

## Grasping 1021

### Chapter 1021: Treasury Collection

From this day forth, Ning Fan never set foot on the First Auxiliary Peak again, nor did True Person Bailu invite Ning Fan again.

Aside from the First Auxiliary Peak, other peak masters who invited Ning Fan all held him in high regard and continued to welcome him thereafter.

For such mutually beneficial matters, Ning Fan naturally did not refuse. Furthermore, he still had a generous amount of Spirit Fruits gifted by Mingfeng Immortal Venerable; under constant consumption, his demon cultivations progressed significantly every day.

He later realized that what he consumed were Spirit Fruits that were at least a million years old, which were quite costly within the Dabei Clan...

Unfortunately, ordinary Shedding Void Stage cultivators desiring to accumulate Mana to its peak would need at least hundreds of thousands of years of arduous cultivation. Even with the help of Spirit Fruits, and with the three apertures Fiendgod's effects magnified eightfold, Ning Fan's demon cultivations were still far from reaching the peak of the Mid Stage.

Aside from discussing Dao and visiting friends, Ning Fan would spend the rest of his time on the cliff where he once faced off against the Baihua Great Emperor.

This cliff was now overwhelmed by Demonic Qi, so much so that ordinary Buddha cultivators dared not approach, fearing contamination by the Demonic Qi; Baihua cultivators also took turns driving off the Demonic Qi day and night but to little effect, with the task likely impossible to accomplish within a century.

The cliff originally had some plants, but affected by the Demonic Qi, they withered and died, as if their vitality had been severed by the Demonic Qi.

Only a few patches of Wuyou Orchid managed to resist being consumed by the Demonic Qi, continuing to grow resolutely within its midst. This flower can withstand Ning Fan's Demonic Qi, proving its worth as one of the top ten Buddhist flowers of the Middle State.

This was the nineteenth day since Ning Fan arrived at Baihua Peak.

Today, Ning Fan visited some Daoists as usual, before arriving at this cliff to engage in contemplation.

A thousand zhang away from the cliff, one or two dozen Baihua cultivators were dispelling Demonic Qi there. Upon Ning Fan's arrival, they all greeted him and temporarily withdrew, stopping their efforts, so as not to disturb Ning Fan's contemplation.

They had grown accustomed to Ning Fan's daily visits, understanding that he was here to contemplate, and thus dared not interrupt him.

Once the cultivators departed, Ning Fan sat in the center of the cliff as usual. Before him lay several clusters of Wuyou Orchids swaying amidst the overwhelming Demonic Qi, pale as a sickly yet beautiful woman.

These Wuyou Orchids thrived with a strong Buddhist nature, allowing them to survive within a certain level of Demonic Qi.

Ning Fan's gaze lingered briefly on the Wuyou Orchids before him, seemingly drawn by the flowers, but soon he refocused, continuing his contemplation from previous days.

Every day, Ning Fan would come to this cliff to reflect on the face-off with the Baihua Great Emperor, today being no exception. Though the battle that day was merely a contest of Dao Images and not a real fight, the insights gained were plentiful.

From the initial comprehension of the Ancient Demon Annihilation Dao, to the various applications of Dao Images, to the resolute mindset when facing the Immortal Emperor...

But what Ning Fan found most worthy of reflection was the final moment, when he launched a devastating Dao Image blow, thoroughly defeating the Baihua Great Emperor...

Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike!

With Ning Fan's understanding at the Second Realm of Tianren, creating divine skills casually came naturally. This Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike was merely a spontaneous countermove in response to witnessing the Baihua Great Emperor conjure a Buddha image from mountain momentum. Though seemingly effortless, because Ning Fan was engaging with the Immortal Emperor under extreme pressure at the time, his mindset, Dao Enlightenment, demonic thoughts, and will were all at their peak, making the skill creation rather extraordinary.

The principle of this skill was to condense the power of Dao Images into a punch, fortifying its interior with the will of destruction and using its exterior force for killing. With one punch, all techniques broke down. Under the enhancement of this skill, Ning Fan's Dao Image attack, already formidable, exploded with more than double its typical power, akin to a critical strike!

It was precisely this overwhelming critical strike that made it impossible for the Baihua Great Emperor to gather sufficient Dao Image power in time to resist, leading to his direct defeat...

"The Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike is essentially an application of the Ancient Demon Annihilation Dao, a method of utilizing the power of Ancient Demons, a divine skill that only Ancient Demons can wield! The essence of this skill is to instantly unleash the power of Ancient Demons within oneself, achieving the effect of a critical strike. In other words, the Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike I created that day is a critical divine skill, capable of doubling the power of my attack!"

A critical divine skill unique to the Ancient Demon lineage!

Divine skills exclusive to the Ancient Demon lineage are rare; like the Lifestealer Technique of Immortal Emperor Mo Zhong, Ning Fan has now created a new one. If this were the Era of the Demon-Sealing Peak, such an act would definitely shock the masses of demons.

An act of pioneering!

Seemingly acquired by chance, yet no creation of a famed divine skill lacks the influence of serendipity.

Without the smooth comprehension by an Ancient Demon, without the fierce dominance facing an Immortal Emperor, such an opportunity would not have presented itself!

"On that day, I used a method of condensing Dao Image into a fist for the strike, thus the strike only had critical power against an opponent's Dao Image. But if I condense Ancient Devil Dao essence into my fist and deliver the strike similarly, then the Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike wouldn't be limited to Dao Image level damage but would be a true Ancient Demon physical technique..."

"In theory, that's correct, but accomplishing this is quite challenging, and the Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike is currently only in its infancy and remains not fully refined..."

With legs crossed, Ning Fan stirred his thoughts, causing countless Demonic Path Runes to encircle him, with black energy surging and dark light radiating.

Azure light flashed in his eyes, his Dao Enlightenment at the Second Realm of Tianren fully exerted, constantly deducing the flaws and inadequacies of the Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike.

Continually refining his Ancient Devil Dao Essence with the will of the Ancient Demon Annihilation Dao, deepening its demonic nature day by day.

The twentieth day, the twenty-first day, the twenty-second day... and a month passed in the blink of an eye.

The time for the second round of the Tomb-Seizing Tournament drew nearer day by day.

All the Spirit Fruits gifted by Mingfeng Immortal Venerable were long consumed by Ning Fan, and much of the resources from the peak masters had also been depleted by Ning Fan, causing them to gradually become hesitant to invite him.

Thus, Ning Fan refrained from being an unwelcome guest and stayed busily on the main peak's cliff, refining the particulars of the Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike.

Meanwhile, Ouyang Nuan's nurturing of the Divine Origin Pill progressed smoothly, having successfully nurtured twelve pills. However, according to Burying Moon, this number was far from sufficient, needing at least a hundred pills to heal the Baihua Great Emperor's injuries.

The road is long!

\*\*\*\*Nurturing the Divine Origin Pill has greatly depleted Ouyang Nuan's Medicine Soul. Fortunately, Ning Fan had long given her the ten-thousand-year Medicine Marrow from the Tami Tribe for consumption, adequately supplementing the depletion of her Medicine Soul.

Wu Laoba was restless, frequently tinkering with his Treasure-Seeking Turtle, seemingly in search of a treasure, but the search was not smooth. He often frowned in thought, sighed and lamented, his eyes occasionally lighting up before returning to a state of wistful disappointment...

Burying Moon boldly utilized the Baihua Great Emperor's treasury, using the resources to stabilize the incomplete form of a primordial spirit, his complexion becoming rosier day by day. Being a close associate of the Baihua Great Emperor, he felt free to take such liberty.

As the time for the second round approached, the Baihua Peak territory began to see the arrival of unfamiliar Spirit Beast Carriages, carrying mostly cultivators from grasslands outside the Middle State. Upon entering, they were directly escorted by the winged youth to the main peak.

Afterward, these individuals became guests at Baihua Peak, residing in the guest rooms of the main peak's caves, but remained behind closed doors, not visiting each other, silently awaiting the Baihua Great Emperor's summons.

Ning Fan inquired with the winged youth, who seemed to have received instructions, and did not hide matters from Ning Fan, revealing all.

These cultivators hailed from over ten different grasslands, and all their tribes were the foremost in each grassland. The Three Thousand Tribes of the Dabei heavily relied on each of the Central Continent Five Emperors, and these tribes depended upon the Baihua Great Emperor. As the second round of the Tomb-Seizing Tournament approached, naturally, they had come to pay their respects to the Baihua Great Emperor.

Understanding dawned on Ning Fan...

"Given the severity of the Baihua Great Emperor's injuries, even healed, his cultivation might plummet. Thus, he is determined to win the second round's prize, the South Sea Spring Water. My presence with Burying Moon and others within the Dabei wasn't accounted for by the Baihua Great Emperor, but with his foresight, he must have planned for this situation well in advance, relying on these tribes..."

From Ning Fan's gathered intelligence, each previous second round had 108 teams participating. Aside from the Middle State, the other 107 grasslands would have their foremost tribes send a team to contend, with team numbers not exceeding ten.

The Middle State's team was composed of several chosen by the Central Continent Five Emperors, and the strongest among them would participate in the second round alone.

The second round mandates strict age constraints, prohibiting participation from those with a bone age exceeding five million years. Consequently, most contestants are likely not Eternal Immortal Venerables but rather Fragmented Thought Elders or Shedding Void Stage Masters.

Among all the followers of Baihua Great Emperor, there were hardly a few at the Late Stage of Shattered Thought, indicating that stronger ones likely existed but were eliminated due to the bone age restriction in the second round...

"If the second round consists purely of Masters of this level, it would indeed be an opportunity for me..."

Three days later, Baihua Great Emperor suddenly sent someone to invite Ning Fan to the inner hall of the cave dwelling.

Guided by a few winged youths, Ning Fan arrived at the inner hall of the cave dwelling. With a slight sweep of his gaze, he noticed quite a number of people already waiting there.

They were mostly followers who had come to Baihua Peak.

"Could this person be..."

As soon as Ning Fan arrived, someone immediately noticed his foreign cultivator attire, and numerous cautious gazes swept towards him.

Clearly, these people had already heard the shocking news that spread throughout Middle State: A foreign cultivator had faced and defeated the Baihua Great Emperor in a Dao Image duel at Baihua Peak...

