lake?"

Fang Bai said, "I think... maybe it's of King Grade, Superior level!"

Spiritual Medicines with a medicinal age of ten thousand years can be called King Grade, and those of King Grade, Superior have a medicinal age of forty thousand years. Such a grade of Spiritual Medicine, for ordinary people, is almost an Immortal Elixir capable of reviving the dead and providing flesh for bones.

For Martial Artists, it is also a dream treasure for assisting cultivation.

Qingzhu Venerable was even more amazed and praised, "Tsk tsk, not only do you know the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass, but you can also immediately mention its grade... remarkable... remarkable..."

He paused for a moment, then laughed and said, "I originally wanted to pick the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass and then exchange it with you for that Blood Blade, but you don't seem very interested in the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass after all!"

Fang Bai said with a smile, "Senior, that Blood Blade is my most beloved. Even if it were a Royal Grade Superior cultivation resource, I wouldn't exchange it with anyone else. Why make it difficult for someone? Besides, my Blood Blade is very loyal; once it recognizes its master, it won't accept another!"

Seeing Qingzhu Venerable's face of disbelief, he simply summoned the Blood Blade, letting it hover in the air and glide to the front of Qingzhu Venerable, "Senior, if you don't believe me, you might as well try it yourself. If you can subdue this Blood Blade, I will give it to you!"

Qingzhu Venerable looked at the Blood Blade, then at Fang Bai, and said with a half-smile, "Are you so sure I'm not going to seize your Blood Blade?"

Fang Bai replied, "If Senior wanted to seize it, you would have done so long ago. Why wait until now? Besides, I'm usually accurate in judging people. I believe Senior is a noble and upright person, unwilling to do such petty thievery!"

Qingzhu Venerable laughed heartily and nodded at Fang Bai, "You little fellow, you're quite to my liking! Alright! I'll give it a try then!"

He knew that such Spiritual Artifacts already had Artifact Spirits. Only by suppressing and subduing the Artifact Spirit inside could he re-refine it for his own use.

He extended both hands, accepting the Blood Blade, intending to penetrate his Divine Sense to explore the Artifact Spirit inside, but he encountered tremendous resistance. No matter how hard he tried, his Divine Sense was isolated outside, unable to enter.

Qingzhu Venerable realized this was caused by the Blood Blade's Artifact Spirit, just as Fang Bai had said. The Artifact Spirit was loyal to Fang Bai and unwilling to accept control from others, which is why it resisted fiercely.

After several attempts, Qingzhu Venerable found his Divine Sense depleted, unable to breach the barrier set by the Artifact Spirit, and had to withdraw fruitlessly.

"This Spiritual Artifact of yours...unfathomable! Could it be Royal Grade Superior?"

Qingzhu Venerable returned the Blood Blade to Fang Bai, both astonished and regretful.

He was astonished that he couldn't even probe the Blood Blade's Artifact Spirit, the first time he'd encountered such a scenario in his life.

Regretful that Fang Bai had delivered the Blood Blade to him, yet he couldn't subdue it and claim it for himself.

"Royal Grade Superior... hmm... possibly!"

Fang Bai thought, my Blood-Drinking Mad Blade has surpassed the limits of Immortal Grade, how could it be compared with mere Royal Grade Spiritual Artifacts?

Completely giving up the notion of exchanging the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade with Fang Bai, Qingzhu Venerable sighed, "I was so eager to exchange the Blood Blade with you, only now do I realize how laughable the idea was. Even if I had obtained your Blood Blade, what could I do? Unable to subdue the Artifact Spirit, unable to re-refine it, it's the same as having a useless piece."

Seeing Qingzhu Venerable a bit downhearted, Fang Bai smiled, "I previously promised that if Senior obtains Royal Grade Green Wood Marrow, I will refine your Green Bamboo Fan into a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact without any charge. Now let's see how fortunate Senior is."

Qingzhu Venerable's spirits soared, his boldness rising, and he laughed, "Alright, it's settled then! For a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact, this time I'll give it my all to stand in the eighth layer of space!"

Chapter 1605: Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle

"Splash!"

A soft sound, water droplets splashed everywhere.

Qingzhu Venerable leapt into the lake, intending to pick the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass growing at the bottom, intending to give it to Fang Bai as a token of gratitude for promising to help him forge a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact.

Fang Bai knew that once someone as powerful as Qingzhu Venerable had made up his mind, it was hard to change it, so he didn't stop him and sat cross-legged by the lake, waiting quietly.

Inside the seventh layer of the Linglong Tower, because very few Martial Artists could reach this level, it appeared extremely calm, with only occasional echoes of tigers roaring and apes crying from the distant mountains.

The small lake before him remained calm for several moments after Qingzhu Venerable plunged in, with the surface smoothing out like a mirror.

Yet Fang Bai could sense the spiritual energy beginning to gather beneath the serene lake, signaling the onset of a great battle.

Suddenly, with a loud "boom," it seemed as if a giant stone had fallen from the sky and struck the lake's center, arousing a towering wave.

"Rare Spiritual Medicine is often guarded by powerful Spirit Beasts. The Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass is a King Grade superior Spiritual Medicine, so the Spirit Beast that guards it should possess strength akin to Qingzhu Venerable. Furthermore, beneath the water's surface, the Spirit Beast might even hold some advantage. Qingzhu Venerable aiming to pick that Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass might not be easy!"

Fang Bai watched the lake surface continuously stirred by booming sounds and each ensuing wave, growing concerned for Qingzhu Venerable.

The Spirit Beast guarding the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass was the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle, a creature with innate water and fire attributes, massive in size, spanning more than several meters, with a crimson shell adorned with star-like spots.

The Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle appeared clumsy but was incredibly agile in combat, and its red shell provided astounding defensive capabilities, far exceeding those of spirit beasts and martial artists of the same level, making it difficult to injure through conventional means.

