

Doctor 1611

Chapter 1611: Soul Severing Realm! The Ninth Layer of Space!

Within Fang Bai's Qi Sea, it was like a vast starry sky, with seven Nascent Souls sitting in a circular formation, their eyes closed.

Each Nascent Soul represented a type of spiritual energy.

As a massive amount of spiritual energy poured into the Qi Sea, the seven Nascent Souls simultaneously began absorbing it.

When the absorbed spiritual energy reached a certain level, the forms of the seven Nascent Souls began to enlarge, and their previously illusory images gradually solidified.

This time, Fang Bai's cultivation consumed nearly all the cultivation resources within the Five Elements Space Ring, as well as absorbed a significant amount of spiritual energy from the world, finally reaching the requirements for advancing to the next level.

Seven waves of aura spread out like ripples, continuously radiating in all directions, flattening everything around.

With the disappearance of the fluctuations, everything in the world returned to tranquility.

The seven Nascent Souls within Fang Bai's Qi Sea transformed into Primordial Spirits, reaching the initial stage of the Soul Severing Realm.

After advancing, Fang Bai's body radiated brilliance, his skin became delicate like a baby's, as if he had undergone a metamorphosis, and his demeanor acquired an otherworldly quality, making him appear even younger than before.

The seven Primordial Spirits in the Qi Sea, at the moment Fang Bai opened his eyes, also suddenly opened their tightly closed eyes, with seven pillars of dazzling light of different colors merging into Fang Bai's gaze, shooting straight into the sky, seemingly piercing through it.

Fang Bai's body quivered slightly, and the seven Primordial Spirits left his Qi Sea, appearing in the eighth layer of space, sitting cross-legged around Fang Bai.

Fang Bai's gaze swept over the seven Primordial Spirits one by one and nodded in satisfaction, knowing that from this moment on, he had formally entered the Soul Severing Realm.

In this world, the vast majority of martial artists can only transform into one Primordial Spirit after entering the Soul Severing Realm.

However, Fang Bai embodies seven types of Innate Spiritual Roots with his Chaos True Body, and each Innate Spiritual Root can transform into one Primordial Spirit.

The Five Elements Spiritual Root plus the Wind and Thunder Spirit Roots make up seven kinds of spiritual roots, which can translate into seven Primordial Spirits.

After advancing to the Soul Severing Realm, with his body and seven Primordial Spirits, Fang Bai possesses great power, enabling him to crush opponents of the same level in a duel.

Facing a mid-level Soul Severing expert, he can also fight and claim victory.

Against a high-level Soul Severing expert, with the aid of a Spiritual Artifact, he can also prevail.

Facing a Soul Severing Perfection expert, he can contend with them.

In the eighth layer of space, after the advancement to the Soul Severing Realm, Fang Bai can withstand the pressure within the space more easily than his previous life's arrival at this level.

This advancement has given Fang Bai tremendous confidence, making him feel hopeful about challenging the ninth layer of the Linglong Tower.

After advancing, Fang Bai did not rush to leave the eighth layer of space but continued his cultivation while sitting cross-legged.

Three more days passed, and Fang Bai felt his realm was thoroughly consolidated, then exited his cultivation state.

Within the eighth layer of space, the pressure no longer posed any restrictions or constraints on Fang Bai. As he walked around, he felt light and at ease, able to wield his Spiritual Artifact and fly freely.

To test his combat power, Fang Bai charged around the eighth layer of space, actively seeking out challenges from Spirit Beasts residing in dangerous places.

Within the eighth layer of space, even the weakest Spirit Beasts had reached the Soul Severing Realm, while the strongest were at the Soul Severing Perfection Realm, akin to the massive skull within the great river.

Once again, during a battle with Spirit Beasts of the Soul Severing Perfection Realm, Fang Bai, albeit exerting every effort, still felt it challenging, unable to defeat them, yet no longer needed to hide from the skull in the river, instead able to alternatively attack and defend.

Although Fang Bai found it difficult to defeat the Spirit Beasts of the Soul Severing Perfection Realm, similarly, those Spirit Beasts also found it challenging to suppress him.

During the trials in the eighth layer of space, Fang Bai obtained many cultivation resources, including Royal Grade Green Wood Marrow, and thought that if he encountered Qingzhu Venerable, he would use the Green Wood Marrow to upgrade the Green Bamboo Fan for him, considering a shared bond of fate.

"It's time to take a look at the ninth layer."

After several days of trials within the eighth layer of space, Fang Bai finally arrived at the steps leading to the ninth layer of space, then, facing increasingly heavy pressure, he climbed one by one up the forty-nine steps, standing at the entrance to the ninth layer of space.

What surprised Fang Bai was that the scenery within the ninth layer differed entirely from the other eight layers.

In the ninth layer of space, everywhere was filled with scenes of thunder and lightning, with bolts striking down along with the sound of thunder, hitting many martial artists, rendering them illusionary.

Among those martial artists struck by lightning, some perished completely, reduced to ashes; while others resisted fiercely, successfully warding off the might of lightning, stepping onto the auspicious path to the Immortal Realm.

"So, the ninth layer of space is practicing the scenario of martial artists crossing the Ninefold Heavy Tribulations..."

Fang Bai gazed at the scene before him, feeling extremely familiar, and understood that the ninth layer of the Linglong Tower is not for martial artists to train, but rather for those climbing it to observe the scene of crossing the Ninefold Heavy Tribulations.

For Soul Severing experts, this is a rare opportunity, as once they break through to the Thunder Tribulation Realm, they will have a clear understanding, avoiding confusion when the time comes, and effectively responding to avoid ending up completely destroyed.

In the Three Thousand Great World, there are billions of martial artists, with Soul Severing Perfection experts advancing to the Thunder Tribulation Realm and undergoing the Ninefold Heavy Tribulations.

Among them, the majority fall under the tribulations, while only a few ultimately ascend to immortality.

Being able to witness the practice of tribulations as an observer in advance is of great benefit to experts.

And this may be the opportunity left for martial artists by the ninth layer of the Linglong Tower.

For Fang Bai, who personally experienced the Ninefold Heavy Tribulations in a previous life, this ninth layer holds little value.

Thinking of Wu De, Wind Roc, Qingzhu Venerable, and the brothers Hu Wei and Hu Zhuang, Fang Bai wondered which layer they had reached, so he returned to the eighth layer, continuing his search for Royal Grade cultivation resources to aid them.

Within the seventh layer of the Linglong Tower, Qingzhu Venerable was engaged in a fierce battle with a high-level Soul Severing Spirit Beast.

That Spirit Beast was a Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf.

The Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf had steel bones, a powerful body, and could emit a rain of spiritual energy arrows from its single eye, with extremely formidable attack power.

After a long fight with the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf, Qingzhu Venerable left several wounds on it, but his injuries were more serious, and his Spiritual Artifact, the Green Bamboo Fan, was severely clawed by the opponent, causing it to crack and significantly lowering his combat effectiveness, gradually losing the upper hand.

"Is my trial within the tower going to end here? Such a shame I can't get to the eighth layer to obtain Royal Grade cultivation resources!"

Seeing the continuous, relentless attacks from the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf, Qingzhu Venerable sighed softly, showing a hint of reluctance in his expression.

"I wonder how Brother Fang is faring right now."

Qingzhu Venerable suddenly thought of Fang Bai, wondering if that young fellow's combat power was comparable to his as a Soul Severing expert. If Fang Bai undertakes trials within this seventh layer of space, it would indeed be a significant opportunity.

Chapter 1612: Lending Qingzhu a Helping Hand

"Awooo!"

Suddenly, a wolf howl echoed. The single eye of the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf glimmered sharply, shooting a volley of arrows toward Qingzhu Venerable.

Just as Qingzhu Venerable waved the Green Bamboo Fan with all his might to fend off the arrow shower, the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf lunged forward sharply. When it got about a Zhang away from Qingzhu Venerable, its body twisted suddenly, and it lashed out its three wolf tails, each like a steel whip.

Three fierce green glows, each a Zhang long, roared with overwhelming force, sweeping horizontally at Qingzhu Venerable.

“Not good!”

Qingzhu Venerable cried out in shock inwardly.

He had just narrowly evaded the volley of arrows; there was no time left to fully counter these three long tails’ sweeping attack.

Out of options, he hurriedly formed a defense Qi shield around himself, bracing to endure the heavy blow of the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf.

“Bang!”

The three long tails of the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf easily shattered the defense Qi shield around Qingzhu Venerable, hitting him with a dull thud.

“Pfft!”

Qingzhu Venerable felt as if his body had been struck by the force of tens of thousands of pounds, his complexion turning pale immediately. Unable to suppress the violent surge of qi and blood within, he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood.

His body retreated by over ten Zhang by force, staggering a few steps before barely managing to stand. After a self-examination, he found himself gravely injured from this strike.

This grave injury reduced Qingzhu Venerable's combat power to less than half of his peak, and if the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf launched another full-force attack, he wouldn't be able to withstand it.