A historical event of a subordinate surpassing the superior!

"Master Ning, please wait here for a moment. The esteemed one will arrive shortly."

The winged youths respectfully spoke to Ning Fan, then withdrew to the side.

The inner hall suddenly fell silent, and although some were curious about Ning Fan, no one spoke to him, making the atmosphere rather dull. Fortunately, the gloom did not last long, and soon, seven or eight maidens from Baihua Great Emperor's personal entourage emerged from another passage in the inner hall.

Following the maids, Baihua Great Emperor stepped in, reminiscent of an empress attending court, her steps exuding a suffocating majesty. Her cold gaze swept across, causing all followers to lower their heads in awe and bow in salute.

"Greetings, Your Eminence!"

"No need for formalities. Are you the participants sent by each tribe?"

Baihua Great Emperor narrowed her eyes slightly; a hint of disappointment flashed in them for a moment. If among her followers, only talents of this level advanced to the second round, the chance of obtaining the South Sea Spring Water was slim...

After all, to secure the top three positions would be rewarded with the South Sea Spring Water. According to internal information obtained by Baihua Great Emperor, among the participating teams,

there were no less than twenty teams with Late Shattered Thought as their anchor; nine teams at the Shattered Thought Peak; and teams with Immortal Venerable as their anchors, totaling three...

Three teams of Immortal Venerable... with the power of these followers, it seemed almost impossible to break into the top three...

Furthermore, the second-round competition wasn't as simple as a duel and didn't allow the use of supportive items like the Immortal Emperor's Strike...

Indeed, this mission could only rely on the foreign cultivator brought by the Burying Moon!

Baihua Great Emperor glanced at Ning Fan so subtly, her lips curled into a calculating, cunning smile.

This person's Dao Image was indeed impressive, but the second round wasn't about Dao Images. The strength of the Dao Image was of no use; however, his cultivation as an Eternal Immortal Venerable could be put to some use... As for his bone age, this person's bone age was terrifyingly young, seemingly only around forty thousand years, which completely met the standards for participation.

Becoming a Eternal Immortal Venerable in forty thousand years? Baihua Great Emperor was skeptical and believed Ning Fan most likely used a secret technique to conceal his bone age, which even she, an ancient Immortal Emperor, couldn't see through, indicating it was a noteworthy technique capable of deceiving other Four Emperors of Middle State, and thus not affecting the second round of the competition...

"Hehe, today I have summoned you all to consider the approach of the second round of the tomb seizure, wanting to bestow some benefits upon you. Later, I will open the Baihua Secret Vault, and you may enter as you please, take as much as you can, I shall not hold back!"

As soon as Baihua Great Emperor finished speaking, the inner hall was filled with countless gasps.

The Baihua Secret Vault! Wasn't that the treasure vault of Baihua Great Emperor? People like them, with humble status, were actually fortunate enough to enter the Immortal Emperor's treasure vault!

In the past, only Immortal Venerables and Immortal Kings who had made significant contributions to Baihua Great Emperor were granted entry!

Rumors said that the Baihua Secret Vault was filled with formations and illusions, presenting both opportunity and a test; the amount of treasure one could acquire depended entirely on individual strength!

It was also rumored that Baihua Great Emperor had condensed the insights of her first half of cultivation into a relic, now placed in the Baihua Secret Vault, and it had never been taken!

Another rumor claimed Baihua Great Emperor's formation skills far exceeded her peers, and her formation insights were also within the Baihua Secret Vault!

Yet another rumor said Baihua Great Emperor had planted a Three Wasteland Poison Immortal in the secret vault, a poisonous flower of unknown origin, with one drop of its poison capable of killing an Eternal Immortal Venerable!

More rumors...

Baihua Great Emperor smiled seductively, evidently pleased with the awe of her followers, yet noticing Ning Fan's calm demeanor, she could not help furrowing her brows slightly.

This young man, does he look down on my treasure cache...

But Ning Fan could hardly be blamed for his calmness; after all, he had seen many fine things, allowing him to remain composed.

Of course, this did not mean he was without expectations regarding the so-called Immortal Emperor's Treasury: since it was an Immortal Emperor's Treasury, it might indeed contain some items useful for this mission.

"Bring these people to my secret vault!"

"Yes!"

Several winged youths led over a hundred followers, exiting from one end of the inner hall and winding through numerous passages, direction unknown.

Ning Fan naturally followed in line, discreetly drawing out the Treasure-searching Compass from his sleeve. The further they went, the more the compass responded to nearby treasures, indicating plentiful valuable items ahead...

Long after everyone departed, Baihua Great Emperor suddenly curled her lips, "I wonder if that young man will successfully obtain the Reprieve Cold Dew... It's an excellent item that can temporarily freeze the Punishing Ring, suppressing its seal and restoring one's true cultivation. Hehehe, though it has considerable side effects. However, if I do not speak of it, how would one ever know..."

...

Led by the winged youths, the group arrived outside the Baihua Secret Vault.

The entrance to the Secret Vault was two phantasmal stone gates, the prohibitive force was extremely strong, clearly containing countless formations that would obliterate any intruder.

The lead winged youth drew out a token, waving it toward the stone gates, which creaked open to reveal a space filled with swirling illusions.

"This place is the esteemed one's treasure space, with only this stone gate as the entrance. Inside, the illusions and restrictions are interwoven; whether you can truly obtain treasures from within depends entirely on your strongest skills. If you find it difficult to sustain inside, you may recite the incantation to be transported out immediately. The transportation incantation is..."

The winged youth conveyed the incantation to everyone and explained the potential dangers within.

Upon hearing that there were risks involved in the secret vault, everyone felt a sense of caution, prompting a slight hesitation and delay in entering.

However, this hesitation didn't last long, and soon, a few bold individuals entered first, followed by one follower after another swarming in.

So what if there were risks! They faced the Immortal Emperor's Treasury; what was a little danger in comparison!

Ning Fan did not hasten in but instead inspected the arrays and restrictions at the stone gate entrance before stepping inside.

Upon entering, Ning Fan immediately felt a force of teleportation swirling underfoot. In the next instant, he was teleported by the local array into a Peach Forest.

This treasure space was considerably vast, imposing significant confusion and limitations on spiritual senses, and lingering long could even lead to potential damage to one's divine sense.

Ning Fan had just intended to spread out his spirit sense to investigate the area, when he felt a force that forcibly devoured his spirit sense. Without a word, he severed that thread of spirit sense, a heavy expression on his face.

Indeed, the formations here cannot be underestimated...

However, if he is given enough time to unravel the formations here, it is not difficult! As for the damage these formations could cause to the divine sense, he directly broke it with the Momentum Character Secret.

Ning Fan secretly activated the Momentum Character Secret, searching the Peach Forest while discreetly memorizing the formation seals beneath his feet.

This Peach Forest seemed to be one of the treasure spaces, one of the hidden treasure locations. Even with Ning Fan's cultivation in the Dao of formations, it took considerable time to walk from one end of the Peach Forest to the other. Upon stepping out of the Peach Forest, he saw a golden house, which contained a Ninth Revolution Golden Pill, a pill for enhancing cultivation called [Putuo Pill].

This pill was highly renowned in the Dabei Clan, and Ning Fan had heard some news about it. It is said that this pill differs from ordinary expensive pills, its effects are exceedingly potent, with the power of one pill equating to that of ten Fragmented Thought Dao Fruits!

Of course, the refining of this pill is extremely complex, and the ingredients are exceedingly difficult to find. It is said that even some well-known Golden Core Alchemists of the Dabei Clan, out of ten furnaces, often only one or two succeed, and each furnace can only refine one Putuo Pill. If two pills are refined simultaneously, failure is inevitable, as it is difficult to control...

Unexpectedly, he could obtain a Putuo Pill for free!

Ning Fan examined it slightly and found that there was no issue with this pill, so he swallowed it. After refining it, both his Fiendgods and ancient demons cultivations improved significantly.

An ordinary cultivator of the Fragmented Thought Peak would absolutely not dare to do so, but Ning Fan, being a Nine Nirvana Heavenly Demon, had a physical defense more than adequate to withstand the pill's effects. The only remaining task was the slow refining process later on.

Afterward, he searched for a path and continued his exploration of this place.

"This child passed through the Peach Forest formation so quickly and obtained the Putuo Pill..." Inside the inner temple, Baihua Great Emperor seemed to have sensed something, slightly furrowing her brows. This formation was the result of her tremendous efforts; even the Immortal Venerable and Immortal King on the side peak could not pass through it within days, except by abandoning the Peach Forest and returning by the original route...

She seemed to have underestimated the formation skills of this individual.

Ning Fan left the golden house in the Peach Forest, pressing on while piercing through the fog, unwittingly arriving at a large river.

This river was not ordinary, all were exceptional Dao Springs reaching the eighth grade, and there was as much as a river!

"Unfortunately, now it seems the Seven Treasures Marvelous Tree can only continue to grow if irrigated with Dao Springs above the sixth grade, although these Dao Springs are plentiful, they are useless for the Seven Treasures Marvelous Tree."

However, they could all be collected to irrigate another plant... the Four Emperors Luohan Pine.

Even if not all used, they could be taken for trade. It should be known, within the Dabei Clan, ordinary goods are traded with gold and silver, while high-grade cultivation materials are often bartered. Such a quantity of Dao Springs, if taken for trade, would certainly secure many good items.

It is remembered that Baihua Great Emperor seemed to say that as long as the strength was sufficient, one could take items from the secret vault as one please...

With her words spoken in advance, Ning Fan naturally did not hold back with Baihua Great Emperor, directly exerting his divine skills, breaking all the restrictions on the river, and took the entire Dao Spring river away.

"Even the restrictions on the Dao River could be broken!" Baihua Great Emperor sensed again, her status as Immortal Emperor making the loss of this Dao River somewhat painful.

According to her calculations, these individuals entering the secret vault could at best break open one or two restrictions, and most of those broken would be low-level restrictions. The items taken would only be those she had arranged for each person in advance...

Yet Ning Fan was an exception; she underestimated the formation skills of this individual.