In a short while, the battle between one man and one beast moved from the lake bottom to the lake surface. Each clash of spiritual energy created a powerful shockwave, capable of generating enormous waves.

In the water, Qingzhu Venerable appeared at a slight disadvantage, so he flew up from the lake surface, floating in the air, launching attacks down on the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle from above.

The Green Bamboo Fan in Qingzhu Venerable's hand was powerful; with each swing, it stirred a fierce gale, sweeping up nearly half the lake's water into the air, raining down like a torrent of arrows.

However, in the area where the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle resided, the water within a radius of tens of meters was subdued by its released spiritual energy, remaining still and unmoving.

The Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle focused on defense, its shell incredibly hard. Despite repeated attacks by Qingzhu Venerable, it remained unharmed, wasting significant spiritual energy.

Occasionally, the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle would open its mouth and spew fire columns, fiercer than volcano eruptions, with terrifying power. The area touched by the fire columns sizzled in the void.

Qingzhu Venerable hovered in mid-air, with the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle swimming across the lake surface; thus, man and beast faced off, unable to subdue each other in the short term.

However, Fang Bai knew that if they continued mutual attacks, Qingzhu Venerable would undoubtedly suffer.

Qingzhu Venerable continuously launched attacks while airborne, depleting spiritual energy rapidly.

On the other hand, the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle merely waited, preparing to strike fiercely at the least expected time, making it challenging for Qingzhu Venerable to resist.

"Senior Qingzhu, this Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle's defenses are too strong and difficult to kill; how about we join forces?"

After observing the battle by the lake for a while, Fang Bai knew it was unlikely for Qingzhu Venerable to kill the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle alone, so he spoke up.

"Kid, are you confident in killing it?"

Qingzhu Venerable asked back.

Fang Bai said, "I am eighty percent confident."

Qingzhu Venerable's eyes lit up, and he said, "Good, I will hold this beast at bay, and you seize the chance to strike, aiming for a one-hit kill! In that case, both this beast and the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass at the lake bottom will be yours!"

The carcass of a Soul Severing Realm Spirit Beast, along with a King Grade superior Spiritual Medicine, these cultivation resources could drive any Soul Severing Realm powerhouse mad, but Qingzhu Venerable, without hesitation, offered it all to Fang Bai, showcasing his tremendous generosity.

Fang Bai thought for a moment, respectfully nodding towards Qingzhu Venerable, and said, "In that case, thank you, senior! However, the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle's shell is quite defensively advantageous and could be used to enhance senior's Green Bamboo Fan somewhat. Although the Green Bamboo Fan after enhancement won't reach the power of a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact, its attack and defense capabilities could at least increase by thirty percent."

Enhancing attack and defense capabilities by thirty percent is a significant deal for a High Rank Soul Severing Realm expert, Qingzhu Venerable was overjoyed upon hearing this, nodding, "That's great!"

Qingzhu Venerable then attacked the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle with full force, striving to prevent it from diving into the lake depths, providing Fang Bai with an opportunity to attack.

Fang Bai quickly rushed into the air, circling behind the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle, gripping the knife handle tightly with both hands, raising it high, and circulating the "Nine Revolutions True Fire Art" cultivation technique. The fire spiritual energy within his Qi Sea surged, a fusion of the Red Silkworm Spirit Fire and the Nether Spirit Fire, and this pure fire spiritual energy began to pour madly into the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade's body.

In an instant, the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade shone brilliantly, the blood fiend qi and scorching high heat emanating from the blade instantly enveloped the entire small lake.

How high was the temperature of the fire spiritual energy that fused two kinds of spirit fire, and how powerful was its force?

The lake water bubbled and boiled, emitting streams of white steam, and in just a few seconds, more than half the lake water evaporated under the intense heat, faintly revealing the lake bottom.

The few remaining fish in the lake were all roasted by the high temperature, with their bellies turned up, floating on the surface, and one could smell the aroma of cooked fish.

Even though the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle had high cultivation and strong defensive capabilities, it could not withstand such high-temperature roasting, becoming restless and anxious, with no intention to continue intense fighting with Qingzhu Venerable, looking to dive into the lake bottom to hide.

However, the usual lake depths it guarded the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass in were now unsuitable hiding spots due to the water depth and temperature.

Moreover, how could Qingzhu Venerable allow it to flee easily? The Green Bamboo Fan in his hand swung continuously, raising fierce winds and enormous waves, making it impossible for the turtle to dive into the deep water temporarily.

"I don't know what kind of fire-based cultivation technique this kid practiced, but his fire spiritual energy is so powerful that even I can't withstand it. I underestimated him before!"

Although Qingzhu Venerable stood a hundred meters away from Fang Bai, the intense heat released by Fang Bai's Blood-Drinking Mad Blade still compelled him to exert full strength, forming a defense Qi shield to protect himself.

Comparatively, the blood fiend qi of the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade was formidable, but given Qingzhu Venerable's cultivation level and strong will, it posed no threat to him temporarily.

Chapter 1606: Human and Blade as One

Fang Bai, who raised the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade high, had already fused entirely with the blade.

The man is the blade.

The blade is the man.

Man and blade as one, blood fiend aura coexists with fire spirit energy.

For the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle, the blood fiend aura of the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade didn't impact it much, but the fire spirit energy released by the two spiritual fires caused it significant distress, even instilling a hint of fear.

Though the spiritual fire couldn't kill the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle, it could certainly cause it great trouble. Moreover, it had to conjure a defense qi shield to protect itself, and it was also strongly restrained by the Qingzhu Venerable, making it unable to effectively respond to Fang Bai's attacks.

"Bloodthirst!"

"Soul Severing!"

"Silence Annihilation!"