Though in the ninth level of the Linglong Tower, he wouldn't truly "perish," the thought of being about to be kicked out of the Linglong Tower and unable to continue training in the seventh-level space filled Qingzhu Venerable's heart with unwillingness.

With a helpless sigh, Qingzhu Venerable closed his eyes, deciding not to resist anymore.

However, as he waited for several breaths, the next wave of the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf's attacks, as he had imagined, did not follow, which puzzled him.

In the next moment, he sensed a familiar presence. His heart stirred, and when he opened his eyes, he saw Fang Bai, who had somehow positioned himself in front of him, standing between him and the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf, facing off against the beast.

"Fang... Brother Fang?"

Seeing Fang Bai's back, Qingzhu Venerable felt a surge of excitement for no reason.

Fang Bai turned his head slightly and said, "Senior, we meet again."

Qingzhu Venerable sized up Fang Bai, sensing the powerful aura within him, and exclaimed, "You've already reached the initial stage of the Soul Severing Realm? It seems you've had a great fortune during these days apart!"

Fang Bai smiled indifferently and said, "Not too bad! I lucked my way onto the eighth layer..."

"What?"

Qingzhu Venerable was so excited that he almost jumped up, exclaiming, "Really?"

Fang Bai was about to reply when Qingzhu Venerable suddenly shouted, "Watch out!"

Fang Bai felt a sudden gust behind him, pressure mounting rapidly, knowing it was an attack from the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf, so he responded with a palm strike.

The Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf was one of the smartest types among spirit beasts. When Fang Bai appeared, it knew it had met a formidable foe. Seeing Fang Bai turn to speak to Qingzhu Venerable, it immediately launched a sneak attack.

It repeated its old trick, using the same method it severely injured Qingzhu Venerable to deal with Fang Bai, but it underestimated how Fang Bai's strength had surpassed Qingzhu Venerable's, making its ambush ineffective.

Fang Bai's casual palm strike contained a wisp of Spirit Fire power that the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf couldn't withstand.

Fang Bai's palm wind quickly reached the target, enveloping the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf in scorching heat, instantly charring its fur.

In pain, the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf let out a wretched howl, shocked at how strong this human was, and seeing the unfavorable situation, it attempted to flee.

As Fang Bai turned, he swung the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, which he was holding, with the same motion.

"Whoosh!"

A sharp slicing sound cleaved through the air as the several-zhang-long blood-red blade light descended from the void, cutting through the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf's body.

The Blood-Drinking Mad Blade, having drunk the blood of numerous Soul Severing Realm spirit beasts in the eighth-level space, now wielded several times its former power.

With that one slash from Fang Bai, the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf, though it had a body strong as steel, was cleaved in half like cutting through melon, with its intestines spilled, immediately perishing with its life extinguished.

“Hiss...”

Qingzhu Venerable, witnessing this scene, couldn't help but take a sharp breath.

He had struggled against the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf for a long time but had not only failed to kill it, he had almost been defeated by it. Yet, Fang Bai, appearing out of nowhere, had effortlessly slain the beast with just one palm and one slash.

So, it seemed, Fang Bai's current strength far exceeded his? Qingzhu Venerable contemplated this.

Having slain the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf, Fang Bai saw the shocked expression on Qingzhu Venerable's face and, knowing what he was thinking, smiled and said, “If that Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf had not underestimated its enemy, it wouldn't have been so easy for me either.”

Saying this, Qingzhu Venerable found some sense in his words, yet he remained amazed at Fang Bai's rapid power advancement.

“Brother Fang, did you really ascend to the eighth level of the Linglong Tower?”

Qingzhu Venerable, watching Fang Bai collect the inner core of the Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf, couldn't help but ask again.

Fang Bai answered seriously, “Indeed.”

He continued, "I relied on the power of this Blood-Drinking Mad Blade to withstand the pressure of the steps leading to the eighth-level space; otherwise, I might not have been able to ascend!"

Qingzhu Venerable exclaimed enviously, "Your Spiritual Artifact is truly extraordinary!"

Sighing and smiling bitterly, he said, "Brother Fang, your training in the tower has been tremendously fruitful, making me quite envious. As for me... I came to train in the nine-story Linglong Tower, hoping to make it to the eighth level. But now, it seems like nothing but a distant dream, truly humbling!"

Suddenly recalling something, he added, "By the way, is it true that the cultivation resources in the eighth-level space are primarily Royal Grade?"

Fang Bai replied, "Indeed it is. Relying on the Royal Grade cultivation resources obtained from the eighth-level space, I managed to advance to the Soul Severing Realm."

Seeing the look of dismay on Qingzhu Venerable's face, Fang Bai smiled and said, "I found a piece of Royal Grade Green Wood Marrow in the eighth-level space. Senior, may I have your Green Bamboo Fan now?"

"You..."

Upon hearing this, Qingzhu Venerable, both surprised and delighted, exclaimed excitedly, "You want to refine the Green Bamboo Fan for me?"

Fang Bai nodded with a smile, "Honestly, I didn't expect to advance to the Soul Severing Realm. Now that I have, I am confident I can refine your Green Bamboo Fan into a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact."

Qingzhu Venerable was overjoyed, his voice trembling, "If my Green Bamboo Fan becomes a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact, then I might have a chance to ascend to the eighth-level space!"

Fang Bai said, "It's quite likely!"

Qingzhu Venerable suppressed his excitement, cupping his hands and bowing deeply to Fang Bai with a solemn voice, "Brother Fang, thank you. I, Qingzhu, will remember this favor."

Fang Bai nodded, taking the Green Bamboo Fan from Qingzhu Venerable's hands. He then produced a small piece of Royal Grade Green Wood Marrow and began refining it before Qingzhu Venerable's eyes.

Chapter 1613: Wu De's Triumph

Under normal circumstances, an Artifact Refiner uses ordinary fire for refining Spiritual Artifacts.

However, the current Fang Bai is able to use the power of Spiritual Fire to refine Spiritual Artifacts.

As a result, in terms of both speed and quality of artifact refining, Fang Bai far surpasses Artifact Refiners of the same level.

The Green Bamboo Fan, fused with Azurewood Marrow, floats in the air before Fang Bai, rolling and spinning under the control of Fang Bai's Divine Sense, wrapped in Spiritual Fire.

After a hundred breaths, Qingzhu Venerable, standing to the side, at Fang Bai's indication, sprays a mouthful of essence blood imbued with his own Divine Sense onto the Green Bamboo Fan, which then radiates tens of thousands of green glows, completing the grand ritual of refining.

"Royal Grade... indeed it's Royal Grade..."

Holding the refined Green Bamboo Fan in his hand, Qingzhu Venerable's Divine Sense enters the fan, resonates with the Artifact Spirit born within, and discovers that the Green Bamboo Fan has indeed undergone an earth-shattering change, its power incomparable to before the refining.

He tries to gently wave the Green Bamboo Fan in his hand, and from the flat ground arises a fierce gale, sweeping several large stones weighing tens of thousands of pounds and several towering ancient trees into the air, only to drop them dozens of feet away.

"If I had this Spiritual Artifact in hand earlier, that Three-Tailed One-Eyed Wolf wouldn't have been my match!"

Qingzhu Venerable gently strokes the Green Bamboo Fan in his hand, laughing excitedly, and says to Fang Bai, "Brother Fang, I really owe you a great deal of thanks."

Fang Bai said, "Senior..."

"Don't call me Senior anymore."

Qingzhu Venerable shook his head and said solemnly, "Although your cultivation level is not yet as high as mine, your combat power has already caught up. In this world where strength reigns supreme, you're so strong that I am no longer qualified to regard myself as your senior. From now on, why don't we address each other as brothers?"

Fang Bai did not bother with unnecessary modesty and responded, "In that case, I'll call you 'Qingzhu Brother'."

Qingzhu Venerable, being a straightforward person, did not feel the slightest discomfort with Fang Bai's change of address, and laughed heartily in agreement.

Fang Bai said, "Now that Qingzhu Brother has the assistance of a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact, you can try to break through to the eighth space. If you can get up there and train a bit, you might gain even greater opportunities, and advancing to Soul Severing Perfection is not impossible."

Before Fang Bai appeared, Qingzhu Venerable had already despaired of reaching the eighth floor of the Linglong Tower, but now he was reignited with confidence and fighting spirit. He thought that no matter what, he had to give it a try; if, as Fang Bai said, he succeeded in reaching the eighth floor and gained great opportunities there, he might really have the chance to advance to the Soul Severing Perfection realm.

Currently, his cultivation level still has a long way to go before reaching Soul Severing Perfection, but advancing to that realm would be a leap in strength and allow him to touch the edge of the Thunder Tribulation Realm, which is an exhilarating prospect.

At the moment, Fang Bai and Qingzhu Venerable separated once more, with Qingzhu Venerable heading up to break into the eighth space, while Fang Bai continued downwards, searching for Wu De, Feng Peng, and the Hu brothers.