Her arrangement was for Ning Fan to be trapped in the Peach Forest, to have to withdraw from the Peach Forest, and proceed according to the route she arranged.

However, Ning Fan directly broke through the Peach Forest and proceeded to collect treasures in another direction...

"Send word to summon Seven Peaks Ancient Strong People here!"

"Yes!"

Soon, the peak masters of Seven Auxiliary Peaks gathered together, even the critically injured Mingfeng came to this place.

When all seven arrived, Baihua Great Emperor did not explain to the crowd, merely handed each person an array flag, instructing them to input mana into the array flags.

She could have done this herself, but unwilling to recklessly mobilize mana in her critically injured state, she sent her subordinates.

The other six Eternal Old Freaks were utterly perplexed, unable to comprehend Baihua Great Emperor's intentions.

Only the first master of the auxiliary peaks, True Person Bai Lu, guessed a thing or two, intrigued: are these the array flags from the secret vault formation? And the venerable one summoned us to reinforce the secret vault formation, could it be to make things difficult for certain individuals within the vault?

It was known that today, the venerable one ordered that dependents enter the secret vault to select treasures, and that Ning Fan child seemed to be among them.

Could it be, the venerable one's arrangements have encountered a certain anomaly...

Any cause of that anomaly, naturally, could not be those ordinary dependents whose cultivations are average; it is highly likely... Ning Fan!

"If it's to test this person, I might have to exert some effort."

True Person Bai Lu immediately began pouring large amounts of mana into the array flag.

On that day, having been intimidated by Ning Fan, though unwilling to openly become enemies, he held some resentment against Ning Fan. Today, he wouldn't have to face Ning Fan directly to exact a slight revenge, and he naturally wouldn't let the opportunity pass.

The other six Eternal Old Freaks followed suit, funneling mana into the array flags without delay, even Mingfeng Immortal Venerable inputting mana within reasonable limits.

With the support of seven Eternal Old Freaks for the formation, Ning Fan quickly noticed something change.

After leaving the river, he continued onward, arriving at a garden filled with poison mist, giving him a sense of crisis due to being extraordinary, evidently not of common material.

Ning Fan planned to casually break the restriction here and take the poison, but as soon as he attempted to break the restriction, a vast force of mana emerged from the restriction, thundering Ning Fan back step by step, his chest heaving with qi and blood, taking some time to calm his breath.

"The restriction here is far more formidable than those in previous places..."

This only piqued Ning Fan's interest further.

The Momentum Character Secret had been pushed to its limit by Ning Fan, and he waved his arm, unleashing golden streaks condensed from the momentum of heaven and earth, striking the weak points of the restriction.

The restriction here was resilient in its resistance, but couldn't withstand Ning Fan's relentless attack, gradually causing some Immortal Venerables providing mana to be unable to endure.

Firstly, it was Mingfeng Immortal Venerable who was still barely recovering from injury, then the other Eternal Immortal Venerables, and finally, even the Immortal King of Second Peak began to struggle.

"It brought disappointment to the venerable one, as we span distances too far, unable to control the formation covered by these flags, and it got broken." The faces of the six remained unchanged, merely

noting that the formation was broken by a Great Emperor of Zhongzhou in a cross-realm contest against Baihua Great Emperor, feeling little shame in losing to a Zhongzhou Great Emperor.

Only True Person Bai Lu continued to grimly hang on, with a face of incredulity.

How could it be! How could Ning Fan possibly possess such profound formation cultivation, with Baihua Great Emperor's arranged formation, combined with the output of mana from seven Eternal old monsters, unable to halt this individual's progress!

Bang!

Yet it was True Person Bai Lu who was too slow to relinquish, getting caught by the backlash from the formation being broken, divine sense pain in his head, immediately coughing blood, his breath dwindling slightly.

His expression was incomparably shocked.

The strength of this person's Dao of formations, even if not superior to the venerable, is not much weaker!

He cannot be defeated!

"Forget it, this was an oversight on my part, you all may withdraw."

Baihua Great Emperor dismissed the Eternal Old Freaks, her delicate eyebrows knitted.

She had promised beforehand, those who enter the secret vault can take treasures with their own strength. Given that this matter has been miscalculated, it can only be such, allowing Ning Fan to wreak havoc in the treasure vault.

In the treasure space, Ning Fan broke through the poisonous mist formation, looking at a dark green flower that was exuding toxic gas up into the sky, slightly awe-struck.

Such domineering poison!

One drop of the toxin from this flower could probably kill an Eternal Immortal Venerable. If it were the whole flower, perhaps even an Immortal King could be poisoned to death.

Of course, this flower's function is not limited to just poisoning people, which is why Baihua Great Emperor values it so highly.

If this flower is consumed, it seems... it can greatly enhance a master's resistance to toxins.

Of course, attempting to consume the flower, even with Ning Fan's temperament, is somewhat daunting; after all, ingesting such a toxic flower is beyond the help of even treasures like the God-Extinguishing Shield. Only by relying on Ning Fan's own strength could he withstand the poison, gradually absorbing its toxicity, thereby enhancing his own poison resistance...

Difficult! With Ning Fan's current cultivation, rashly consuming this flower would be akin to inviting death. However, Ning Fan doesn't mind temporarily keeping the flower with him to slowly nurture it.

Wait until his cultivation is higher and can withstand the deadly poison, then it's not too late to consume it.

With high poison resistance, facing some poison wielders would surely present an innate undefeatable situation...

"Is this flower called the Three Wasteland Poison Immortal..."

Ning Fan glanced at a Stele within the poison garden, turned away from the garden, and walked in the other direction.

The Treasure-searching Compass still transmitted plenty of sensations; there surely are many good things here, and as Ning Fan's understanding of this place's formations deepened, it became easier to navigate around.

As for other masters who entered the secret vault, they had long endured the oppressive power of the formations, each one chanting spells to transport out of the vault.

Each had gains, and all had extremely excited expressions, but compared to Ning Fan, those people's gains were nearly negligible.

Time slowly passed, and the adherents outside the vault could no longer contain their excitement and sought to return to their rooms to digest their insights.

The young men with the wings refused to let the adherents leave.

The reason being one person hadn't returned yet.

Who?

After such a long time, was someone still able to persist inside the secret vault!

Only then did the adherents realize that Ning Fan hadn't come back yet but was still within the vault searching for treasures.

Some were envious: To stay so long in the secret vault, how many benefits had he already gotten!

More were in awe: There were rumors he was an Eternal Immortal Venerable with sealed cultivation; today, it seems even with sealed cultivation, he is not a match for ordinary Fragmented Thought Elders...

Truly a strong individual who had defeated an Immortal Emperor at the Dao Image, under such a prestigious reputation, he is indeed worthy!

Ning Fan was unaware of the astonishment expressed by adherents outside. He was presently single-mindedly treasure hunting in the vault, consistently expanding his haul.

Another Putuo Pill, he immediately consumed it, his face unchanged...

A Dual Cultivation Ancient Scripture was recorded here, showcasing the Buddhist Joyful Zen cultivation technique... With Yin Yang Transformation, Ning Fan naturally wouldn't practice the Buddhist Joyful Zen, but upon perusal, he can gain some insightful verification.

A hill formed by piles of Ninth Revolution Lead Elixir, Silver Elixir... Haha, he gained capital for trading items.

An orchard full of million-year-old Spirit Fruits... Ning Fan, of course, picked the fruits clean.

There was also a batch of ancient dan refinement, Dabei techniques, Spirit Medicine Secret Art... Ning Fan knew restraint, not taking away the originals but instead imprinting copies to take.

Eventually, after a large circle, Ning Fan returned near the initial Peach Forest.

He had been to the Peach Forest before and didn't plan to enter again, thinking he had traversed around sixty to seventy percent of the place, it was about time to leave; if he overdid it, it's likely he'd truly anger Baihua Great Emperor. Just as he was about to chant a spell, suddenly a fishy wind hit him in the face, amidst the fishy wind came buzzing sounds, it turned out a thumb-sized Blood Bee attacked him abruptly.

A mere Blood Bee, yet it possessed an aura not inferior to Shattered Thought Peak; Ning Fan's gaze tightened, extending the God-Extinguishing Shield's golden light three zhang away to effortlessly block the Blood Bee's attack.

"Hmm?"

The Blood Bee seemed to emit a faint 'eh', or perhaps didn't emit anything, suddenly turned around and fled in another direction, seemingly fearing Ning Fan, after drilling into the illusory mist, it could no longer be found...

"Trying to escape huh..."

Ning Fan's eyes subtly blinked, flipping his hand to take out the Treasure-searching Compass, capturing a trail of aura from the Blood Bee during their brief confrontation and feeding it into the Compass.

This Compass is not only used for treasure hunting but can also locate people, nothing above or below the heavens escapes its search!

Thus, although the illusory mist was strong, Ning Fan easily determined the Blood Bee's escape direction and pursued.

The place this bee fled to might hold great treasures, and this Blood Bee very likely was a guardian spirit insect...

Ning Fan chased frantically, unaware of how long he chased, suddenly sky-brimming blood light pierced through the illusory mist from the front.

Further ahead was a boundless bloody mist, frozen into a sea of Xuan Ice by some unknown force. Above this solidified bloody mist, floated a Mystic Ice Platform, from atop which insidious chills continuously emanated. Such strong chilly air, even for Ning Fan, a Five Elements mortal cultivator, induced some shivers.

"What is this..."

On that jade platform lay a jade platter, within which only a single icy blue half-frozen droplet of liquid was placed.

This droplet emitted a terrifying chill, freezing the entire bloody mist beneath!

Even Ning Fan's Punishing Ring within his body faced this profound chill, showing slight stagnation, seeming difficulty in sealing Ning Fan's cultivation.

To Ning Fan's astonishment, his Calamity Blood Cultivation, upon approaching this droplet, experienced a minuscule unsealing...

## Chapter 1022: Entanglements

The Blood Bee that led Ning Fan here had long disappeared.

Ning Fan stared at the Bloodsea for a while, then suddenly made a leap onto the frozen Bloodsea. With a few flickers, he arrived below the floating Mystic Ice Platform.