When the blood fiend aura on the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade and the strange fire spirit energy accumulated to their peak, Fang Bai roared, combining the three blades, and almost instantaneously slashed at the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle in mid-air.

A blood-colored blade light, several meters long, merged with the ominous flame, descending like blood-colored lightning, cleaving onto the tough and solid shell of the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle.

"Puff!"

The shell on the back of the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle was forcibly split by the blade light of the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, and the residual force of the blade continued unabated, slicing the turtle's body in two.

A column of blood, several meters high, shot up into the sky, quickly spread upon falling into the lake, dyeing the entire lake surface red.

Having been cut in half, the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle struggled painfully for several moments before finally losing all signs of life and sinking to the lake bottom.

"Well done!"

Seeing Fang Bai decisively slay the turtle in one strike, Qingzhu Venerable shouted in praise, also amazed by the true strength Fang Bai displayed.

Fang Bai's one-blade kill of the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle made Qingzhu Venerable reconsider, thinking even if he acted himself, he might not have managed as cleanly and quickly as Fang Bai.

Through this battle, Fang Bai's status in Qingzhu Venerable's mind suddenly skyrocketed, no longer treating him as a mere junior in the Nascent Soul Realm, but rather calling him Brother Fang.

"Brother Fang, the fire primordial qi you released just now seemed unusual; might I ask why?"

After Fang Bai collected the turtle's inner pill and the Heart-Shaped Leaf Grass, Qingzhu Venerable couldn't resist asking.

The intensity of fire spirit energy Fang Bai had gathered just now was unprecedented in Qingzhu Venerable's experience, leaving a strong impression.

Fang Bai smiled and said, "Does Old Brother Qingzhu know about spiritual fire?"

Since Qingzhu Venerable referred to Fang Bai as "Brother," Fang Bai decided to address him as "Old Brother."

Qingzhu Venerable was momentarily stunned, then said excitedly, "Spiritual fire... is that the legendary innate strange fire?"

Fang Bai nodded, "It should be."

Qingzhu Venerable sighed, "Heavens-born strange fire is said to have existed since the dawn of heaven and earth; who could have imagined you would be lucky enough to acquire it. However..."

His gaze wandered over Fang Bai before continuing, "I've heard that spiritual fire possesses immense power, incinerating the land for miles, leaving no vegetation. That you could tame it, could it be because you possess a dual attribute innate spiritual root and an extraordinary physique?"

Fang Bai said, "Probably."

Qingzhu Venerable laughed, "Brother Fang, you have the dual attribute innate spiritual root of the extraordinary holy body, your aptitude unmatched, and in the future, your cultivation level will undoubtedly far surpass mine. You've also acquired an incredibly powerful spiritual artifact and spiritual fire, a fortuitous encounter so lucky it's making me a little envious."

Fang Bai also laughed, "I believe that this trial inside the Linglong Tower's nine layers, Old Brother Qingzhu's opportunity will surely be outstanding."

Qingzhu Venerable said, "Thank you for the blessings! I hope so!"

And then added, "If you can refine my Green Bamboo Fan using the shell of the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle to increase its power by thirty percent, I might indeed have the chance to venture into the eighth layer of space."

Fang Bai took a deep breath, "That last strike overexerted my physical strength and spirit energy, I need a moment to rest, then I can refine the Green Bamboo Fan for Old Brother. Please, protect me for a moment."

Qingzhu Venerable nodded, "Focus on your recovery, the protection task is up to me."

Fang Bai sat cross-legged by the lake, closing his eyes to rest, while Qingzhu Venerable leapt onto a large stone.

In a dense forest two thousand li west of the small lake, Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, two high rank Soul Severing experts, had jointly killed a Unihorn Tiger and divided all its possessions before returning to the spot where Fang Bai's aura had disappeared to continue searching for his trail.

"Hmm? That kid went east."

When Fang Bai left that ancient tree earlier, he hadn't deliberately concealed his aura, so the two quickly followed it and found the lakeside.

"That kid's indeed here!"

"Haha, let's see where he runs now!"

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze burst into laughter when they saw Fang Bai sitting quietly in meditation.

"Brother Qu, Brother Zhu, how come the two of you are here?"

Clearly acquainted with them, Qingzhu Venerable stepped forward to block them in front of Fang Bai, concerned they might pose a threat to Fang Bai's safety.

Qu Rui squinted his eyes, grinning, "Brother Qingzhu, you know this kid?"

Qingzhu Venerable replied, "He's a young friend of mine."

Zhu Jingze sneered, "A young friend? This kid isn't even a Soul Severing expert, and you consider him a young friend? Brother Qingzhu, lowering your position to associate with him, are you also eyeing his Blood Blade?"

Qingzhu Venerable calmly said, "That has nothing to do with you two. I'll only ask, what's your purpose here?"

Qu Rui pointed at Fang Bai, his face turning grim and said, "Naturally, to kill him and take his Blood Blade!"

Though Zhu Jingze and Qu Rui had always been at odds, he too coveted the Blood Blade. Seeing Qingzhu Venerable's intent to protect Fang Bai, he provoked, "Brother Qu, since that kid is Brother Qingzhu's friend, let's forget about the Blood Blade. Brother Qu, your strength is formidable, but Brother Qingzhu isn't weak either!"

His implication was that Brother Qu might not defeat Qingzhu Venerable, so there's little hope of obtaining the Blood Blade and no need to invite trouble.

Qu Rui coldly glanced at him mockingly, "Brother Zhu, you want me and Brother Qingzhu to fight so you can benefit from the conflict?"

Zhu Jingze was thick-skinned, unfazed by the remark, laughing awkwardly, "Brother Qu, you're projecting your own intentions onto me! What I mean is, it's better for the two of you not to have a conflict..."

Qu Rui cut him off with a "Hah", "You want that kid's Blood Blade, go take it by force, no need for false politeness or pretending to be kind."