Fang Bai made his way down and finally saw Wu De, Feng Peng, and the Hu brothers on the third floor of the Linglong Tower.

At this moment, Wu De and others were engaged in a fierce battle with a group of Nascent Soul Realm Spirit Beasts. They were shouting, with eyes wide open, their skin torn and their bodies covered in blood.

Among the Spirit Beasts besieging them, a few had perished.

However, in the battle with the Spirit Beasts, Wu De and others, who were few in number, had completely fallen into a disadvantage. If this continued, in less than a hundred breaths, they might be overwhelmed by the Spirit Beasts, thus automatically ejected from the Linglong Tower, losing the opportunity to continue training.

Fang Bai's gaze swept over Wu De and others and found that Wu De had already reached the high ranks of the Golden Core.

Evidently, during the training on the first three floors, Wu De, who possesses a Dual Attribute Innate Spiritual Root and an Extraordinary Holy Body, benefited the most and progressed the fastest.

However, Fang Bai also knew that with Wu De's previous cultivation, without the help of Feng Peng and the Hu brothers, he wouldn't have made it this far.

So Wu De, upon advancing to this point, should be most grateful to Feng Peng and the Hu brothers.

As for Feng Peng, he also advanced from the initial stages of the Nascent Soul to the middle stages, having improved by a small realm, which is also a good gain.

Regarding the Hu brothers, although their strength has improved somewhat, their cultivation has still remained in the middle stages of the Nascent Soul.

Perhaps it was the thought of their bet with the Lion Clan disciple, Huang Paoxiao, worrying they might cause Fang Bai to lose his Blood Blade Spirit Weapon, which made the two brothers appear somewhat anxious during the battle. Though they fought fiercely and killed some Spirit Beasts, they sustained heavier injuries themselves.

"Whoosh!"

"Whoosh!"

"Whoosh!"

...

More than ten blood streaks suddenly shot out, and among the Spirit Beasts besieging Wu De and others, more than ten bled in the sky, their heads and bodies separated, perishing on the spot.

Wu De and others were in the midst of a fierce battle when they suddenly felt the pressure around them disappear. They were startled and soon saw Fang Bai, holding the Blood Blade, walking step by step towards them with the blade still stained with fresh blood.

"Fang Bai!"

Wu De wiped some Spirit Beast blood splattered on his face, stepped forward excitedly and said, "Did you kill all these Spirit Beasts? You have gained some great opportunity and your strength has improved again!"

"Master!"

"Brother Fang!"

Feng Peng and the Hu brothers followed Wu De and stepped forward one after another.

Feng Peng, knowing his master's strength, naturally had no doubts about his master killing these Spirit Beasts, but Wu De and the Hu brothers found it hard to believe.

After all, the ten or so Spirit Beasts that attacked them were all at the high stage of the Nascent Soul, and Fang Bai was only at the Nascent Soul Perfection stage. How could he, with his own power, kill so many powerful Spirit Beasts in an instant?

But apart from them, there was only Fang Bai on the scene, and the bloodstains on the Blood Blade in Fang Bai's hand explained everything, forcing them to believe.

"Wu De, not bad! In this nine-story Linglong Tower, not only have you formed your Golden Core, but you've also reached its high rank!"

Fang Bai patted Wu De on the shoulder and said with a smile.

Wu De chuckled, his face full of pride.

"If not for Feng Peng and the Hu brothers' help, you probably wouldn't have been able to form your Golden Core, right?"

Seeing Wu De looking so smug, Fang Bai couldn't help but tease him.

Wu De's face turned red, and seeing Feng Peng and the Hu brothers smiling at him, he said with an awkward laugh, "Of course! Of course! I owe them a great deal this time and will certainly repay them in the future!"

Hu Wei laughed heartily and said, "Actually, we also owe Brother Wu a great deal this time. During the previous training, Brother Wu, with his keen sense of Spiritual Energy, found a lot of Spiritual Medicine, and we all gained greatly."

"Overpraised... overpraised, I just found those Spiritual Medicines by luck..."

Wu De said, feigning modesty, waving his hand, but his chubby face was already beaming with a smile.

Seeing that Wu De and the four others were heavily injured, with fresh blood still gushing from their bodies, Fang Bai casually took out four bottles of Spirit Pills and tossed them to them, saying, "After taking these Spirit Pills, your injuries will heal quickly."

Wu De and the others, being knowledgeable, saw the Spirit Pill exuding a rich fragrance and abundant Spiritual Energy, and its scent alone invigorated them. Although they couldn't discern its grade, they knew it was an extremely superior pill, so they took it as instructed, then sat cross-legged to cultivate and recover their bodies.

Chapter 1614: Leaving the Tower

Fang Bai gifted Wu De and others spirit pills that he refined with royal grade cultivation resources in the eighth layer of space.

In the eyes of a Nascent Soul Realm expert, royal grade spirit pills are absolutely coveted treasures for cultivation—obtaining just one is remarkable, and getting a whole bottle would require exceptional fortune.

Wu De and others did not know that the bottle of spirit pills Fang Bai gave them were all royal grade spirit pills, otherwise they would not dare to or be willing to consume the whole bottle at once, thinking it was a wasteful extravagance.

Fang Bai knew that after consuming a bottle of royal grade spirit pills, the medicinal power would be too intense for Wu De and others, far beyond what their bodies could withstand. Thus, he stayed by their side.

As soon as he noticed anyone's energy spiking, with their meridians near the breaking point, Fang Bai would intervene quickly, striking a palm on them to suppress the raging energy, then guiding it into the Qi Sea.

It can be imagined that, without Fang Bai present, Wu De and others who consumed a bottle of royal grade spirit pills might have suffered serious injuries due to their meridians bursting.

Wu De and others entered a cultivation state, and not until the third day did there start to be some movement.

Strong energy waves surged from within the four of them, spreading all around, signaling the advancement of a Martial Artist.

With the help of royal grade spirit pills and the strand of spiritual energy Fang Bai imparted into their bodies, in the past three days, each of Wu De and others advanced two small realms.

Among them, Wu De advanced from Golden Core to Nascent Soul Formation, successfully stepping into the Nascent Soul Realm, becoming the biggest winner among the four.

Wind Roc also advanced from Nascent Soul primary rank to Nascent Soul high rank.

The Hu brothers advanced from Nascent Soul mid rank to Nascent Soul perfection, which was beyond their imagination before, so much that when they opened their eyes, they were overjoyed and wanted to kneel in gratitude before Fang Bai, but Fang Bai stopped them.

The advancement to Nascent Soul perfection for these two brothers is of great significance, not only giving them hope of winning the bet with Lion Clan disciple Huang Paoxiao, but also elevating their status significantly upon returning to the clan.

In Tiger Clan, the elder brother Hu Wei had originally been highly hoped by his father to inherit his legacy and assume the role of clan leader, yet Hu Wei's cultivation level had stagnated over the years, eventually surpassed by a cousin in the clan, making that cousin the most likely candidate for the next clan leader.

However, Hu Wei's recent advancement to Nascent Soul perfection again surpasses that cousin. One can imagine the look on that cousin's face when Hu Wei returns.

Thinking about this, Hu Wei felt a great sense of satisfaction and became even more grateful to Fang Bai.

"I estimate that the nine-layer Linglong Tower will close soon. Hurry and seize this opportunity to continue cultivating to stabilize the freshly advanced realm."

Fang Bai noticed Wu De and others were excitedly losing their composure, and sternly reminded them.

Although Wu De and others have advanced two small realms, this advancement was not completely natural but reliant on external forces, belonging to a "pulling up shoots to help them grow" style of advancement. Thus they need a period of cultivation to thoroughly stabilize their realm, otherwise, if met with strong opposition and suffering heavy injury, they risk being reverted to their original state.

Wu De and others naturally understand this principle. Upon hearing Fang Bai's words, they immediately contained their excitement and continued cultivating while the Linglong Tower was still open, taking advantage of the abundant spiritual energy in the space.

Fang Bai sat cross-legged on a large rock nearby to protect them.

In a flash, nine days passed. During these nine days, many experts passed through here, including Lion Clan disciple Huang Paoxiao, who had a bet with the Hu brothers.

Originally, Huang Paoxiao's cultivation was one small realm above the Hu brothers, but upon encountering them again, he couldn't sense their cultivation levels, realizing they had a huge opportunity and their cultivation now surpassed his, causing him great anxiety.

He and several Lion Clan disciples wanted to disturb the Hu brothers, to sabotage their cultivation, but were frightened away by Fang Bai's imposing presence, and had to retreat far away.

They wanted to escape the Linglong Tower and return to the Lion Clan territory for shelter, but before the ninety-nine days are up, no one can leave, leaving them terrified and uneasy.

Huang Paoxiao still remembered his bet with the Hu brothers. If his prowess lagged behind the Hu brothers in this trial, he would have to lose his Split-Mountain Fork spiritual artifact to them.