With another flicker, his movement technique seemed ghostly, appearing as if he hadn't moved at all. Yet, when he spread his hand, a drop of deep blue ice liquid had appeared on his palm.

This was precisely the drop from the Mystic Ice Platform.

"This substance seems to have a suppressive effect on the Punishing Ring within my body..."

This ice liquid gave off a bone-chilling sensation, yet it would not cause any frostbite. It seemed only to have a freezing effect on certain specific things.

When Ning Fan touched the ice liquid from a close distance, the eight Punishing Rings within his body showed obvious changes. The sealing power flowing within the rings unexpectedly had a tiny part frozen from the edge. Once the seal was frozen, a trace of the originally sealed Calamity Blood cultivation was then released.

A mere trace, yet it was enough to astonish Ning Fan.

"Back when I was traversing the Fiendish Domain Continent, I visited many Ancient Cultivator Cave Mansions. There was one mansion with stone carvings that mentioned something called [Reprieve Cold Dew]. The Reprieve Cold Dew is a rare ancient treasure of the Dabei Clan, with a magical effect of freezing sealing power. Some ancient cultivators once sought the path of the Ascetic Monk, voluntarily requesting the Dazu Saint to use the Punishing Ring to suppress their cultivation as a way to temper themselves. However, the cultivation world is always fraught with risks and slaughter, and even these ascetic monks sometimes had to resort to unleashing their sealed cultivation. At those times, the monks would often not shatter the Punishing Ring, as it's said the ring holds some unknown benefits, and they

would hesitate to break it lightly... In times of crisis, they would often choose to ingest a small amount of Reprive Cold Dew, thus temporarily restoring some of their sealed cultivation without damaging the Punishing Ring. The duration and amount of restored cultivation depend on the amount of Cold Dew ingested..."

Ning Fan recalled the stone carvings he had seen before, making soft guesses.

Could this drop of ice liquid be the Reprive Cold Dew? Given that it can suppress the Punishing Ring, it indeed seems possible. Unfortunately, the stone carvings recorded too little about the Reprive Cold Dew, leaving Ning Fan unable to confirm it, only hypothesizing a few points.

The Punishing Ring is truly a troublesome thing.

It's not that the Punishing Ring is particularly hard to break; if Ning Fan wished, he could shatter it anytime and restore his true cultivation. The problem lies in the fact that the Punishing Ring represents a form of restriction imposed by the Dabei Clan on foreign cultivators. Once this restriction is broken, it would be considered a violation of the Dabei Clan's laws, inviting the pursuit of the Central Continent's Five Emperors...

The Punishing Ring cannot be broken.

Not breaking it doesn't mean there's no other way to cleverly restore cultivation. Clearly, this drop of ice liquid is precisely such a tricky item. Even if it's not Reprive Cold Dew, it most likely has a similar suppressive effect. Just holding this substance can freeze part of the Punishing Ring's seal. Ingesting some and using its freezing power to directly suppress the Punishing Ring in the Dantian might yield even better results.

This item can serve as another trump card in the second round of seizing the tomb! Should he be unable to obtain the South Sea Spring Water with sealed cultivation, Ning Fan wouldn't mind consuming some ice liquid to participate in the second round with unleashed cultivation...

"If it's for the South Sea Spring Water, I believe the Baihua Great Emperor would absolutely not blame me for taking this item. I even suspect that the Blood Bee leading me here was sent by the Baihua Great Emperor, with some intentional purpose..."

Having thought of this, a hint of caution appeared in Ning Fan's eyes. After checking the ice liquid and finding nothing unusual, he put it away.

Just as he was about to leave, a blood light shot out from the frozen Bloodsea, buzzing towards Ning Fan...

Ning Fan's eyes focused, ready to defend, but the blood light suddenly paused, revealing its form as the Blood Bee that had previously attacked him. This time, however, the Blood Bee seemed to have no intention of attacking, falling onto the ice surface of the Bloodsea. Upon landing, it transformed amid a series of blood-red runes into a young woman dressed in a pink veil.

The woman's body emitted a glow, giving off a sacred aura. Underneath her flowing hair was a nearly perfect delicate body, emanating a faint fragrance resembling flowers and honey.

The only disharmonious aspect was the iron chains locked onto her tender bare feet, clanking as she walked, much like a prisoner.

After appearing, the woman showed a hint of hesitation on her face but quickly made a decision, dragging the iron chains step by step as she approached, bowing before Ning Fan.

"The criminal woman greets the young master. Please forgive the previous attack, young master..."

Then, with a gentle wave of her palm, streaks of blood light shot out, transforming into a nearly transparent blood-colored beehive, encompassing a ten-zhang area around Ning Fan. The beehive posed no threat; its only feature was a strong isolation against spirit sense, so powerful that even an Immortal Emperor couldn't easily break through to see inside. Clearly, it was a formidable isolation divine skill.

It seemed the woman wished to speak with Ning Fan, wary of the treasure trove's owner, the Baihua Great Emperor, thus taking special precautions...

"What does the girl mean by this?" Ning Fan's gaze was calm as he scrutinized the woman before him, quietly guessing her intentions.

The woman bowed again, imploring, "The young master is a powerful cultivator; I beg the young master to rescue this humble girl from the sea of suffering!"

"Rescue you from the sea of suffering? Are you referring to truly saving your main demon soul from this Bloodsea?"

Ning Fan frowned slightly.

This woman was transformed from the Blood Bee that had previously attacked him. He hadn't seen clearly during their brief encounter before, but now he realized that she had no physical body, only a wisp of a demon soul. Furthermore, it wasn't her main demon soul but something akin to a second demon soul.

Humans can cultivate a main spirit and a second primordial spirit; similarly, demon cultivators can cultivate a main demon soul and a second demon soul; it's the same principle.

With Ning Fan's Rain Technique Perception, he could vaguely sense a deeply concealed demon aura below the ice layer of the Bloodsea, seemingly suppressed, which matched the Blood Bee's breath. However, it was several times stronger than the Blood Bee, likely the main demon soul of this Blood Bee woman.

A main and a secondary... The cultivation of this woman's secondary demon soul had reached the Shattered Thought Peak while her main demon soul's cultivation seemed to have reached the Eternity's Second Calamity Celestial Honored Realm...

This woman appeared to have practiced some secret technique, even the Mind Reading Technique could be partially obscured, making it impossible to see into her heart...

Not simple at all...

"Young master, please discern, this humble girl was originally a Bee Demon, born in antiquity. Though a demon, I never harmed anyone. Admiring Buddhist Law, I entered under the tutelage of the first owner of Baihua Peak—Guhua Celestial Being, listening and cultivating diligently. Gradually, I achieved a certain level of cultivation and became the guardian spirit beast of Baihua Peak. Later, when Guhua

Celestial Being failed to break through the Eternal Seventh Calamity and perished in the lightning tribulation, the second owner of Baihua arrived. He still appointed me as the mountain protector spirit beast. Thus, through several generational transitions, I've always practiced at Baihua Peak without ever having any dissent until the arrival of the fourth Baihua owner—Ji Shiling..."

Upon mentioning the name Ji Shiling, the Blood Bee woman clutched her head in pain as if there was a restriction within her demon soul, preventing her from freely mentioning the name. It took a while before the pain subsided.

Ji Shiling?

Ning Fan was slightly surprised; the name was unfamiliar.

"Ji Shiling is the common name of this generation's Baihua Emperor, but now she probably doesn't use it anymore..." The Blood Bee Woman explained with restraint despite the restrictions.

"Why has Lady been suppressed here by the Baihua Great Emperor?" Ning Fan thought for a moment and asked anyway.

"I annoyed Ji Shiling due to certain matters..."

The Blood Bee Woman seemed somewhat embarrassed to speak, hesitated for a moment, then continued,

"Actually, when Ji Shiling first assumed the role of Baihua Lord, she was kind to me. However, one year, she suddenly demanded that I sacrifice my chastity to seduce a man. But what I admired was the orthodox Buddhist Law, and I always practiced self-restraint and virtue, so I refused firmly, unwilling to yield and lose my Yin energy. Unexpectedly, this angered Ji Shiling. In her rage, she destroyed my physical defense, extracted my Demon Soul, and further imprisoned it under this bloody mist..."

"Thankfully, I am adept at the incarnated souls technique. Although I couldn't break through the bloody mist to escape, I gradually cultivated a second Demon Soul. With an incarnated soul's body, I secretly broke away from the bloody mist. However, unfortunately, Ji Shiling noticed and used mighty methods to imprison me here again. Compared to my main Demon Soul being suppressed at the bottom of the

bloody mist, my second Demon Soul can gain a certain freedom to wander outside the bloody mist, but it still can't get too far away. Moreover, every few months, a tide of bloody thoughts emerges in this bloody mist, causing me to suffer soul infusion pain, hardly better than death..."

A flash of hatred appeared in the Blood Bee Woman's eyes.

"So, you wish for me to take the risk of offending the Baihua Great Emperor to rescue you from this suppression?" Ning Fan frowned.

Seeking treasures in the vault was all he intended, and he didn't want to stir extra trouble or provoke the Baihua Great Emperor for a stranger.

"Young Master jests. You and I are neither relatives nor acquaintances; how could I hope for you to go to such lengths for a stranger? To be honest, though I'm suppressed here, I've also made some arrangements outside. This escape plan has been long in preparation; certainly, I need some assistance from Young Master, but there's no need for you to do anything in the vault that would anger Ji Shiling, ensuring no risk of offending her. You can rest assured on this point. I just wish for you to seek someone in the Middle State and deliver something to them. If this can be accomplished, I am sixty to seventy percent confident I can escape from here on my own. Even if Ji Shiling is truly enraged, it won't place blame on you. Should you lend a hand, the reward would surely satisfy you!"

Rewarding after the event, huh...

Ning Fan observed the Blood Bee Woman without expression, calculating silently in his heart.

It seemed she already had an extremely thorough escape plan in mind; all she needed was someone to assist by finding a person outside and delivering an item...

On the surface, it's just a slight effort...but, is there truly no risk in this matter?

Is there a deeper reason why the Baihua Great Emperor suppressed the Blood Bee Woman here? Is it really as she says, that she was suppressed for refusing to seduce a man?