Zhu Jingze stroked his beard, "Since that kid is Brother Qingzhu's friend, I'll abstain from taking the blade, as a courtesy to Brother Qingzhu! If you want it, handle it yourself, don't involve me."

"Hypocrite!"

Qu Rui huffed, "I bet, if Brother Qingzhu and I fought each other to mutual injury, you'd surely seize the opportunity to grab the kid's Blood Blade and might even kill us both, isn't that right?"

Seeing Qingzhu Venerable turn a disapproving look toward himself, Zhu Jingze shrieked, "Nonsense! I'm not that kind of person!"

Chapter 1607: Fight if you want, otherwise get lost!

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, what kind of people are they? Qingzhu Venerable knows very well, so he doesn't believe a word they say.

However, their intent to seize Fang Bai's Blood Blade is something Qingzhu Venerable knows is quite possible, because even he himself is extremely fond of Fang Bai's Blood Blade.

Nevertheless, he keeps his word and promised to protect Fang Bai, thus he won't allow others to disturb Fang Bai.

"If you want to take Brother Fang's Blood Blade, you'll have to ask my fists first!"

Qingzhu Venerable, with the Green Bamboo Fan in hand, surged with spiritual energy, murderous intent skyrocketing, said sternly.

Though both Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze coveted Fang Bai's Blood Blade, Qingzhu Venerable's posture of fighting to the death made both of them hesitate, neither daring to act rashly.

If they joined forces, they might be able to kill Qingzhu Venerable after a great battle, but unfortunately, they weren't united in their hearts. Moreover, within the space of the ninth level of the Linglong Tower, the fall of martial artists is merely an illusion.

Once a martial artist is "slain," they'll be automatically expelled from the tower by the Linglong Tower and can only return after ten years.

Since they couldn't kill Qingzhu Venerable, neither of them wanted to become mortal enemies with such a strong opponent, allowing the other to gain the upper hand.

And Qingzhu Venerable naturally wouldn't take the initiative to attack Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze.

Thus, the three of them remained in a standoff at a distance of ten zhang.

After a hundred breaths, Fang Bai slowly opened his eyes, laughed when he saw the current situation.

"You two old thieves are truly persistent, chasing me all the way here!"

Fang Bai got up, stood side by side with Qingzhu Venerable, pointing at Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze.

Qingzhu Venerable curiously asked, "Brother Fang, how did you recognize them?"

Fang Bai said, "These two old thieves covet my Blood Blade, they've been chasing me all the way. Fortunately, I run fast; otherwise, the Blood Blade would have been lost long ago! Thought I'd already shaken them off, yet here they are!"

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, being called "old thieves" by Fang Bai, were greatly annoyed. Their eyes swept over Fang Bai's Five Elements Space Ring, knowing the coveted Blood Blade must be inside.

Qu Rui sneered, "Kid, hand over your Space Ring, and I will let bygones be bygones!"

Zhu Jingze said, "Give me the Space Ring, and I'll spare your life! Otherwise... once we leave this ninth level of the Linglong Tower, your death will be certain!"

"Two old folks hundreds of years old with high-level Soul Severing cultivation threatening a twenty-something Nascent Soul perfection martial artist, aren't you shameless? I'm truly ashamed for you!"

Seeing Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze exposing their fierce intentions and openly threatening Fang Bai, Qingzhu Venerable couldn't help but sneer.

Since Fang Bai had already recuperated, Qingzhu Venerable was not afraid of conflict with Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze.

The spectacular strike Fang Bai used to slay the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle before left Qingzhu Venerable in awe, thinking that if all four got into a melee, joining forces with Fang Bai might not be afraid of the two opponents.

Moreover, in the Linglong Tower, even if Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze have killing intent, they cannot kill Fang Bai; only outside the tower could they possibly do so.

Qingzhu Venerable believed that before leaving the tower, Fang Bai should be able to advance to the Soul Severing realm, significantly boosting his strength. Maybe after leaving the tower, he would be able to contend with high-rank Soul Severing powerhouses like Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze.

"Brother Qingzhu, you're so eager to help him, are you after his Blood Blade too?"

Qu Rui suddenly said.

"I believe so!"

Zhu Jingze said with a smile that doesn't reach his eyes, "Otherwise, why would a dignified high-rank Soul Severing powerhouse deal with a Nascent Soul perfection expert? What are they up to, even a fool understands!"

He then said to Fang Bai, "Kid, you should be careful! Some people are not what they seem on the surface!"

Qingzhu Venerable wasn't angered by this, he stroked his beard and smiled, "Say what you like, I trust Brother Fang wouldn't believe you."

Fang Bai revealed the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, swung it a few times in the air, leaving behind layers of blade shadows, and then pointed the blade tip at Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, saying loudly, "If you want to take my Blood Blade, come on!"

Seeing Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze remain motionless, he coldly smiled and added, "Fight if you dare, otherwise roll away!"

Being told to "roll" by a junior, Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze's faces turned extremely unpleasant to the eye.

Qu Rui harshly said, "Arrogant little thief! I'll slap you to death with a palm!"

With that, he raised his hand to strike down, the Spirit Qi Big Palm descending from the sky with a thunderous roar, pressing down towards Fang Bai's head, enveloping dozens of zhang with its pressure, bending all the grass and trees low.

Qingzhu Venerable raised his head to the sky, let out a cold snort, and his Green Bamboo Fan motioned upwards, a violent gust dispelling the descending Spirit Qi Big Palm.

"Brother Zhu, let's first join forces to defeat Qingzhu and Fang Bai, then discuss the ownership of the Blood Blade, what do you say?"

Qu Rui, knowing he wasn't a match for Qingzhu Venerable and Fang Bai alone, began to solicit Zhu Jingze.

Zhu Jingze's eyes flickered, and he smiled, "Instead of fighting over a Blood Blade, why not seek other opportunities? Brother Qu, I shall take my leave first!"