Though the Split-Mountain Fork is only a middle king-grade spiritual artifact and not the Lion Clan's prized treasure, it is still a top-tier item in the clan's collection. Losing it, especially to their longstanding rivals from Tiger Clan, would certainly earn him a severe reprimand from the clan leader upon returning.

Nine days later, when Wu De and others opened their eyes again, the sparkle in their eyes had faded, making them appear less sharp and more tranquil.

"Congratulations to you all."

Fang Bai noticed Wu De and others had stabilized their realms, and said with a smile.

Wu De, Wind Roc, and the Hu brothers exchanged smiles and were about to speak when suddenly the space around them began to shake violently, as if struck by a powerful earthquake.

"Don't panic, the nine-layer Linglong Tower is closing."

Fang Bai stated calmly, drawing on his past life experience.

The trembling of space grew more intense, then suddenly the scene before them twisted, and the next moment Fang Bai and the others felt themselves afloat, hovering outside the nine-layer Linglong Tower.

Alongside them experiencing this were several thousand other experts.

These thousands of experts all possessed cultivation levels from Nascent Soul mid rank and above, managing to endure until the final closure of the Linglong Tower.

But the other tens of thousands of experts had already "fallen" within the tower and were expelled out before then.

The thousands of experts floating in mid-air each employed movement techniques, descending to the ground, then turning to gaze at the ancient tower exuding a primordial aura, feeling a spontaneous sense of reverence.

The final emerging thousands of experts all harvested some rewarding experiences in the tower, evident from the smiles on their faces.

Only Huang Paoxiao and a few Lion Clan disciples appeared grim, as if they had suffered a great loss.

"Huang Paoxiao! Where's the Split-Mountain Fork?"

Just as Huang Paoxiao and Lion Clan disciples were about to slip away, a voice called out, followed by two figures blocking their path.

Seeing Hu Wei and Hu Zhuang brothers, Huang Paoxiao's expression turned even more somber.

"Haha, a bet is a bet! Huang Paoxiao, you're not planning to go back on it, are you?"

Hu Wei watched Huang Paoxiao's expression and felt utterly delighted, sneering as he spoke.

Huang Paoxiao couldn't detect the Hu brothers' cultivation, knowing their strength had far exceeded that of his group of Lion Clan disciples. Unable to be aggressive, he restrained his anger and replied, "Who said I'm reneging? My Lion Clan has more treasures than countable, a mere Split-Mountain Fork, just take it!"

He then took out his Split-Mountain Fork spiritual artifact and tossed it to Hu Wei opposite him; though outwardly indifferent, inside he felt deep regret.

Chapter 1615: What Makes Him Worthy

The brothers Hu Wei and Hu Zhuang, with the Split-Mountain Fork in their possession, did not continue to trouble Huang Paoxiao and the other Lion Clan disciples, merely mocking them with a few words before waving them off to leave.

“Big brother, did you notice the venomous look in Huang Paoxiao’s eyes before he left?”

Hu Zhuang, watching the departing backs of Huang Paoxiao and the other Lion Clan disciples, sneered as he spoke.

Hu Wei laughed coldly, “So what? Our Tiger Clan and the Lion Clan have never coexisted peacefully! At worst, this matter may spark a new war between the two clans!”

Hu Zhuang nodded in agreement, “The Lion Clan is bloodthirsty and warlike, and this time with Huang Paoxiao at a major disadvantage, the Lion Clan certainly won’t let this go. Once we return to our clan, we must prepare for the impending battle!”

Hu Wei nodded in agreement and then turned his gaze to Fang Bai, Wu De, and Wind Roc, extending an invitation, “If you three have the time, why not come to our Tiger Clan Territory and be our guests for a few days?”

“Yes, come visit! Our Tiger Clan is always warm and welcoming. If you come, you’ll be the most honored guests and will receive the grandest welcome!”

Hu Zhuang enthusiastically added.

Wu De, having fought alongside the Hu brothers and developed a strong friendship, was the first to accept their generous invitation, and eagerly persuaded Fang Bai and Wind Roc to join him.

Wind Roc always deferred to Fang Bai’s decisions, so it naturally did not object to what Fang Bai said.

“Alright then.”

Facing the enthusiastic invitation from the Hu brothers and Wu De’s persuasion, Fang Bai found it hard to refuse and nodded in agreement.

Fang Bai thought to himself that he had left the Nine Heavens Immortal Palace to search for his long-lost confidants, friends, and family scattered across the three thousand worlds, and making more friends could naturally help in finding them.

“Brother Fang!”

At this moment, Qingzhu Venerable approached from a distance, visibly excited, and clasped his fists in gratitude toward Fang Bai, “Thank you.”

Fang Bai glanced up and down at Qingzhu Venerable, knowing that he had successfully reached the eighth layer of the Linglong Tower and advanced to the realm of Soul Severing Perfection. He smiled slightly and clasped his fists in return, “Congratulations, Brother Qingzhu, my felicitations to you.”

Their conversation seemed baffling to Wu De, Wind Roc, and the Hu brothers, who did not understand what it meant.

After chatting for a while, Qingzhu Venerable asked about Fang Bai’s future plans and, upon learning that Fang Bai was searching for his friends and family, he inquired about their names and characteristics, committing them to memory. With a serious expression, he stated to Fang Bai, “I have traveled extensively across the three thousand worlds and made many friends. I will mobilize them to help you in your search. I’m confident that it won’t be long before we hear good news.”

Upon hearing this, Fang Bai naturally expressed his gratitude.

“Fang Bai, what was it that you and Qingzhu Venerable talked about just now? Why did he thank you? What did you congratulate him for? And, you address each other as brothers... he’s a Soul Severing high-rank expert!”

After Qingzhu Venerable left, Wu De finally moved closer to Fang Bai and asked in a low voice.

Fang Bai replied, “He wishes to call me brother! What’s wrong, do you have a problem with that?”

“Your strength surpasses mine, how dare I have an issue? Sigh, when will I, this humble Taoist Master, be able to chat and call such a Soul Severing high-rank expert my brother?”

Wu De sighed with longing.

Fang Bai said, “Wu De, you are mistaken. Qingzhu Venerable is no longer just a high-rank expert; he’s reached the eighth layer of space and has attained the realm of Soul Severing Perfection.”

Upon hearing this, both Wu De and the others were utterly shocked.

A Soul Severing Perfection expert’s strength is incomparable to that of a high-rank expert, tantamount to touching the edge of the Thunder Tribulation Realm.

Although the three thousand worlds have countless Martial Artists, those who achieve such cultivation levels are rare, hardly one in millions.

Progressing further from the realm of Soul Severing Perfection to the Thunder Tribulation Realm means stepping onto the pinnacle of power in this world, truly earning the title of a strong one.

To think Fang Bai was on brotherly terms with such a Soul Severing Perfection expert, the fortune of it all was enviable.

“Had we known earlier, we should have invited Qingzhu Venerable as our guest in the Tiger Clan Territory!”

Hu Wei, looking regretful, smacked his thigh ruefully.

Hu Zhuang agreed, “Yes, if we could invite Qingzhu Venerable, let’s see how the Lion Clan would dare to act arrogantly when they find out!”

Seeing both brothers pounding their chests and remorseful, Wu De couldn’t help but laugh, “Alright, you two don’t despair. It doesn’t matter if you can’t invite Qingzhu Venerable when you can invite Fang Bai.

If you spread the word that Fang Bai is as close as a brother to Qingzhu Venerable, won't that be a deterrent against your enemies?"

Hu Wei's eyes lit up, "Brother Fang's words are very wise!"

Without delay, Fang Bai, Wu De, Wind Roc, and the Hu brothers set off together, employing their Spiritual Artifact to fly towards the Tiger Clan Territory.

When they had traveled thousands of miles away from the Linglong Tower, Fang Bai suddenly stopped his advance and said to Wu De, Wind Roc, and the Hu brothers, "You go ahead, I have some matters to attend to. I'll find you at the Tiger Clan Territory afterward."

Wu De, seeing Fang Bai's mysterious demeanor, couldn't help his curiosity, "What's going on that you can't share with us?"

Hu Wei smiled, "Brother Wu, Brother Fang must have something important. Let's not pry. Let's go, I'll treat you and Brother Wind Roc to the best Thousand-Year Fruit Wine in our Tiger Clan Territory!"

At the mention of "Thousand-Year Fruit Wine," Wu De immediately drooled, no longer concerning himself with Fang Bai and Wind Roc, instead eagerly inquiring about the wine details. Then, with eyebrows raised in joy, he called upon Wind Roc, leaving with the Hu brothers as a stream of light.

"Two old scoundrels with no sense of propriety, they actually joined forces to chase after me!"

Watching Wu De and the others leave, Fang Bai turned back, a murderous gleam in his eyes and a mocking smile on his face as he muttered.

Floating in the air, Fang Bai remained imperious and unmoving until, several breaths later, two streaks of light flew over and stopped several dozen feet in front of him.