To Ning Fan, the Baihua Emperor was a person characterized by unpredictability and ominousness, but she wasn't someone lacking self-control. On the contrary, as seen from her tolerance toward Ning Fan for transgressions, she was rather someone with a forbearing nature for greater things... Would such a person truly suppress a spirit beast serving multiple Baihua Lords because of a momentary rage?

Ning Fan was more inclined to believe that there was another reason behind this, possibly a significant one...

Moreover, whether the Baihua Great Emperor was unaware of the Blood Bee Woman's escape plan, had already detected it, or had already planned countermeasures, waiting leisurely for her attempting to escape just to fall into a trap, culminating her scheme...

You can't rule out this possibility.

No wonder Ning Fan was so cautious; the waters of Baihua Peak were dauntingly deep. The Baihua Great Emperor's existence might just be an Illusory Art, which was already filled with oddities. Furthermore, this issue of suppression beneath the bloody mist seemed to have other mysteries, leading Ning Fan to ponder further...

"It seems mere verbal rewards cannot sway Young Master. You are indeed a man with a firm heart..." the Blood Bee Woman paused for a moment, then continued, "To tell you the truth, Ji Shiling has actually plotted against you, but you haven't realized it yet."

"Plotted against? What does that mean?"

Ning Fan's expression remained indifferent, yet in his heart, he recalled the entire process from when he arrived at Baihua Peak, ultimately thinking of that drop of icy liquid.

Could it be that that item was truly problematic...

"Young Master might not know, but my attack on you today was not by mere chance; it was under Ji Shiling's orders, commanding me to lead you here to entice you to take that drop of Reprieve Cold Dew..."

So, it was indeed the Reprieve Cold Dew, pre-arranged by the Baihua Emperor...

"If I am not mistaken, Young Master, you should be a Foreign Cultivator, right? You are likely unfamiliar with the Reprieve Cold Dew. It's understandable, as even among beings like Da Bi's Honored Immortal, very few truly understand it. Having served Guhua Celestial Being, I've heard him speak of the drawbacks of this substance. Guhua categorized the Immortal Hundred Herbs into dozens of classes, and this one belongs to the Poppy family. Consuming this is akin to mortals consuming poppy; in excess, it leads to addiction. Once addicted, continuous consumption becomes necessary, and as the addiction deepens day by day, it gradually undermines the cultivator's path foundation, causing regress in cultivations... In the past, ascetic monks consumed it, fearless of the addiction, and even often used it to temper their minds, yet not many truly overcame the addiction, and many a path was ruined because of it..."

"Ji Shiling, fearing that you would refuse to consume it if the truth was told, lured you into stealing it yourself. Firstly, to avoid affecting the chances of obtaining South Sea Spring Water; secondly, perhaps intending to secretly plant an addiction within you. If you consume it without a means to resolve the addiction, you may find yourself controlled by Ji Shiling. Presumably, Young Master wouldn't like being subjected to another's control, correct?"

Ning Fan's gaze immediately darkened.

This substance is comparable to the poppy in the mortal world, is it!

If so, even with its effect of freezing the Punishment Ring Seal, Ning Fan could not possibly consume it.

The risk is too great!

He also felt a surge of anger, realizing that the Baihua Great Emperor used this substance to plot against him for the sake of South Sea Spring Water, potentially further guile linked to the addiction...

The Baihua Emperor really went too far!

"After telling you this, will Young Master be willing to take some risk to assist me? Don't you wish to retaliate against Ji Shiling a little..." the Blood Bee Woman looked deeply into Ning Fan's eyes and smiled.

A way to retaliate is right in front: release the Baihua Emperor's imprisoned sinner, letting the Baihua Emperor's years of schemes go to waste!

"That reason is insufficient to make me help you!"

Ning Fan suddenly took a deep breath, his heart instantly returning to calm, showing no signs of his prior anger.

For the sake of the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor, he'd temporarily endure such calculative scheming; if revenge were to happen, it wouldn't be now but after achieving his goals...

The Blood Bee Woman glanced at Ning Fan in slight surprise, she had underestimated Ning Fan's endurance. After hesitating a bit, she added, "How about this, if you are willing to assist, not only will there be significant rewards afterward, but I can also offer you some immediate benefits right now."

"Benefits? What benefits?"

"Young Master may want to take a closer look. What exactly is this icy blood sea?"

The Blood Bee maiden pointed through the blood curtain covering the place towards the icy blood sea in front of them.

Ning Fan followed the direction she pointed and carefully observed this blood sea, his expression shifting from serious to grim, and then to slight shock.

"This sea... it's entirely composed of Immortal Emperor's blood! However, the resentment here is too heavy."

"Young Master has good eyesight. The water of this blood sea is indeed Immortal Emperor's blood. In the past, when Guhua Celestial Being failed to transcend the Eternal Seven Tribulations, he fell under the Tribulation of Measure, spilling blood for thousands of miles into a river with unquenchable resentment, turning a perfectly good Baihua Buddha Land into a fierce domain, destroying the Spirit Vein, and dispersing ninety percent of the disciples. It wasn't until the second Baihua master came and spent a hundred years resolving this Imperial Death Resentment, reconstructing the Spirit Vein, and collecting all the blood scattered by Guhua Celestial Being. Unfortunately, although this blood is Emperor's blood, the heavy resentment caused the loss of its golden glow, making it useless, so the second Baihua master sealed it in the treasury to gather dust. Not until Ji Shiling became the fourth Baihua master did he retrieve this blood for repeated study, though it's unknown what he was researching. Later, when I offended Ji Shiling, he used this blood to suppress me..."

"The resentment in this blood sea is extremely terrifying, and every several months, a tide of blood recollection forms. Although this tide doesn't take lives, it disturbs the heart of cultivators. When I was initially suppressed, each time the tide appeared, I would lose my sanity, falling into madness, taking months to regain clarity, only to face the next tide again in continuous cycles."

"Perhaps I gradually adapted to it because, as time passed, the periods of madness during the tides shortened. Although the tides are still excruciatingly painful, I started to gain some benefits from them. The resentment in the blood sea contains some memories of Guhua Celestial Being before his death, including a scene of his failed tribulation, as well as some secret divine abilities he used before dying... In a few hours, the next blood recollection tide will occur, and if I'm willing to pay some price, I'm confident I can imprint the scene of Guhua Celestial Being's failed tribulation and give it to you... Only the young woman who knows this blood sea best can accomplish this, others cannot."

Ning Fan showed a moved expression.

The divine abilities and secret techniques of Baihua Celestial Being weren't much to Ning Fan's interest, but the memory of Baihua Celestial Being's failed tribulation... That was more precious than the divine skills of an Immortal Emperor!

The cultivators of the Timeless Realm are classified in realms by the number of tribulations they transgress, where the tribulation is naturally not an ordinary lightning tribulation, but a Tribulation of Measure, whose might is incomparable to minor calamities like the Bone Age Calamity.

For Eternal Cultivators, reaching the limit of their mana is not the most difficult task. Drawing down a Tribulation of Measure after that is the most difficult. Without drawing it down, one will be stuck at a bottleneck, unable to advance further.

And for Immortal Emperor-strong beings, drawing down a Tribulation of Measure is not the hardest part. Passing it is the most difficult challenge...

The tribulations of Immortal Venerable and Immortal King are not too perilous; even the Sixth Calamity that establishes an emperor position isn't insurmountable with proper preparation and sufficient aptitude.

However, once one becomes an emperor, the power of the tribulation multiplies tens of times, and from the Seventh Tribulation onwards, only a tenth to a twentieth manage to pass. Countless Immortal Emperors have died so due to failing their tribulation.

The fundamental difference between an Immortal Emperor's tribulation and others' is that there is only one chance to attempt it: succeed, and one advances; fail, and one perishes. No Immortal Emperor has ever survived a failed tribulation.

This results in a situation where most Immortal Emperors remain at the Eternal Sixth Calamity: some because they lack the opportunity to draw down the tribulation, others, old monsters whose bottlenecks have long eased, can draw down the Seventh Tribulation any time, but they suppress it with all their might, as they have no confidence in passing, staying at the sixth calamity's cultivation.

Any experience related to tribulation for those eager to transgress and ascend is precious and invaluable.

If one can observe another Immortal Emperor undergoing a Tribulation of Measure, it surely increases one's understanding and slightly raises the chances of success. The matters concerning life and death are of utmost caution.

It's a pity that witnessing an Immortal Emperor's tribulation memory is not easily obtainable. Those who succeed mostly do so by a hair's breadth, using all their divine abilities and mysterious skills, and such tribulation memories involve many secrets and are not shared with others easily.

They are top secrets of various Immortal Emperor powers!

It's said that the Godly Void Pavilion of the Eastern Heaven once auctioned a memory crystal containing the memory of a successful tribulation sealed with great divine power, eventually bought by an Immortal Emperor with a damaged Innate Treasure...

The price was indeed hefty.

The Blood Bee maiden before Ning Fan provided a chance to observe an Immortal Emperor's failed tribulation memory. Though it's only the memory of failure, it's still very helpful in understanding the details of the Tribulation of Measure.

However, this benefit still could not sway Ning Fan. After all, Ning Fan was far from becoming an emperor, let alone experiencing the Seventh Tribulation, so there was no urgency in learning these.

"If it's only the memory of a failed tribulation, it's not enough!" Ning Fan shook his head.

"Hmph, if it were any other Sixth Calamity Immortal Emperor, they would be eager to help for these failed tribulation memories. It's only a matter of delivering an item, not a difficult task. But Young Master's appetite is truly not small! If you weren't the most trustworthy among those who entered the treasury over the years, I'd have sought help from others instead of wasting words with you here!"

The Blood Bee maiden was somewhat displeased, seeing Ning Fan unmoved, and bit her lip, "I have nothing more to offer in return at this moment. If I can escape this peril, I will repay with something far more valuable than this tribulation memory, which I assure with a Demon Soul Great Oath!"

Ning Fan shook his head slightly, "No need for the Demon Soul Great Oath. I have three questions. If you can answer one or two, I might still help."

Upon hearing this, the Blood Bee maiden's expression softened, and she smiled, saying, "What questions does Young Master have? I am most willing to provide answers."