With that, he turned without looking back, transforming into a stream of light and fled towards the distant mountains, leaving Qu Rui dumbfounded and standing in place.

"That old thief..."

Qu Rui didn't expect Zhu Jingze to flee without a fight, cursed, lost all will to battle, and pointed discontentedly at Fang Bai, "For now, I'll spare you! We'll settle accounts after we leave this ninth level of the Linglong Tower!"

Saying so, he lightly tapped the ground with his foot, his figure turned into a stream of light soaring to the sky, disappearing into the distance in the blink of an eye.

"Those two old guys, not only sly as foxes, but also despicable and shameless! Brother Fang, you will need to be careful of them after leaving the tower!"

Qingzhu Venerable said solemnly to Fang Bai.

Fang Bai chuckled, "After leaving the tower, it's fine if they don't come looking for me; otherwise, they'll find themselves never returning!"

Though his words carried a domineering force, Qingzhu Venerable was still somewhat worried and said, "If it's just one of them, you might be able to deal with them alone, but if both of them come, you may not be able to handle it! How about this, after leaving the tower, you come along with me first. Once we've shaken off their pursuit, you can leave on your own."

Fang Bai laughed proudly, shook his head, and said, "I appreciate the goodwill, senior. But rest assured, I should be able to advance my cultivation level before leaving the tower. Once I've reached the Soul Severing realm, it'll be much harder for them to take my life!"

"Well... alright, the decision is yours!"

Qingzhu Venerable had realized that Fang Bai had the ability to challenge those above his level, especially with that immensely powerful Blood-Drinking Mad Blade in his hand, so if Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze were to pursue him, he might just carve a bloody path and escape.

Chapter 1608: Eighth Layer Space

Several hours later, Fang Bai used the shell of the Red-Shell Star-Spotted Turtle to reforge Qingzhu Venerable's spiritual artifact, the Green Bamboo Fan.

Afterwards, Qingzhu Venerable wielded the Green Bamboo Fan and tested it on the spot, discovering that the spiritual artifact, reforged by Fang Bai, had indeed increased in power by thirty percent.

For a Soul Severing Expert, an enhancement of thirty percent in combat strength was significant. For instance, prior to this, Qingzhu Venerable could only fight Qu Rui to a draw, but now, relying on the newly reforged power of the Green Bamboo Fan, he could easily defeat Qu Rui.

Overjoyed, Qingzhu Venerable insisted on giving Fang Bai some rare King Grade cultivation resources as a reward. Fang Bai initially didn't want them, but seeing Qingzhu Venerable's insistence, he had no choice but to accept.

The old and the young parted ways by the lakeside, each seeking their own fortune.

The pressure of the seventh layer's space, although not posing any threat to a Soul Severing Expert like Qingzhu Venerable, nevertheless exerted some pressure on them, causing them to proceed with caution and full alertness at each perilous site, to guard against sudden Spirit Beast attacks.

Qingzhu Venerable planned to undergo some thorough trials in the seventh layer of Linglong Tower, intending to advance his strength further before attempting to tackle the eighth layer.

After separating from Qingzhu Venerable, Fang Bai bypassed the seventh layer and headed straight for the steps to the eighth layer of Linglong Tower.

At this moment, the dozens of steps leading to the eighth layer were empty and devoid of any Martial Artist's aura, indicating that so far, no strong individuals had been able to ascend to the eighth layer.

Fang Bai knew how formidable the pressure of the eighth layer was. If he relied solely on his physical body to ascend, he feared he would have to retreat to the seventh layer due to being unable to withstand the pressure.

However, a spiritual artifact could counteract some of the pressure, sharing part of the burden for the Martial Artist.

Therefore, after taking a deep breath, Fang Bai summoned the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, holding it across his chest as he ascended the steps leading to the eighth layer one by one.

The steps comprised a total of forty-nine tiers, each three feet wide, all crafted from Earth Spirit Stone, emitting a hazy earth-yellow glow.

With each tier ascended, the pressure intensified. If it were a high-rank Soul Severing expert like Qingzhu Venerable, they might find themselves unable to move forward in the middle part due to being unable to withstand the pressure.

Fang Bai's physical body was formidable, unmatched in this world. He could withstand part of the pressure, and with the help of a Divine Artifact like the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, yet to unleash its full power, he walked steadily and slowly to the top of the stone steps.

Behind him, on the forty-nine tiers of steps, were pools of sweat and a trail of footprints.

Standing at the entrance to the eighth layer, a rich and pure spiritual energy greeted him head-on. Fang Bai sighed comfortably while bathing in it.

The spiritual energy within the eighth layer was far superior to that of the seventh layer, unimaginable to ordinary Martial Artists.

In years past, Fang Bai had trained in this eighth layer and encountered great fortune, but unfortunately, he never managed to ascend to the ninth layer, which was a regret.

Nevertheless, he later encountered fortunes in other regions, achieved enlightenment and ascension, and eventually reached the Immortal Realm.

Despite the intense pressure, Fang Bai gritted his teeth and persevered, stepping forward into the depths of the eighth layer.

The eighth layer was a blood-red desert, its end difficult to discern.

The blood-red desert was not devoid of life; occasionally, one or two plants could be seen. Those plants emitted rich and pure spiritual energy, rare Royal Grade spiritual medicine not easily found in the other seven layers.

Fang Bai walked amidst them, collecting any Royal Grade spiritual medicine he encountered into his Five Elements Space Ring without hesitation.

After all, the internal space of his Five Elements Space Ring was vast enough to store a million Royal Grade spiritual herbs. Having struggled to reach this place, there was no reason to let any herb go.

As he ventured deeper into the desert, illusions began to arise. However, these illusions, capable of disturbing a Soul Severing expert's mind, had no effect on Fang Bai, who had lived two lives.