The two streaks of light were Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, the two Soul Severing high-rank experts Fang Bai had encountered within the nine-layer Linglong Tower.

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze had been training in the seventh layer and ultimately failed to reach the eighth. When they were expelled from the tower, they were secretly surprised to find that Qingzhu Venerable, formerly equal to them in cultivation, had advanced a minor realm.

They witnessed Qingzhu Venerable thanking Fang Bai and forming a brotherly bond, filling them with doubt. Fang Bai had only just progressed to Soul Severing's initial stage, so what right did he have to be called a brother by Qingzhu Venerable, a Soul Severing Perfection expert?

The power disparity was immense, yet why did Qingzhu Venerable express gratitude toward Fang Bai?

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze speculated on various possibilities.

Eventually, they unanimously concluded that Fang Bai's Blood Blade must be a Royal Grade Spiritual Artifact. It was likely that Qingzhu Venerable used the Blood Blade to withstand the mighty pressure, enabling him to enter the eighth layer's space and ultimately, advance his cultivation.

Chapter 1616: Contest for the Blade

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze tracked Fang Bai all the way here because of that Blood Blade.

Yet, there is only one Blood Blade, and both of them desire it; if one person obtains it, the other will surely fight to the death, inevitably leading to a life-and-death battle.

So the two agreed to first capture Fang Bai and acquire the Blood Blade; whoever could erase Fang Bai's Divine Sense from the Blood Blade and control it skillfully would get to keep it.

The one who obtains the Blood Blade must provide enough cultivation resources as compensation to the one who doesn't get it.

With their agreement in place, both pursued with their own thoughts.

"Kid, are you waiting for us?"

Qu Rui saw Fang Bai suspended in mid-air, facing them with a mocking smile at the corner of his mouth. First, he was taken aback, then burst into laughter.

"I think he knows he can't escape, so he's just waiting here to die!"

Zhu Jingze laughed with a "hehe".

Qu Rui said, "Alright Zhu, stop scaring him. As long as he is willing to hand over the Blood Blade, we can spare his life."

Zhu Jingze said, "That depends on whether he cooperates. If he obediently hands over the Blood Blade, we can spare his life! If he tries any tricks, we'll obliterate his body and soul!"

Qu Rui said, "Kid, hand over the Blood Blade, and I'll give you a King Grade Superior Spirit Artifact. Or the same grade cultivation resources! You can choose one!"

Qu Rui said this because, despite Fang Bai's Soul Severing initial cultivation level, he gave Qu Rui a profound feeling, especially the mocking smile on Fang Bai's lips, making him slightly nervous.

Moreover, he deduced Fang Bai's Blood Blade to be a Royal Grade Spirit Artifact, which greatly aids a Martial Artist's combat power, resulting in some apprehension. He thought it would be best to exchange cultivation resources for the Blood Blade without bloodshed.

Zhu Jingze, lacking Qu Rui's depth and being more impulsive, said, "Qu, why talk nonsense with him? Just kill him with one palm and snatch his Space Ring! The Blood Blade must be in his ring!"

Qu Rui looked at Fang Bai, smiling and asking, "Well? Have you decided? Fight or peace, it's up to you in one thought!"

Fang Bai's expression changed slightly, seeming somewhat fearful, sighed, "I intended to fight you to the death to defend this Royal Grade Spirit Artifact of mine, but considering that I'm no match for you... fine, you want the Blood Blade, take it!"

Saying this, with a flash of red light, the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade appeared in his right hand.

"But, there is only one Blood Blade, so who should I give it to? If I give it to this one, what if that one wants to kill me?"

Fang Bai asked anxiously.

Zhu Jingze looked at the Blood Blade in his hand, eyes gleaming, waved him over eagerly, "Just give the Blood Blade to me! I swear on my honor, neither of us will harm you!"

Fang Bai pursed his lips, thinking to himself, you old rascal, what honor do you have? But he wouldn't say this aloud, so he looked at Qu Rui and asked, "Really?"

Qu Rui's eyes flickered with a bright light, then nodded, "We keep our word. As long as you hand over the Blood Blade, you can leave."

"Great! Catch!"

Fang Bai raised his right hand, and the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade flew toward Zhu Jingze, reaching him in the blink of an eye.

Zhu Jingze was overjoyed, reaching out to catch it.

At that moment, a strong sense of danger hit. Qu Rui, standing beside Zhu Jingze, barely ten yards away, turned suddenly, a black long blade appearing from nowhere in his hand, slashing toward Zhu Jingze like a black lightning strike.

The black long blade was made from Extraterrestrial Crow Meteorite Iron fused with dozens of rare materials from the Great World, heavy and incredibly sharp—Qu Rui's personal Spirit Artifact, a King Grade Superior. Qu Rui rarely revealed it, but once drawn, it would taste blood.

Since Qu Rui crafted this Black Blade Spirit Instrument, countless strong ones had died under it.

"You treacherous old fool!"

Zhu Jingze never imagined Qu Rui would suddenly attack and do so with full force, clearly having plotted against him long in advance, realizing too late he was deceived.

Seeing the black lightning strike down, Zhu Jingze cursed, giving up on the Blood Blade, retreating rapidly, immediately distancing himself from the Blood Blade by over ten yards.

In that instant, the Blood Blade fell into Qu Rui's hands.

"Zhu, you're too naive when it comes to scheming! Haha, this Blood Blade is mine now!"

Qu Rui held the Black Blade in one hand and the Blood Blade in the other, thoroughly elated, unable to contain his triumphant laughter.

Zhu Jingze watched the Blood Blade, which should have been his, now in Qu Rui's hand, seething with rage, shouted angrily, calling forth a pair of Iron Hammer Spirit Instruments, striking at Qu Rui furiously.

His pair of hammers were also King Grade Superior Spirit Instruments, weighing over ten thousand pounds together, immensely powerful, creating gales that made Qu Rui's clothes flutter wildly.

"Clang!"

Against Zhu Jingze, an equally strong opponent, Qu Rui dared not be careless, raising the Black Blade in his left hand to block forcefully, causing sparks to fly and spiritual energy to spread dozens of yards around.

Since Qu Rui blocked single-handedly, he inevitably suffered a minor setback, his figure retreating further back.

"I'm done playing with you!"

Intending to take the Blood Blade and find a place to refine it, dealing with Zhu Jingze later, Qu Rui threw the Blood Blade into the Space Ring and fled.

Zhu Jingze was furious to the point of madness, wishing to eat him alive, refusing to let him go. He shouted, "Stop, you old thief!" and chased after him like a shooting star.

The two high-ranking Soul Severing experts fought over the Blood Blade, leaving its original owner, Fang Bai, aside, no longer paying him any attention.

In their chase and escape, neither paid heed to Fang Bai, following at a leisurely pace with an amused smile on his lips.

After a thousand miles, seeing he couldn't shake off Zhu Jingze, Qu Rui turned to Zhu Jingze, "Wait! Zhu, I'll give you all the cultivation resources in my Space Ring, and I'll keep the Blood Blade. How's that?"

Zhu Jingze, feeling deceived and deeply resentful, only wanted to reclaim the Blood Blade, and retorted angrily, "Old thief, you wish! If you don't give me the Blood Blade, I'll fight you to the death!"

Qu Rui flared up as well, sneering, "Think I'm afraid of you? Come on, let's fight for three hundred rounds, and see who kills whom!"

As they spoke, they each summoned their Spirit Instruments, preparing to clash in mid-air for a grand duel.

Fang Bai hid his aura, standing miles away on a mountain peak, ingeniously avoiding their Divine Sense probe. Seeing them fighting again, he thought, "Fight! Just fight! It'd be best if both are defeated, saving me the effort!"

Chapter 1617: Primordial Spirit Detonation

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, these two high-rank Soul Severing experts, launched a fierce battle with all their might to seize Fang Bai's Blood-Drinking Mad Blade.

They speculated that Qingzhu Venerable previously relied on Fang Bai's Blood Blade to reach the eighth level of the Linglong Tower and thereby advance to Soul Severing Perfection. They thought if they could obtain the Blood Blade, they might also reach the stature of Qingzhu Venerable when the Linglong Tower reopens in ten years.

In the realm of martial artists, after reaching Soul Severing realm, further advancement becomes exponentially difficult, especially for prodigies like Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, whose cultivation levels have reached their limits due to innate constraints. Advancing further is extremely challenging, even after ten, twenty years or even longer; they might still fail to reach the next level.

However, if they could seize a tremendous opportunity to break free from the shackles hindering their advancement, they might still ascend. Achieving Soul Severing Perfection would grant them an additional sixty years of life, naturally an immense allure, compelling them to risk their lives to obtain the Blood Blade.

Fang Bai stood proudly atop a distant mountain peak with his hands clasped behind his back, his eyes shining like electricity, watching the epic battle between the two high-rank Soul Severing experts, like a seasoned hunter awaiting the chance to deliver a fatal strike.

Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze, one was cold, the other irritable, and during the fight, only Zhu Jingze's angry shouts and curses were heard incessantly while Qu Rui responded silently, his expression as icy as his demeanor.

In the eyes of others, Zhu Jingze's momentum was unrivaled, relentlessly suppressing Qu Rui, and it seemed likely that Qu Rui was heading for defeat.

But from Fang Bai's perspective, Zhu Jingze's fierce and initial momentum could not inflict any substantial damage on Qu Rui; instead, it was wasting his own strength and spiritual energy.

On the contrary, although Qu Rui mostly remained defensive, he was secretly amassing power. Once he counterattacked, it would be irresistibly fierce, and hence the ultimate loser would certainly be Zhu Jingze.

Yet, who wins or loses is of no concern to Fang Bai.

What Fang Bai wants are the lives of both of them.

Fang Bai dislikes slaughter, but for those who dare covet his life, he doesn't mind becoming Death incarnate.

"Bang!"

The spiritual artifacts of Qu Rui and Zhu Jingze collided in mid-air, and the powerful shockwave forced both to retreat tens of meters.

Qu Rui stood proudly like a pine, tightly grasping the Black Blade while looking at Zhu Jingze with a sneering smile full of disdain.

Zhu Jingze's hand holding the hammer trembled slightly, a trickle of blood dripped from the corner of his mouth, and on closer inspection, a crack appeared on his hammer.

Clearly, this time Zhu Jingze suffered a significant setback.

"Give me the Blood Blade, or fight me to the death!"

Zhu Jingze raised the iron hammer high, fiercely staring at Qu Rui as he shouted threateningly.

The powerful pressure and Killing Qi released from his hammer made Qu Rui's breath constrict.

"Want the Blood Blade? Hahaha..."

Qu Rui laughed heartily at the sky, his gaze fierce as he said, "Then come and take it with your skills!"

Zhu Jingze let out a strange cry, bellowing, "Qu Rui, you old scoundrel, I'm fighting you to the death!"

His killing intent surged, and he threw the iron hammer upward, instantly enlarging it dozens of times, crashing down on Qu Rui like a small mountain.

In previous exchanges, Zhu Jingze aimed for a quick victory, his relentless attacks exhausting nearly half his strength and spiritual energy. Knowing he couldn't match the power-preserved Qu Rui, he suddenly activated his body's potential, boosting his combat ability by thirty percent.

Seeing the hammer approaching, Qu Rui knew any carelessness might turn him into minced meat, and he felt a chill in his heart, wildly slashing upward with the Black Blade to weave an impenetrable Defense Qi Shield above his head.

"Ding ding ding..."

Qu Rui's knife mesh met Zhu Jingze's hammer, producing a clear, resonant sound like pearls falling on jade plates, which shook the heart and churned the blood.

Though Zhu Jingze's assault was wild, this strike was blocked hard by Qu Rui.

"Zhu old thief, taste my blade!"

Qu Rui sensed Zhu Jingze's all-out strike, knowing it was time to counterattack. The opportunity was rare, so he slashed with the Black Blade like lightning, launching a series of assaults like tides, enveloping Zhu Jingze completely.

Zhu Jingze could inflict no harm on Qu Rui with his strike; his vitality was depleted. Despite offsetting Qu Rui's chain of attacks, several wounds appeared on his body as well, staining half of his garb red with blood.

"Ah!"

Zhu Jingze, undefeated through the years, yet today was beaten heavily by Qu Rui. Covered in wounds, he was exceedingly angry, roaring, and frenetically charging at Qu Rui with his partly damaged hammer.

Knowing his current state meant he couldn't overcome Qu Rui using normal combat, he resorted to fighting to the death, hoping to force Qu Rui to retreat, thereby seizing a sliver of hope.

Martial artist duels, especially between those of the same rank, dread encountering those unafraid of death.

"Old scoundrel, you lunatic!"

Under Zhu Jingze's reckless offensive, Qu Rui was forced to retreat repeatedly, shifted from advantage to disadvantage, becoming angry.

"Since you wish to die, I shall grant your wish!"

Qu Rui forced himself to calm down, employing the Art of Wandering Combat to shake off Zhu Jingze's close attacks, seeking the chance to counterattack and soon regained the upper hand.

To avoid prolonged uncertainty, Qu Rui endured injuries himself and left several deep, visible wounds on Zhu Jingze's body, wreaking significant havoc.

Zhu Jingze's entrails spilled out, his left leg severed by Qu Rui's Black Blade, diminishing his combat power by over half, leaving him unable to resistance Qu Rui's attacks.

"Qu Rui, if I die, you won't fare any better!"

Zhu Jingze shouted vehemently, his eyes bloodshot, and his body swelled rapidly at an eye-popping speed.

"Insane... this old thief has genuinely gone mad..."

Sensing the frenzy emanating from Zhu Jingze, knowing he was preparing Primordial Spirit Detonation, Qu Rui's pupils shrank in horror, abandoning the intention to seize his Spatial Ring, and retreated explosively.

"Bang!"

A thunderous noise erupted as Qu Rui retreated a hundred meters away and Zhu Jingze's body exploded, the insane and powerful shockwave expanding toward surrounding space.

Within a thousand-meter radius centered around Zhu Jingze, the sky darkened, and space trembled incessantly; all vegetation on nearby mountain peaks was flattened, leaving bare land.

The self-detonation of a high-rank Soul Severing expert exceeds the power of a Nascent Soul Expert's self-detonation by tenfold.

Though Qu Rui retreated swiftly and had the Qi Shield protecting him, he was heavily damaged by the powerful shockwave generated by Zhu Jingze's detonation.

His clothes were torn, hair disheveled, bleeding from seven orifices, utterly miserable, knowing recovery wouldn't be possible for three to five months after this battle.

A streak of blood light plummeted from high above.

Qu Rui's eyes concentrated, only then realizing his Spatial Ring had shattered during Zhu Jingze's Primordial Spirit Detonation, and the Blood Blade he acquired slipped out of the Spatial Ring, falling toward the ground.

Qu Rui descended, grabbed it, and held it in his hand, exalted and unable to suppress his laughter.

Chapter 1618: Tiger Clan Territory

"This Blood Blade did not come easily; from this moment, it's mine!"

Qu Rui grasped the Blood Blade, laughing to himself.

Just as he was about to lower his head to examine the Blood Blade closely, it suddenly trembled violently. Killing aura flooded the air, and it flew out of his hand, standing upright in the sky. Then, like the scythe of the Grim Reaper, it slashed horizontally toward his neck.

Qu Rui could never have anticipated that the Blood Blade would attack of its own accord. He was so excited and thrilled to acquire the blade that he hadn't any defenses up.

Caught completely off guard, Qu Rui only felt a chill at his neck. The next moment, he found his head flying high up, moving farther and farther away from his body.

He had been decapitated, yet not instantly dead. When he landed, his head faced his body, noticing blood gushing out like arrows from his severed neck.

Thereafter, a streak of light flew by, landing in front of him. A pair of cold eyes met his, filled with ridicule.

"Huh..."

Qu Rui saw that the owner of those cold eyes was Fang Bai, the owner of the Blood Blade. His eyes widened as he wished to say something, but only a "huh-huh" sound escaped his throat.

"I didn't want to kill you, but you both sought your own doom. So don't blame me!"

Fang Bai looked down at Qu Rui's head, reached out to the void, summoned the Blood Blade, and used it to prop himself. He then said, "Since you're about to die, let me tell you something you'll never get to touch: beyond Royal Grade Spiritual Artifacts are Immortal Artifacts, Emperor's Instruments, and Divine Artifacts. This Blood Blade of mine is likely a Divine Artifact. Do you want to keep it for yourself? You don't deserve it!"

Qu Rui's eyes widened again, seeming to ask, "How do you know so much?"

Fang Bai smiled, crouched down, whispered a few words, then Qu Rui stared at him, as if he'd seen a ghost, with deep awe and regret in his gaze.

“You’re luckier than Zhu Jingze; at least you can keep your whole body after death! Rest in peace!”

As Qu Rui’s eyes closed, Fang Bai gently swung his fist, creating a human-shaped pit in the ground, then reached out to grab Qu Rui’s body and head into the pit, covering it with dirt with another swing of his fist.

After finishing all this, Fang Bai stored the Blood Blade in the Five Elements Space Ring, casually grabbed Qu Rui’s Spatial Ring and threw it inside. Only then did he get back on track, following the aura of Wu De, Wind Roc, and the Tiger brothers, heading towards the Tiger Clan Territory.

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When Wu De and Wind Roc accompanied the Tiger brothers back to the Tiger Clan Territory, they found that strong practitioners from the Lion and Tiger Clans were facing off at the border of their territories.

The atmosphere on the scene was suppressive and tense, as if a great battle could erupt at any moment.

“What’s going on?”

“What happened?”

After landing in their own territory, Hu Wei stopped a hurried Tiger Clan youth and asked loudly.