"First, what is the true reason Baihua Emperor is suppressing you!"

"This matter..." The Blood Bee maiden was momentarily at a loss for words, aware that Ning Fan saw through her concealment. Though her face turned slightly grave, she did not argue.

"Second, aside from your main Demon Soul and second Demon Soul, you seem to have cultivated other subsidiary Demon Souls, right?"

"Correct..." She forced a calm expression, but her heart was secretly startled. She indeed cultivated a third Demon Soul, hidden elsewhere, which was a secret unknown to anyone, even Ji Shiling. How did this man before her, whom she'd just met, know of this?

"Third, do you think Baihua Great Emperor is aware of your escape plan?"

"..."

The Blood Bee maiden's expression turned increasingly desolate and despairing.

Even this man whom she'd just met saw through her hidden third Demon Soul. Could Ji Shiling have seen through it too, perhaps even knowing its whereabouts all along?

Is there any point in continuing with the escape plan...

Might she escape one scheme only to fall into another...

"Indeed, this woman has cultivated other auxiliary Demon Souls. I'm afraid the person she wants me to find is the other auxiliary Demon Souls she has hidden in the outside world..."

Ning Fan simply guessed casually, but upon seeing the Blood Bee woman's change in expression, he knew that he had hit the nail on the head.

"Will Young Master help or not with this favor..." the Blood Bee woman smiled ruefully.

"Not help!"

What a joke, why should Ning Fan help a woman who is keeping secrets from him.

What if she tricked him!

"Very well, regarding the matter of escape, I do need to reconsider. Since Young Master refuses to help, so be it... But, seeing as I've given Young Master some advice, could he keep secret about my intent to escape and not tell Ji Shiling." Faced with Ning Fan's refusal, the Blood Bee woman was not disappointed and instead returned to a calm expression.

"Rest assured, I am not one to gossip. Although I won't help you escape, I won't harm you either. Even though I've said I won't help you escape, I am willing to give you all other kinds of assistance as recompense for your advice on the Reprieve Cold Dew matter."

Thus, under the surprised gaze of the Blood Bee woman, Ning Fan easily broke through her isolated beehive, waved his sleeve, and sent forth golden streaks of light, continually altering the dominant forces in the area.

Gradually, the forces within the bloody mist eased, and the suppression originally present was alleviated.

The Blood Bee woman covered her mouth in disbelief. Her Main Demon Soul, painfully suppressed at the bottom of the blood sea, would constantly endure the agony of soul tearing. Yet, as Ning Fan effortlessly modified the dominant forces here, that soul-tearing pain actually subsided!

Though the Main Demon Soul remained suppressed, it suffered little pain. Having endured millions of years of continuous agony, the sudden disappearance of pain was a comfort beyond ordinary experience, causing the Blood Bee woman to moan in relief, feeling relaxed all over.

Her gaze towards Ning Fan held a mixture of complexity, and a deep sense of awe.

To change Ji Shiling's restrictions at will... this foreign cultivator's Dao of formations is outstanding!

Although Ning Fan refused the Blood Bee woman's request, he did not plan to leave right away but stayed, waiting for the blood thought tidal waves mentioned by the Blood Bee woman.

This Blood Bee woman certainly won't pay the price to help him imprint the Ancient Flower Sovereign's tribulation memories.

The fact that she won't help doesn't mean Ning Fan can't try himself. If he can imprint a portion of the tribulation memories from the tidal waves with his own strength, it would be a pleasing matter.

Four hours later, the blood thought tidal waves began.

The originally ice-sealed surface of the blood sea suddenly rose with green lightning. As this lightning appeared, the Blood Bee woman's expression changed, she hastily bade farewell, transforming into a blood light to return to the sea bottom, not daring to remain on the surface.

Subsequently, the entire upper part of the blood sea became engulfed in green lightning.

The green lightning gradually weakened, but immediately after, a resentment that could cover the sky erupted from beneath the green lightning.

"I don't believe it!"

"I don't believe it!!!"

It was an ancient roar echoing to this day, rising from within that resentment—the death roar of the Ancient Flower Sovereign!

Ning Fan dared not be negligent, already secretly activating the Body-protecting Golden Light of the God-Extinguishing Shield to keep the imperial death resentment at bay a few yards away, remaining utterly composed.

At the same time, in the depths of the blood sea bottom, amidst infinite blood light pressure, the Blood Bee woman was conversing with someone identical to her appearance.

It was her Main Demon Soul!

"I apologize, I could not persuade that person to help..."

"Humph, he is indeed fortunate; otherwise, to the Third Demon Soul, that Vast Expanse Butterfly would be quite the nourishment."

"That person is overly cautious, but fortunately, even if he doesn't offer himself, the Third Demon Soul should still act on its own. To us Spirit Eating Bees, the taste of the Vast Expanse Butterfly is unmistakable and irresistible!"

"However, he did make a point. Our plan, Ji Shiling certainly knows about it. She's likely using this matter to verify some suspicions. If not doubtful, how could she imprison us here for so many years..."

"That Vast Expanse Butterfly seems intent on imprinting the Ancient Flower Sovereign's tribulation memory with its power..."

"Difficult, extremely difficult! Even if we join forces, it would require a hefty price to accomplish such a task. If this person's cultivations are sealed, touching the memories within the resentment might lead to a loss of mind... Haha, let it be a punishment for his unwillingness to help. We'll just watch him suffer under this resentment!"

...

Meanwhile, the Baihua Great Emperor inside the inner hall snorted coldly.

If she wasn't mistaken, the suppressed Spirit Eating Bee had activated its hive magic, even in contact with Ning Fan.

It seemed the Spirit Eating Bee knew the drawbacks of the Reprieve Cold Dew...

Thus, Ning Fan most likely won't consume that Reprieve Cold Dew.

"Humph, if this person doesn't unseal his cultivations, winning the top three in the second round is mere foolish dreaming! It seems obtaining the South Sea Spring Water will require a different approach without relying on this person..."

Chapter 1023: Reincarnation Feels Like a Stranger

The Blood Tide is approaching, the air filled with more oppressive resentment, and ghostly wailing echoes from unknown origins.

Ning Fan expanded his protective aura to a radius of one zhang, walking calmly across the frozen sea, impervious to any resentment. He comprehended the grand momentum of the place clearly; he even somewhat predicted the center of the tide's explosion.

Having determined the center of the tide's explosion, Ning Fan came to a place in the east of the bloody mist, sat down cross-legged, and awaited the tide's arrival.

This waiting lasted for three hours.

The bloody mist suddenly began to show signs of melting, with the ocean's waves resuming their flow beneath the ice layer, resentment spreading like dense fog, shrouding the sea in a hazy glow. In this haze, broken scenes occasionally appeared like mirages amidst the mist.

These were all images from Ancient Flower Celestial Being before her death!

"It's here, every hour the Blood Tide's power doubles. Even with our combined efforts, we can only last until the fourth hour, that's usually when memory related to passing tribulation appears... The Vast Expanse Butterfly wishes to imprint the tribulation memory while sealing its cultivation, it's next to impossible!"

At the sea's bottom, the Blood Bee woman's main demon soul struggled against the rapidly increasing resentment all around, smirking coldly, eager to see Ning Fan struggling under the tide.

Indeed, in the eyes of the Blood Bee main demon soul, Ning Fan may not even be able to sustain for one hour in the tide and would be severely injured.

Unfortunately, this woman is destined to be disappointed, as Ning Fan was protected by the God-Extinguishing Shield, seeing the pervasive resentment as child's play, not suffering any harm, nor allowing the resentment to approach.

As a blood-colored wave surged from the Endless Sea, the area resounded with the deafening crashes of ocean waves; as it approached, it was indeed a giant wave, a hundred zhang high, roaring down towards Ning Fan's seated location.

This hundred zhang high wave contained terrifying resentment, comparable to slaughtering thousands of Cultivation Star mortals to amass such an amount of resentment, enough to shock some newly ascended Immortal Venerables. Yet Ning Fan responded calmly, casually waving his hand, and instantly sent hundreds of golden streaks towards the wave, dispersing its momentum, causing it to halt in mid-air, extremely eerily.

"This child actually disrupted the wave's forward momentum and descent, causing it to remain in the air! What high-level comprehension of the grand momentum is needed to achieve this!" At the sea's bottom, both Blood Bee main demon soul and Second Demon Soul were collectively shocked.

Even the Baihua Great Emperor, far away in the inner hall, raised an eyebrow, seemingly surprised.

Ning Fan looked thoughtfully at the static giant wave.

"Ancient Flower Celestial Being's passing tribulation memory, due to heavy resentment, remains, covered in resentment even as the years pass unwithered. These memories are too fragmented, like a complete book torn into countless pages, even each page shredded into innumerable pieces... Imprinting these fragmented memories is too troublesome, and even if imprinted, can only glimpse disjointed scenes. It might be better to directly collect this resentment to slowly research the various memories later, perhaps then able to see complete... These resentments can be considered treasures

within the treasury, after all, Baihua Emperor has made a promise, if I were to take them, she should have no objections!"

With a decision made in his heart, Ning Fan actually rolled his sleeve, directly collecting the static giant wave into his sleeve!

"This child actually collected the resentment-formed giant wave!" The two women at the sea's bottom were shocked beyond compare.

Their comprehension of the grand momentum fell far short of being able to stop such waves in mid-air for collection, typically only avoiding their onslaught.

Yet Ning Fan accomplished this, his abilities surpassed the two women's imagination, clearly not something that ordinary Eternal Immortal Venerables could emulate!

A mere foreign cultivator with such methods!

"Eastern Heaven's Secret Art of Power... No, this child perhaps even mastered the Secret Art of Prestige, otherwise, facing my pressure back then, he could not have been so composed... Indeed underestimated him, this child might not need to consume Reprieve Cold Dew, perhaps he has a slight opportunity to seize some South Sea Spring Water, thus there's no need to completely abandon hope..." Since Ning Fan entered the treasury, the Baihua Great Emperor finally smiled satisfactorily for the first time, removing a shadow from her face.

Then she seemed to think of something, a calculating gleam appeared in her eyes.

Imprisoning Blood Bee for years without confirming anything, perhaps these last memories of Ancient Flower in Ning Fan's hands might unravel some secrets...