Following the illusions, dense Spirit Beasts began to emerge from the dim sky and the blood-red sand layer.

In the sky appeared the sharp-toothed and talon-armed Red-Headed Eagles, measuring several feet in length. Their large bodies and formidable attack power rivaled that of a human Soul Severing initial stage expert.

Emerging from beneath the sand layer were Dual-Tailed Scorpions, each several feet in size. The Dual-Tailed Scorpions moved with astonishing speed and had formidable attack capabilities. Their long, hooked tails could easily pierce King Grade spiritual artifacts.

In the blink of an eye, Spirit Beasts covered the sky and ground, surrounding Fang Bai.

Fang Bai remained fearless, viewing these Spirit Beasts as perfect targets for honing his combat skills.

He wielded the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade in his hand, slashing fiercely. Within a brief hundred breaths, he unleashed a thousand blade glows. Each blade glow contained a trace of Spirit Fire power, claiming dozens of Spirit Beasts' lives.

A thousand blade glows harvested an incalculable number of Spirit Beasts' lives. After a hundred breaths, the ground around Fang Bai was covered with fallen Spirit Beast corpses, their bright red blood staining the sand even redder.

The scattered scent of blood attracted more Spirit Beasts. From a distance, the area within a ten li radius with Fang Bai at the center teemed with the shadows of Spirit Beasts, likely numbering in the thousands. They gathered densely, emitting strange sounds that made one's scalp tingle and sent chills down the spine.

The Blood-Drinking Mad Blade in Fang Bai's hand had absorbed an innumerable amount of Spirit Beast blood, exuding a sinister glow, with Blood Fiend Qi growing ever thicker.

Another hundred breaths passed, and Fang Bai, with his spiritual energy greatly depleted, felt physically and mentally exhausted. In his moment of slackness, he was suddenly attacked by the surging Spirit Beasts, causing dozens of wounds of varying sizes to appear all over his body, leaving him drenched in blood, resembling a blood-soaked figure.

"I can't hold on any longer!"

Just as Fang Bai's spiritual energy was about to be exhausted, he finally summoned the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron and took refuge inside to rest and heal.

The Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron was the most robust Divine Artifact in Fang Bai's possession. It was not only extraordinarily durable but could also easily smash through other spiritual artifacts and be used to refine spiritual artifacts, making it extremely versatile.

After Fang Bai took refuge inside the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron, he found the spiritual energy within much more abundant than the last time, almost comparable to that in the eighth layer's space outside. Upon reflection, it seemed that the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron had been autonomously absorbing the spiritual energy of nature here.

Fang Bai realized that the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron absorbing nature's spiritual energy was actually a process of self-enhancement. Compared to when Fang Bai first acquired it, its power had increased many times over.

Fang Bai believed that if he used the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron against an enemy, it would be even more powerful than the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade.

However, the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron was too heavy, and manipulating it for offense and defense consumed a vast amount of spiritual energy and divine sense. This was why Fang Bai would not easily wield the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron.

Once inside the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron, the lid automatically closed, allowing him to rest and cultivate in peace, entirely isolated from any external noise.

Chapter 1609: Giant Skeleton

The Red-Headed Eagle and the Dual-Tailed Scorpion launched a simultaneous attack on the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron from the sky and the ground, intending to break open this seemingly ancient and shabby giant cauldron and devour Fang Bai hiding within.

A dense swarm of Spirit Beasts poured wave after wave of storm-like attacks onto the cauldron.

However, the cauldron was as solid as a rock, utterly unscathed, and neither the claws of the Red-Headed Eagle nor the stingers of the Dual-Tailed Scorpion could shake it in the slightest.

"Boom!"

Suddenly, the cauldron trembled incessantly, emitting countless rays of green light. A powerful spiritual energy shockwave forcibly dispersed tens of thousands of Spirit Beasts around.

The Spirit Beasts seemed to fear the green light emanating from the cauldron; they quickly retreated. In the blink of an eye, the desolate landscape filled with killing and bloodthirsty auras returned to its previous tranquility, with only occasional gusts of wind whistling by.

The Spirit Beasts came quickly and fled just as quickly. However, in that fleeting moment when the cauldron released its green radiance, it still managed to kill hundreds of Spirit Beasts.

After tens of thousands of Spirit Beasts had dispersed, Fang Bai leapt out from within the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron, swiftly collecting over a hundred Spirit Beast inner cores, then continued on his journey.

Over a hundred inner cores from Spirit Beasts at the Soul Severing Realm have high value and great utility for a martial artist, incomparable to Nascent Soul Realm Spirit Beast cores.

If Fang Bai were to reveal these over a hundred Soul Severing Realm Spirit Beast inner cores to others, it would undoubtedly cause a sensation, making countless martial artists envious.

However, Fang Bai also knew the principle of "bearing treasure invites calamity," and naturally, he would not easily show off such valuables.

Fang Bai put away the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron and continued forward, continuously collecting encountered Spirit Beasts and Spiritual Medicine along the way. The Five Elements Space Ring became increasingly filled with Royal Grade Spiritual Medicine and Soul Severing Realm Spirit Beast inner cores.

After a day and night, a murky, turbulent river stood before him.

The river surged violently, roaring eastward, and the thunderous sound of water was deafening.

The pressure above this river was several times greater than in other places. Fang Bai tried several times and found that he couldn't fly over the river using a Spiritual Artifact, so he had to travel upstream along the river.

After walking a hundred miles along the river, an Iron Chain Bridge crossed the riverbank ahead.

Fang Bai stood at this end of the Iron Chain Bridge, thoughtfully gazing at the turbulent river below, then took a deep breath and swiftly skimmed across to the other side along one of the chains.

This river spanned ten miles in width, with swift currents and unfathomable depths. It was certain that the riverbed harbored extremely formidable Spirit Beasts.