Recognizing him as the son of the Clan Leader, the Tiger Clan youth respectfully replied, “Many Spiritual Medicines planted by the Lion Clan have been stolen recently. Their strong practitioners tracked the aura all the way here, insisting that the thief entered our territory and demanding that we hand over the thief...”

Hu Zhuang, upon hearing that the Lion Clan’s Spiritual Medicines were stolen, felt delighted and eagerly asked, “So what’s the result? Did they find the thief?”

The Tiger Clan youth shook his head and said, "If they had, it would be fine. Thousands of our clan's members carefully searched the entire territory but found no trace of the thief. Yet, though we told them the truth, the Lion Clan wouldn't believe us, claiming we're harboring the thief and suggesting the thief might be one of our members..."

Hu Zhuang angrily said, "Huh, those Lion Clan guys are clearly using this as an excuse to bully us!"

Hu Wei asked seriously, "What does our Clan Leader say?"

The Tiger Clan youth replied, "The Clan Leader is furious and has already led the strong members of our clan to confront the Lion Clan about it!"

Hu Wei and Hu Zhuang exchanged a glance, then waved their hand and said, "Let's go, let's see the confrontation ahead!"

After a few steps, Hu Wei turned his head and said to Wu De and Wind Roc, "Wu De, Wind Roc, you two can sit in our clan first and wait for Brother Fang there. We brothers will check the situation ahead, and if nothing major happens, we'll be back soon to accompany you."

Wu De, eager to find a sparring partner since advancing in the Ninth Floor Linglong Tower, was itching for a fight. Given his friendship with the Tiger brothers, he jumped at the chance to join in the excitement and exclaimed, "Our brothers are in trouble, how can we not lend a hand? Let's go! Let's go together!"

Wind Roc, also being a Spirit Beast, was born with a combative spirit, and upon hearing this, showed an eager expression as well.

Hu Wei said, "Since that's the case, let's all go together!"

Under the guidance of that Tiger Clan youth, Wu De, Wind Roc, and a group of Tiger Clan youths, rode Spiritual Artifacts and hurried to the face-off between the Tiger and Lion Clans.

The Tiger and Lion Clan strong practitioners facing off were all elite members with transformation abilities, and they took human form for this confrontation, speaking in human language.

“Hand over the thief from your Tiger Clan, or else, today we, the Lion Clan, will flatten the Tiger Clan Territory!”

A Lion Clan Elder spoke with a voice like thunder.

“The thief is not in our Tiger Clan territory, nor is he one of our Tiger Clan members! You Lion Clan shouldn’t be so overbearing!”

A Tiger Clan Elder retorted, his tone full of anger.

The Lion Clan Elder sneered, “If that’s the case, then why don’t you let us search your Tiger Clan territory for the thief? Clearly, you’re feeling guilty!”

Yet another Tiger Clan Elder said, “Nonsense! This is our Tiger Clan territory; why should we let you Lion Clan enter? If it were the other way around, would you allow us into your Lion Clan territory?”

The Lion Clan Elder, evidently skilled in verbal sparring, responded, “Why not? If your Spiritual Medicine was stolen and you tracked the thief into our territory, then we’d let you search freely!”

“Old fellow, you sure talk well! When it really comes to it, who knows how you’ll evade then!”

Newly arriving, Hu Wei couldn’t help but chime in loud and clear.

The speaking Lion Clan Elder saw a younger Tiger Clan member interrupting and got furious, pointing at him and saying, “Tiger Clan boy, even your Clan Leader dares not speak to me like this, yet you dare! Your courage is truly commendable! Do you believe I could crush you with a single palm?”

Both the Tiger and Lion Clans are combat-loving Spirit Beast clans; they will not easily back down without a decisive victory.

Though Hu Wei's cultivation level was far inferior to that of the Lion Clan Elder, he remained undeterred, patting his chest and laughing heartily, "I don't believe it! If you want to fight, then fight!"

"You're courting death!"

The Lion Clan Elder was a mid-level Soul Severing strong practitioner; he wouldn't even consider a mere Nascent Soul Perfection level Hu Wei worthy. With a lift of his hand, he unleashed a palm strike.

In the sky, a booming sound erupted, and a massive Spirit Qi Big Palm pressed down toward Hu Wei.

"Fight! Fight!"

Just then, on a distant mountaintop, a silver-haired Little Mink watching the scene let out a "hee" laugh, and its small, lively eyes gleamed with human-like intelligence.

Chapter 1619: The Lightning Mink Returns

The confrontation between the Tiger Clan and the Lion Clan this time saw both sides bringing out their powerful individuals. When a Lion Clan elder attacked Hu Wei, other Tiger Clan powerhouses naturally wouldn't just watch.

"You want to harm the disciples of the Tiger Clan? No way!"

The Great Elder of the Tiger Clan, Hu Xiao, who had a mid-level Soul Severing cultivation, shouted and punched towards the sky.

"Boom!"

A fist condensed from spiritual energy collided with a large palm, likewise condensed from spiritual energy, in mid-air, causing a fierce reaction. Spiritual energy scattered and surged, making heaven and earth tremble.

The elders of the Lion Clan and the Tiger Clan were equally matched in strength. Therefore, during this exchange, neither side gained the upper hand, and the essence energy fists and palms disappeared after the collision.

However, neither the Lion Clan nor the Tiger Clan seemed eager for an actual conflict. After one strike, the elders of both clans withdrew, and the young members of each clan resumed their verbal skirmish, engaging in a tense standoff.

Such standoffs between the young members have occurred countless times throughout the history of the Lion Clan and the Tiger Clan, and Hu Wei and Hu Zhuang, the two brothers, have long grown accustomed to it.

Yet, this time the Lion Clan has turned out in full force, including its clan leader, which seems somewhat unusual for a confrontation.

Hu Wei asked around to find out that spiritual herbs planted within the Lion Clan's territory had been stolen overnight, nearly a quarter of them. Another quarter had been ruined, leading to an almost fifty percent loss of the cultivated spiritual medicine, no wonder they were furious.

While Hu Wei and Hu Zhuang secretly relished this, they were also appalled at the thief's astounding destructive power, thinking to themselves that it was fortunate the thief hadn't targeted the Tiger Clan territory, or else the Tiger Clan would be the unlucky ones.

"Something bad... something really bad has happened..."

At that moment, several Tiger Clan disciples flew over, with the leading Tiger Clan disciple looking flustered and frantic.

"Why are you panicking? Speak slowly if you have something to say!"

Hu Chong, the current leader of the Tiger Clan, stern-faced, barked at the panicked disciples rushing over.

Hu Chong has served as the Tiger Clan leader for over ten years. With his formidable strength and fairness, he has established immense respect throughout the clan, with every member showing him reverence.

"Reporting to... to the clan... clan leader..."

The nervous or perhaps furious Tiger Clan disciple stood upright, stammering, "Our herb field... herb field..."

Seeing the grim expressions of the disciples who had come to report, Hu Chong's heart skipped a beat. Harshly, he asked, "What happened to the herb field?"

"Just now our patrolling disciples discovered that many spiritual herbs in the herb field were stolen, and many were ruined..."

That Tiger Clan disciple, recalling the utter devastation in the herb field they had witnessed earlier, was almost moved to tears.

Hu Chong gasped, gripped the disciple's shoulders, and sternly asked, "Quickly, tell me how much spiritual medicine was lost?"

The disciple, tears in their voice, replied, "Almost... almost half."

Hu Chong felt faint, his body swaying, and asked sternly, "Who did this?"

The disciple replied, "We didn't see who did it, but several waist tokens left by Lion Clan disciples were found at the scene..."

As he spoke, he handed over several yellow jade tokens to Hu Chong. Upon inspecting them, Hu Chong realized they belonged to the Lion Clan disciples, those of their core disciples and direct disciples.

Hu Chong's eyes glared, as he abruptly turned back, with a fiery gaze towards Lion Clan leader Huang Sheng, shaking the waist token, with a cold smile, "Clan Leader Huang, please explain this to me."

Without waiting for Huang Sheng to speak, his tone suddenly turned cold, almost roaring, "Your Lion Clan claims our Tiger Clan harbors the thief, but there's no evidence! Our herb field is indeed damaged, with your Lion Clan disciples' waist tokens left behind, evidence as clear as day! Clan Leader Huang, unless I get an explanation today, our Tiger Clan will not let this go!"

The Lion Clan leader Huang Sheng's expression subtly changed upon seeing the tokens. He turned back towards a steward beside him and said, "Huang Zhan, go find out why those disciples' waist tokens ended up with the Tiger Clan."

The Lion Clan steward named Huang Zhan responded and headed back, returning after a hundred breaths to quietly inform Huang Sheng, "Clan Leader, Huang Yan and the others went on a training excursion a month ago and have not returned... How their waist tokens ended up with the Tiger Clan remains unknown."