Wave after wave of incoming tidal waves were dispersed by Ning Fan with the Secret Art of Power, collecting them one by one. This ease lasted for three hours, finally beginning to show strain.

At this point, the intensity of the resentment had multiplied several times over, still escalating with time. From the fourth hour onwards, Ning Fan had no choice but to maximize his protective aura.

Until the ninth hour, Ning Fan's protective aura was slightly sunken by the surrounding resentment, if he withdrew the protective aura now, he was confident he would be directly turned to blood by the resentment, fortunately, the tide was nearing its conclusion, else Ning Fan had no faith he could withstand several more hours with sealed cultivation.

But this was enough to astonish the two women at the sea's bottom.

As the last wave of the tide passed, Ning Fan dissolved his protective aura and left calmly, having gained a palm-sized blood-red crystal in his sleeve, which emitted ghostly wails and crashing wave sounds near the ear.

It was condensed from the resentment collected from the Blood Tide!

Chanting spells, formation light suddenly appeared in the air, rolled Ning Fan, and transported him out of the treasury.

Outside the treasury, the crowd had grown impatient, discussing fervently when Ning Fan suddenly emerged, silencing everyone instantly.

Each harboring private thoughts.

"He finally came out, able to linger in the treasury so long, his divine skills mustn't be underestimated, if I encounter him in the second round, I must not provoke excessively..." Many were apprehensive.

"This person actually lingered so long in the treasury, who knows what benefits he gained..." Naturally, there were also those greedy types, yet with Ning Fan's strength in mind, they restrained their ambitions.

Once Ning Fan emerged, the meat-winged youths guiding the crowd finally led everyone back to the guest rooms.

Those cultivators who gained benefits in the treasury quickly busied themselves upon returning, Ning Fan was no exception.

From this treasury visit, he obtained quite a number of good items, like the drop of poison that could kill Immortal Venerables of the Three Wasteland Poison Immortal, which Ning Fan didn't plan to use for murder, but considered consuming once his strength allowed to enhance poison immunity.

Also, there was an entire river of Sixth Grade Dao Spring, and an abundant collection of Dabei Pill Recipe pills, and a vast orchard of million-year spiritual fruits... These benefits were considerable gains.

Then there was the drop of Reprieve Cold Dew... though Ning Fan didn't intend to consume it, he still took it, ultimately not returning it...

Naturally, there were also the fragmented memories of the Ancient Flower Celestial Being's failed tribulation. Ning Fan didn't bring out imprinted copies, but rather the complete Imperial Death Resentment, almost draining the entire blood sea of resentment.

Holding the entirely blood-red resentment crystal, Ning Fan attempted to probe his spirit sense into it, immediately feeling the stabbing pain of resentment from the spirit sense.

Simultaneously, fragmented memories of Ancient Flower Celestial Being's failed tribulation poured into Ning Fan's mind.

Still too fragmented, unable to clearly witness the entire process of Ancient Flower Celestial Being's passage through the Eternal Seventh Calamity, only able to see disjointed scenes.

Scene one, Guhua (Ancient Flower) Celestial Being stood above a sea of blue lightning, using the power of an Innate Treasure Sword to withstand the thunderous attacks within the sea of lightning.

Scene two suddenly shifted to the moment of Guhua Celestial Being's demise, turning to ashes, still roaring words like 'I don't believe' before death.

Scene three jumped back to the meticulous preparations before the True Immortal Tribulation.

Scene four was once again the moment when Guhua Celestial Being battled the blue sea of lightning.

Scene five showed Guhua Celestial Being, before the tribulation, watching the Wuyou Orchid at the Baihua Main Peak.

Scene six is...

Ning Fan suddenly paused, slightly rewinding his spirit sense, and rewatched a fragment of broken memory:

As the sun set in the west, the evening breeze turned a bit chilly. Guhua Celestial Being seemed to sense that this time the tribulation would not be smooth, dismissed the child attendants, stayed alone by the cliff, and gazed at those Wuyou Orchids, looking solemn.

"For this Seventh Calamity, I am less than thirty percent confident of success. In theory, I should continue to suppress the tribulation, keep accumulating strength, and wait for a better opportunity. But no longer can I wait; I want to gamble on this tribulation to verify a conjecture... Perhaps the answer would drive me to despair, make me insane, but I refuse to believe this conjecture is true! Even if it is, I'll use this tribulation as bait to plot against that figure behind the scenes, for a... reverse snatch!"

"Sadly, I once found a Twelve-grade Flower Sovereign as a protective vessel, but now I've only retrieved an Eleven-grade one. The reverse snatch may be less likely to succeed than expected... The one originally planted in the Dreamland Realm first lost its life's golden qi, then withered away. Had it not, accomplishing the Twelve-grade Flower Sovereign Soul Fusion, I would have at least fifty percent chance to succeed... Yet, if the flower hadn't withered, I might not have had this understanding, as such, it's hard to say what is gained or lost. Alas, it was the one I hoped for the most, as it gained spirit awareness and emotions due to a butterfly, only to die longing for its mate, gone with the Heavenly Court, what a pity, what a pity..."

Guhua Celestial Being slightly extended his divine skills, twelve spheres of light flew from around him, each holding a flower exuding an imperial aura.

Gradually, from each flower in the twelve spheres of light emerged a thumb-sized woman, each asleep in their respective flower core, transformed from the flower's spirit soul, all of breathtaking beauty.

The largest and most ethereal flower held a sleeping spirit soul with a face so familiar to Ning Fan.

Xu Qiuling...

"Only missing you..." Guhua Celestial Being sighed slightly at the Wuyou Orchids as pale as sick beauties, that twelfth-grade illusory flower, resembling Xu Qiuling's, faded and vanished, leaving only the other eleven.

Up to here, the scene ended.

Ning Fan paused his breathing, replaying the scene over and over. Within his soul, a tremor seemed to shiver, incessantly colliding...

The Flower Sovereign, losing its life-golden qi, disappeared with the Heavenly Court, the butterfly, and the flower spirit soul so indistinguishable from Xu Qiuling...

That face, so potent in stirring his soul... Could that flower be... Ling Er's past life...

And the butterfly related to the Heavenly Court in the story, is it pointing to him...

Did he once cross paths with Ling Er in a past life...

Was Ling Er longing for her mate to death in a past life, longing for him...

Ning Fan's expression dimmed, unable to articulate the feeling.

In a past life, there was life and death shared, in this life, hands held in unity, but at the first unexpected encounter amid a sea of people, they did not recognize, did not know...

Reincarnation feels like a stranger... reincarnation... feels like a stranger...

Suddenly, Ning Fan understood something.

No wonder he cared so much for Wuyou Orchids on Baihua Peak, always feeling an unshakable gaze, undoubtedly because Ling Er's past life's flower sovereign species was this Wuyou Orchid.

Only the flower transformed from Ling Er is worthy of another look.

Wuyou Orchid, Longing Orchid...

Ning Fan's gaze deepened, continuing to probe the resentment crystal. Within were hundreds, thousands of broken scenes, skipping all related to the tribulation, yet difficult to find more related to Xu Qiuling.

Probably at Guhua Celestial Being's last moment, the Wuyou Orchid Flower Sovereign that Xu Qiuling represented was only slightly recalled, not significantly important, hence it did not frequently appear in the memories.

However, at this moment, Ning Fan would rather discard those memories about the tribulation, and have this crystal contain just the bits and pieces about Xu Qiuling.

The desire to understand, to know about the past life...

But unfortunately, nothing more remained.

After a long while, Ning Fan put away the memory crystal, his expression unreadable, thoughts unknown.

Over the following days, Ning Fan still appeared by the cliff, but no longer to comprehend the Ancient Demon Divine Skill, rather to look, to see those clusters of pale Wuyou Orchids, as if gazing across time, across past and future, at that smiling face eager for her mate's return.

Involuntarily, he took out the qin he hadn't played for a long time, playing the Song of Yue Boatman taught by Xu Qiuling.

The melody couldn't compare to the beauty created by Qin Art Grandmasters, yet it contained emotions soaked into the bones, bit by bit, deeply embedded in the qin's sound.

Moreover, an extremely ethereal Dao rhythm gradually appeared on Ning Fan, increasing bit by bit with the qin's tune.

That was the scent of reincarnation!

Reincarnation feels like a stranger... Ning Fan gazed out upon Baihua Peak, in the present, saw into the past through his acquaintance with Xu Qiuling, and perceived a past life.

If the first meeting in the past life was the start, and this life's reunion the end, then this moment was Ning Fan moving from the start towards the end, and back to the start once more.

Though not a completion of cultivation, merely an emotional journey of return, it deeply affected Ning Fan, even giving him his first genuine, personal understanding of the term reincarnation.

Reincarnation feels like a stranger...

When Ning Fan was still in the first step, he grasped a trace of the Power of Reincarnation. However, that trace was too little and was not realized by himself but was learned by mimicking the Purple Dou Immortal Sovereign. Thus, it could be used to some extent in the first step of cultivation, but reached a limit in the second step.

Now, things are different.

Ning Fan couldn't articulate his emotions, yet beneath the melody of the zither, there was a scent of reincarnation, growing ever more intense and unfathomable.

He didn't deliberately amplify the sound of the zither, but its ethereal quality seemed capable of penetrating all barriers of space-time, reaching the ears of every cultivator in the Hundred Flowers Territory.

Throughout, the zither's melody continued.

Throughout, the zither's melody became deeper and deeper, instilling a sense of unfathomable awe!

It seemed as if a seed of reincarnation truly sprouted on Ning Fan's spirit sense, known to few, yet not unknown entirely.

Even the True Person Bailu was stunned these past few days, shocked by the uncanny divine skills of Ning Fan's zither music, but unable to comprehend the true essence of the music.

However, it did not escape the notice of the two powerful beings present here!

Burying Moon naturally recognized the budding comprehension of reincarnation within the zither melody. Though just a budding, it was an encounter even Immortal Emperors and Quasi-Saints find unattainable!

Ning Fan accomplished it!

The other person shocked was undoubtedly the Baihua Great Emperor.