As Fang Bai approached the center of the river, although there was no commotion in the water, he dared not relax for a moment.

Though the scenery of this eighth space was entirely different from during Fang Bai's previous life training, he knew that this vast desert harboring a sudden appearance of such a river was definitely a trial for martial artists, ensuring they could not cross safely without conflict.

If there were no Spirit Beasts in the river, it would be fine; however, should any appear, they would surely be formidable adversaries.

Upon reaching above the river's center, Fang Bai suddenly sensed something, peering down at the water. Suddenly, a massive vortex appeared on the river surface, followed by a large head emerging from the water.

This massive head belonged to a giant skeleton nearly ten stories tall, comparable to a high building.

Standing amidst the river, the water only reached its leg bones while its chest faced Fang Bai on the Iron Chain Bridge.

Feeling a dangerous aura, Fang Bai's pupils contracted suddenly as he swiftly retreated.

"Whoosh!"

The wind sounded sharply, and the pressure followed. The skeleton wielded a bone axe, its blade grazing the Iron Chain Bridge, sweeping horizontally toward Fang Bai's waist with such speed that Fang Bai could not dodge in time.

"A skeleton comparable to a human at Soul Severing Perfection!"

Fang Bai was startled as the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade appeared in his hand, blocking in front of him.

"Clang!"

The frantically slashing bone axe collided intensely with Fang Bai's Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, producing a clear metallic clang as sparks flew like fireworks.

"Splash!"

A strong shockwave swept over like a mad storm, causing Fang Bai's body to fly back and the Iron Chain Bridge to shake violently, sending giant waves crashing from the river.

"Such ferocious spiritual energy!"

Blasted back dozens of meters by the spiritual energy shockwave, Fang Bai barely regained his footing, feeling his blood and energy churning, surprised internally.

From a distance, Fang Bai looked like a tiny kitten facing an elephant as he stood on the Iron Chain Bridge, confronting the giant skeleton nearly ten stories tall.

The giant skeleton didn't resemble human bones but appeared more like an ancient ape's skeleton, refined into a lifeless yet powerfully aggressive entity similar to a Puppet Corpse.

The giant skeleton lurking in the riverbed was likely meant to test the human strong who attempted to cross the river.

Before Fang Bai could steady himself, the skeleton launched its second attack.

It swung the giant bone axe, carving a dazzling arc of white light toward Fang Bai's head in mid-air.

Before the bone axe arrived, the pressure descended upon Fang Bai, enveloping tens of meters around him.

Fang Bai wanted to evade but found his movements significantly hindered, so he had to raise his blade to counter the axe that felt like a mountain crashing down.

"Boom!"

The bone axe slammed into Fang Bai's Blood-Drinking Mad Blade. Unable to withstand the force surging from the bone axe, Fang Bai's body plummeted like a meteor, crashing into the river and creating towering waves.

The skeleton looked down for Fang Bai, intending to launch another attack, but it found Fang Bai no longer resurfaced after entering the river.

Suddenly, the river churned, causing the skeleton's body to tremble slightly. One of its submerged leg bones had been fiercely struck by Fang Bai, who was hidden in the river.

Yet, the skeleton merely shook slightly, nothing more.

"A skeleton as strong as a Soul Severing Perfection expert, truly remarkable!"

Seeing his continuous attacks with the three styles of the Mad Blade only resulted in a few shudders of the skeleton, Fang Bai couldn't help but bitterly smile, realizing that the skeleton's power was beyond what he could defeat at the moment.

However, rather than fearing, Fang Bai's fighting spirit intensified, seeing it as a perfect opportunity to hone his combat abilities.

Though the skeleton's attacks were fierce and its defense strong, its oversized body made it slightly slower. Fang Bai fully utilized the Wind Art, pushing his speed to the limit, repeatedly dodging the skeleton's attacks without incident.

After a hundred breaths of fighting, Fang Bai was greatly exhausted, while the skeleton seemed tireless, its attacks endless.

After a hundred breaths, Fang Bai's movement technique finally slowed, catching him off guard as the edge of the bone axe swept across his left arm, instantly tearing skin and flesh with blood gushing, and if not for his robust physique, unrivaled constitution, his arm might have been severed.

Grunting softly, Fang Bai realized that continuing the fight might truly endanger him, so his eyes gleamed brightly as he summoned the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron, hurling it against the bone axe coming down from the skeleton once again.

Chapter 1610: Shoot You Dead with One Arrow!

The Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron truly lives up to its name as a Divine Artifact. Even though only a fraction of its power was unleashed, it was still able to forcefully deflect the Bone Axe that the skeleton had fiercely swung down.

Taking advantage of the moment, Fang Bai opened the cauldron's lid and slipped inside the Great Cauldron, letting it fall into the river.

The skeleton reached out a large hand to grab the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron before it touched the river's surface, trying to crush it with force.

However, no matter how hard the skeleton tried, the cauldron remained entirely unaffected.

The skeleton seemed to be enraged and hurled the cauldron into the air with great force. The cauldron soared high into the sky, reaching hundreds of meters before it began to fall back down.

"Boom!"

Sand and dirt flew, smoke and dust filled the air. The massive cauldron landed heavily on the riverbank, creating a pit several meters deep in the ground.

The skeleton reached in, retrieved the cauldron from the pit, and found it still intact.

No matter what methods the skeleton used to try to destroy the cauldron and kill Fang Bai, all attempts ended in failure.

After struggling for a while, the skeleton seemed to give up and casually tossed the cauldron into the river, then lay its own body into the river water.

Inside the cauldron, Fang Bai paid no mind to the outside, sitting cross-legged within, using the rich Five Elements Spiritual Qi inside the cauldron to heal his injuries.

Inside the cauldron, time seemed to stand still.