Huang Sheng raised a brow and gestured towards Hu Chong, "Clan Leader Hu, let me check whether the waist tokens in your hand are genuine. Perhaps they were impersonated..."

"Impersonated my foot!"

Hu Chong angrily retorted, "I have dealt with your Lion Clan for hundreds of years, and I would recognize your waist tokens even if they turned into ash! There's no mistake!"

Pausing, he added, "Clan Leader Huang, the loss of spiritual medicine in our herb field is entirely attributed to your clan's disciples. You must compensate for this loss!"

Huang Sheng was also frustrated, yet not angry. He laughed instead, "You have losses, but do we have none? You expect us to compensate you, but who will compensate us? Clan Leader Hu, a highly respected elder from our clan saw the thief flee into your territory. Are you claiming he lied?"

Hu Chong replied, "I already had my people search the entire territory; no thief was found. You fabricated this! I suspect your Lion Clan intends to spy on our Tiger Clan secrets!"

"You... you bullshit!"

"You're the one talking crap!"

"What do you intend to do?"

"Either compensate for our clan's losses or fight!"

"Fight, then!"

...

The two major clan leaders argued, their tempers flaring higher and higher, ultimately unable to suppress their anger, igniting a fierce battle.

Once the clan leaders started fighting, the disciples accompanying them wouldn't just stand by.

Thus, thousands of powerhouses from the two clans began battling across mountains and water, in the sky and on the ground.

"Boom boom boom!"

"Crack crack!"

Waves of spiritual energy shockwaves spread in all directions. The sounds of rocks crumbling and trees snapping continuously echoed, never fading.

And, from afar on a mountain peak, a little silver-haired ferret squinted its eyes, letting out "heehee haha" sounds, already laughing uncontrollably.

"Having fun, aren't you?"

In its moment of excitement, the little silver ferret suddenly felt its ear pinched as a voice sounded beside it.

The little silver ferret was startled at first, but upon recognizing the familiar voice, it became excited. "Fang Bai, is it you?"

"Of course, it's me."

Fang Bai, dressed in white, released the ear of the silver ferret, stood in front of it, and patted its little head, laughing, "Little mink, I never thought that while searching for friends and family, you'd be the first rascal I'd find!"

The little silver ferret was the Lightning Mink Fang Bai had encountered in the mundane world. It enjoyed eating spiritual medicine and sleeping, yet its cultivation level was always increasing.

Fang Bai didn't expect to encounter this little creature near the Tiger Clan territory.

Chapter 1620: Joining Forces

To Fang Bai's surprise, the Lightning Mink was already at the initial stage of the Soul Severing Realm, on par with his cultivation level.

It made sense; the Lightning Mink had a special constitution that allowed it to absorb nature's spiritual energy anytime, anywhere, even while sleeping, it was in a state of cultivation.

In this world full of dense spiritual energy and abundant Spiritual Medicine, it could be said to be like a fish in water, with its strength undoubtedly progressing rapidly.

The Lightning Mink's improvement could be seen in the color of its fur.

When Fang Bai first encountered the Lightning Mink, it was all white. Later, it turned from white to gray, and now it had changed from gray to silver, looking much more majestic than before, truly a "handsome man" among Spirit Beasts.

Fang Bai suspected that the medicinal gardens of both the Tiger Clan and the Lion Clan were half ruined and stolen by none other than the Lightning Mink!

The Lightning Mink loved eating Spiritual Medicine, and with the abundance of King Grade herbs in this world, it suited its palate perfectly. One could imagine how many Sect's medicinal gardens had been ravaged since it arrived in this world.

Moreover, the Lightning Mink enjoyed causing trouble. The so-called conflict between the Tiger Clan and Lion Clan was purely something it stirred up for entertainment.

Fang Bai could guess that the "thief" mentioned by the Tiger and Lion Disciples and the Lion Disciple's waist token were all the work of the Lightning Mink.

"Haha, Fang Bai, I didn't expect you to reach the Soul Severing Realm too! I'm at the same level now! In the secular world and minor world, I was always behind you, but here I've finally caught up! Haha... And now, transforming into a human form is effortless for me! Watch this..."

As Lightning Mink spoke, it shook its body a few times, and in front of Fang Bai appeared a young man in white robes, with sword-like eyebrows and starry eyes, exuding charm.

"How's that? Doesn't it make you feel inferior? Haha, if I am the second most handsome man in the world after my Transformation, no one would dare claim first!"

The Lightning Mink was complacent and narcissistic.

Fang Bai rolled his eyes and said, "You transformed, but why wear the same white robe as me? Even your looks are seven or eight-tenths like mine. Did you do it on purpose?"

Lightning Mink grinned and said, "This way, we look even more like good brothers! By the way, Fang Bai, have you seen that Taoist Wu De? After you left in the minor world, we gained quite a reputation!"

Fang Bai said irritably, "You two, one likes to ravage Spiritual Medicine, the other is skilled in grave robbing. Birds of a Feather! Your so-called reputation doesn't sound too good, does it?"

The Lightning Mink showed no shame, flashing an alluring smile, and said, "Birds of a Feather? More like kindred spirits! Do you know that in the minor world, every Sect and Loose Cultivator feared us whenever they mentioned me and Taoist Wu?"

Fang Bai said, "Wu De is in the Tiger Clan Territory, you know?"

"What?"

The Lightning Mink was taken aback, then happily said, "Really? When did Taoist Wu arrive?"

Fang Bai said, "Wu De is friends with the Tiger Clan's disciples, but you've ravaged their medicinal garden, offending the Tiger Clan greatly. What are you going to do?"

The Lightning Mink scratched its head and said, "Had I known, I wouldn't have done it! At worst, I'll compensate the Tiger Clan for some losses! I still have plenty of Spiritual Medicine in my Space Ring!"

"It's not going to be that easy!"

Fang Bai nodded towards the ongoing brawl between the Tiger and Lion Clans and said, "See? Because of your instigation, many Tiger Clan disciples have died or been injured. They won't forgive you easily."

The Lightning Mink said, "What should I do then? Should I go to the Tiger Clan Territory and just not mention it, so they won't know it's me?"

Fang Bai said, "The Tiger Clan is straightforward. If you want to be friends with them, don't hide anything, be direct... Never mind, I'll think of something! As long as I can offer something to satisfy the Tiger Clan, they might stop pursuing this matter!"

Lightning Mink asked, "What do we do now? The Tiger Clan seems to be at a disadvantage. Shouldn't we help them out?"

"Of course!"

Fang Bai said, "I'll take on the Lion Clan Leader; you go and injure some Lion Clan disciples... don't overdo it, or they might fight back desperately. Just scare them off!"

"Understood!"

Hearing about a fight, the Lightning Mink immediately got excited, let out a clear howl, and lunged at several Lion Clan experts.

Although the Lightning Mink was only at the initial stage of the Soul Severing realm, its movement technique was so fast that even mid-stage Soul Severing experts found it hard to catch up, completely helpless against it.

As it darted around like a silver flash among the Lion Clan experts, the Lion experts it passed were left bleeding and screaming, many falling to the ground.

In an instant, dozens of Lion Clan experts were either dead or injured. The other Lion experts, seeing this, were shocked and dodged when they spotted the silver flash, fearing a deadly encounter.

"This little guy is ruthless!"

Fang Bai saw the immediate effect of the Lightning Mink's attack and couldn't help but silently applaud.

"Master!"

Seeing Fang Bai suddenly cross the air from a mountain peak, a Wind Roc battling a Lion Clan expert was overjoyed.

"Brother Fang is here!"

The Tiger brothers knew Fang Bai's incredible skills were a strong ally for the Tiger Clan, and his appearance greatly delighted them.

"That guy Fang Bai, was off doing something mysterious, only coming now!"

Wu De muttered.

He knew his own strength was too weak to help in such battles between experts, so he had hidden behind some Tiger Clan experts for protection since the clash began.

The Soul Severing experts of the Tiger Clan sensed Fang Bai's formidable aura, glanced at him amid the chaos, and knowing this human was a friend, became reinvigorated.

Though Fang Bai was only an initial stage Soul Severing expert, at this moment, for either the Tiger or Lion Clan, having one more Soul Severing expert's aid meant a greater chance of victory.

"Brothers of the Tiger Clan, let's join forces to repel the enemy, then catch up later!"

Fang Bai nodded at the Wind Roc first, then spoke to the Tiger brothers.

As he spoke, the Blood-Drinking Mad Blade appeared in his hand, and he charged directly toward the Lion Clan Leader, who was fiercely battling the Tiger Clan Leader.

The Lion Clan Leader, Huang Sheng, was a high-rank Soul Severing expert, two minor realms above Fang Bai. Yet, when Fang Bai swung that blade, he was shocked, thinking how could this young man, just entering the Soul Severing realm, be so powerful. That swing made him feel his heart tremble.

Having to deal with both the Tiger Clan Leader Hu Chong's attack and Fang Bai's formidable blade, Huang Sheng knew he couldn't handle it, and reluctantly stepped back.