No telling how much time had passed, Fang Bai's injuries had fully healed, his inner Spiritual Qi filled to the brim. He sensed that his strength had improved considerably after the recent battle.

But to progress further and reach the Soul Severing realm, he would still need a significant amount of cultivation resources to keep accumulating Spiritual Qi.

For Fang Bai, advancing each minor realm required several times more Spiritual Qi than others, and the power he gained after advancing was similarly several times stronger than others.

Extending his Divine Sense, Fang Bai discovered that the enormous skeleton was currently lying next to the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron. Any slight movement from him could potentially alarm it.

Fang Bai had no idea how long he had been in the ninth level of the Linglong Tower. This time upon entering the tower, he was determined to challenge the ninth level, and he couldn't just stay idly in the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron, wasting time. Otherwise, after eighty-one days passed, he would be forcibly expelled from the Linglong Tower.

With this thought, Fang Bai calmed his mind and began contemplating a plan to escape.

"This skeleton has been staying in the river water; could it be that it relies on the river to gain formidable ability?"

Fang Bai's eyes suddenly lit up with this realization.

With both hands, he summoned the Red Silkworm Spirit Fire and the Nether Spirit Fire, directing the Fire Spirit Energy of the fires out towards the river water outside the cauldron.

The rapidly rising temperature caused the water within a hundred meters to boil furiously, white mist rose, smoke lingered, and the pure and concentrated Water Spirit Qi contained in the river began to weaken under the high heat.

The huge skeleton lying at the river bottom seemed to feel discomfort and started to become restless.

Upon discovering this through his Divine Sense, Fang Bai was overjoyed, realizing that his method was working, so he continued to release the Fire Spirit Energy of the two types of Spiritual Fires outward.

Both the Red Silkworm Spirit Fire and the Nether Spirit Fire could instantaneously cause thousands of miles to be reduced to scorched earth - their power was utterly immense.

As the temperature continued to rise, the river water within a thousand-meter radius centered on the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron began to boil. The water reaching the border of this radius seemed to encounter an invisible barrier, halting its flow and swirling in place, forming vortexes.

Amidst the sizzling sounds, the river water began to evaporate, lowering the water level continuously.

Half an hour later, the water within a hundred meters around the cauldron had evaporated completely, revealing the riverbed and the enormous skeleton lying at the bottom.

Without the river, the skeleton's movements seemed significantly sluggish. It struggled to stand and walked step by step toward the distant water, attempting to leap into it.

"One arrow to take you down!"

Fang Bai opened the cauldron's lid, leapt atop the cauldron, and summoned the Houyi Bow, notching an arrow imbued with his vital blood and a wisp of Spiritual Fire.

The Flame Arrow shot out with a whistle, tearing through the air, aimed at the huge skull on the skeleton's neck.

"Boom!"

Deprived of the river's sustenance, the enormous skeleton became extremely fragile. Fang Bai's arrow pierced through its skull, causing it to explode, then it collapsed and shattered on the ground.

"Success!"

Fang Bai put away the Houyi Bow, excitedly pumping his arm in triumph.

He stored the Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron into the Five Elements Space Ring, and before the blocked river water a hundred meters away could flow over, he quickly traversed the riverbed to the opposite bank.

Using Spiritual Fire to evaporate the water and using the Houyi Bow to slay the skeleton, these two attacks greatly consumed his Spiritual Qi and Divine Sense. Therefore, after reaching the shore, Fang Bai again sat quietly for recovery.

When his strength was restored to its peak, Fang Bai looked up at the sky and murmured, "The pressure in the ninth level space of the Linglong Tower must certainly be several times stronger than the eighth layer, and the spirit beasts there must also be immensely more powerful. If I don't advance to the Soul Severing realm, even if I manage to ascend, I fear I would be overpowered by spirit beasts."

After contemplating this, Fang Bai decided to advance to the Soul Severing realm within this eighth level space before attempting to ascend to the ninth level of the Linglong Tower, otherwise, it wouldn't hold much meaning.

Leaving the river behind, Fang Bai continued forward.

In each Linglong Tower level, the area with the densest Spiritual Qi is always at the entrance to the next level.

After another day of searching, Fang Bai finally discovered the stairway leading to the ninth level space. He lingered nearby for a long while, sensing the pressure on each step, knowing that with his current cultivation level, he could at most ascend halfway before being overwhelmed, so he restrained his impulse and continued searching the surroundings for opportunities.

For several days in a row, Fang Bai managed to gather hundreds of Royal Grade cultivation resources and slew over a dozen spirit beasts equivalent to early or mid-Soul Severing stage, obtaining their inner cores.

This result satisfied Fang Bai, and he thought that with the plentiful Royal Grade cultivation resources he had previously gained, they might aid him in advancing to the Soul Severing realm.

Having been in the eighth level space of the Linglong Tower for an unknown duration, Fang Bai had yet to encounter Qingzhu Venerable or any other Soul Severing experts, realizing that aside from himself, there might be no others who had set foot in this eighth level space.

On this day, with a bounty of gains, Fang Bai began climbing the stairs leading to the ninth level space of the Linglong Tower, stopping at the twentieth step, where he refined the Royal Grade Spiritual Medicine he had gathered into Royal Grade Spirit Pills, consumed them, and sat cross-legged entering into a Cultivation State.

Three days later, when Fang Bai exited the Cultivation State, his spiritual energy, essence, and vigor were in excellent condition, with faint lights swirling around him, just half a step away from the Soul Severing realm.

Fang Bai took out dozens of Spirit Beast Inner Pills he had acquired, swallowing them all at once, and entered the Cultivation State once again.

The massive cultivation resources transformed into massive amounts of Spiritual Qi, surging and churning furiously within Fang Bai's body. Ultimately, like tamed wild horses, they were drawn into the Qi Sea, merging into each of the Nascent Souls.