As an Immortal Emperor, it was impossible to know nothing of the Power of Reincarnation, and the penetrating force within Ning Fan's zither melody was clearly... reincarnation!

Genuine reincarnation, belonging solely to Ning Fan, neither an imitation nor borrowed!

Perhaps at the moment, the Power of Reincarnation within Ning Fan was not formidable, but as long as he continued to cultivate, one day this power would become a force no second-step cultivator could withstand.

A power unique to a third-step.

"Someone, write down the music you heard!"

The Baihua Great Emperor calmly summoned the maids to notate the zither music.

However, when these maids took up their pens, they discovered the melody in their minds was unfamiliar, continually forgotten, unable to be recorded.

The Baihua Great Emperor couldn't help but grow serious.

She also couldn't remember any note, the strange melody slipping from memory as soon as it entered the ear...

This confirmed her belief that Ning Fan's zither music was infused with an extremely profound power of reincarnation, filling her with both awe and unprecedented confidence in Ning Fan participating in the second round of the grave-pilfering affair.

"Reporting to Your Majesty! The Sea Witch Sect Witch has replied, expressing willingness to assist in the second round of the grave-pilfering, but she demands double the reward!"

A maid suddenly entered the inner hall and reported.

The Baihua Great Emperor's eyes slightly darkened, then eased, and she mockingly replied to the informant, "Tell her the reward can be doubled, but if she fails to acquire the South Sea Spring Water, she cannot blame the palace for being ruthless."

"Yes!" The maid respectfully withdrew.

The Baihua Great Emperor shook her head indifferently.

For the second round of the grave-pilfering, having Ning Fan should suffice. As for the Sea Witch Sect Witch, she will be the backup strategy...

With a slight raise of her hand, the Baihua Great Emperor gently flicked her finger, and a message-transmitting flying sword suddenly shot out, disappearing.

At the same time, on a secluded cliff of the Baihua Main Peak, a message-transmitting flying sword suddenly appeared beside Ning Fan.

"If you obtain the South Sea Spring Water and nurture sufficient Divine Origin Pills, the information you seek will be delivered to you without fail. As for previous grievances, please understand a bit, and there will be additional compensation after the task is completed."

Showing some signs of wanting to ease the relationship between the two.

Ning Fan paused his zither playing, appearing hesitant for a moment, then let out a soft sigh.

He and the Baihua Great Emperor had many disagreements, but it wasn't an irreconcilable life-and-death feud. Now that the other seemed willing to compromise, he decided not to pursue the matter further.

After all, the matter of the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor was more pressing.

After a brief silence, Ning Fan turned his hand and sent back a message-transmitting flying sword, "If the Offering Vessel of Ancient Demons information is obtained, past grievances will be resolved."

As long as he could get the information about the Offering Vessel, saving the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor, he could overlook minor plots.

Receiving the response, the Baihua Great Emperor felt a slight relief. She was overbearing and domineering by nature but did not wish to provoke an adversary who had begun to comprehend reincarnation.

This young man's current status is manageable, but his future achievements... the Baihua Great Emperor dared not think thoroughly; feared he could be at least a Quasi-Saint. Provoking such an individual was unwise!

A few more days passed, and a series of Spirit Beast Carriages began heading towards Zhongzhou Liuli City.

Ning Fan intended to set off as well, but unfortunately, Burying Moon and Ouyang Nuan could not accompany him.

So far, with the help of Ouyang Nuan's Five-Color Medicine Soul, the Ninth Revolution Golden Pill Pill Masters of the Baihua Peak had refined over sixty Divine Origin Pills, yet this number still fell short of the Baihua Great Emperor's requirements. It seemed that Ouyang Nuan had to remain here a while longer.

Burying Moon naturally stayed behind to protect Ouyang Nuan; she brought her along and naturally had to ensure her safety.

As for Wu Laoba, he shamelessly insisted on accompanying Ning Fan to Middle State to represent the Tamu Clan and the Southern Frontier Steppe in the second round of the Tomb-Seizing Battle!

"Master, take Little Ba along! Since obtaining the new magical treasure, my powers have greatly improved. If I participate in the Middle State competition, I'm sure I can sweep away the enemies for the master!" Wu Laoba was brimming with confidence!

Even with his cultivation sealed, he was self-assured that his greatly improved Black Fortune powers were enough to face a direct confrontation with an Eternal Immortal Venerable.

If his cultivation was unsealed... hehe, even in the face of an Immortal King experiencing the Calamity of Eternal Aeons, he was confident he could fight and potentially kill an enemy several levels higher!

With the Imperial Jade Fortune Crown, his strength soared, and he was no longer the same Wu Xiaoba of the past in Wu's hometown!

"According to the rules as I understand them, you did not participate in the first round of the Tomb-Seizing, so you do not seem to be qualified to represent Tamu in the second round. I think you should stay here and not accompany me..." Ning Fan gave Wu Laoba a meaningful look.

"What! I'm not qualified for the second round! Well, even if I can't participate in the second round of the Tomb-Seizing, Little Ba wants to follow the master, to make a trip to Liuli City. My lifelong wish is to follow the master, not for the master's reward, but to see the master's handsome face every day upon opening my eyes, to smell the master's fragrance with every breath..."

Ning Fan frowned, feeling a shiver of disgust. He suspected that Wu Laoba might have a fondness for his own gender, and instinctively moved a few feet away from him.

Of course, he also suspected that Wu Laoba's eagerness to go to Liuli City might have ulterior motives...

Lately, Wu Laoba had been using the Treasure-Seeking Turtle countless times daily to search the western side of Middle State.

Liuli City was in the west of Middle State, no? Might there be something in this place that Wu Laoba urgently desires...

It must be said, Ning Fan knew Wu Laoba all too well. Based on the feedback from the Treasure-Seeking Turtle, indeed, there was something in the direction of Liuli City in Middle State that made Wu Laoba drool, leading to his eagerness to accompany Ning Fan to Liuli City.

As for assisting Ning Fan in the second round of the Tomb-Seizing... does it really matter if he can participate? Wu Xiaoba is not the kind of person to go out of his way to help the Tamu Clan in the second round of the Tomb-Seizing.

Given the time, he'd prefer tricking the natives of Middle State—the Dabei Clan has so many fools, he could easily deceive and scare them to gain numerous benefits...

But compared to that thing, ordinary benefits appeared lackluster.

"All right, let's take you along on this journey." Ning Fan smiled meaningfully.

Wu Laoba shivered suddenly—did the star of misfortune see through something? Last time the Water-Flooding Realm Bottle had that same smile, this time...

"Let's set off."

A Spirit Beast Carriage carried Ning Fan, Duolan, and Wu Laoba as it departed for the far west of Middle State.

Unlike the trip there, this time, it was Wu Laoba driving while Ning Fan and Duolan stayed inside the carriage.

Throughout the several days of travel, Ning Fan did not waste any time, continually organizing his insights into the Ancient Chaos understanding, alongside his previous insights into reincarnation.

What is reincarnation? Ning Fan presently had no concept. He only vaguely felt that, following the matter with Xu Qiuling, a seed seemed to have been planted within, making the sensation of using the Power of Reincarnation feel somehow different.

Purple-gold smoke-like power twined around his fingertips, like a well-behaved snake.

This was once the reincarnation understanding of the Purple Dou Immortal Sovereign.

But now, it seemed different, seemingly turning into an understanding unique to Ning Fan...

"Compared to before at Baihua Peak, I seem significantly different..."

Nevertheless, whenever he tried to calmly perceive that reincarnation Dao rhythm, he was interrupted by Wu Laoba's spontaneous singing along the way.

The dreadful singing, incredibly joyful singing, and somewhat offensively loud singing.

Even with Ning Fan's firm spirit sense, this singing made him frown.

"Senior, your subordinate's singing voice is indeed... unique," Duolan smiled wryly, trying to be as tactful as possible.

"It is indeed unique... It's a waste that this guy doesn't practice sonic magic skills; his singing is naturally taunting." Ning Fan shook his head, equally helpless.

He didn't stop Wu Laoba from singing, though.

Bad as it was, it served as a form of mental cultivation.

Yet unexpectedly, Wu Laoba overheard everything spoken inside the carriage and secretly remembered Ning Fan's words.

"My master once said I had a talent in sonic magic, saying I was a tone-deaf genius one in a hundred thousand... I always thought it was sarcasm from my master, but now the star of misfortune says the same—could this really be my talent?"

So he decided to develop a magical roar technique infused with Black Fortune powers!

Thus, between his singing, Wu Laoba sometimes paused, seemingly pondering the changes in melody, gradually incorporating magical skills...

In this atmosphere, Liuli City drew closer and finally appeared before them.

"Are you participants in the second round, or spectators?"

The Spirit Beast Carriage had barely stopped when a group of inspecting Masters approached, led by a burly Yellow Turban Warrior with red hair and red eyes.

"No need for inspection, it's me."

Duolan assumed an icy demeanor as he stepped out of the carriage.

Instantly, the red-haired warrior's expression changed, and he immediately knelt to the ground.

"Criminal Luo Shixx of Chulie pays respects to the young master! I did not expect the young master to come to Liuli City to watch the second round of the Tomb-Seizing. Luo Shixx thought you would directly participate in the third round... But it's just as well, there is a matter in Liuli City requiring the young master's decision. Please make the call for us, for Chulie!"

Chapter 1024: Blood Martial Arena

"Did something happen to the disciples left in Liuli City?"

Upon hearing the words of the red-haired man, Duolan furrowed her brows slightly, as if she had some suspicions. She instinctively wanted to ask more, but on second thought, she was accompanying Ning Fan to the comparison this time. If she caused trouble for Ning Fan again, it wouldn't be right, so she hesitated and swallowed the words that were about to slip out.

"Whatever it is, let's wait until I've settled down in Liuli City before discussing it."

"It's a neglect on my part. Someone, please escort the Saintess to a place in the city for her accommodation!" The red-haired man was taken aback, glancing thoughtfully at the carriage, seemingly exchanging a brief glance with Ning Fan inside the carriage, and then gave the order."

"No need, we can enter the city on our own," Duolan responded coldly.

The Spirit Beast Carriage stopped at the stables outside Liuli City. Duolan, along with Ning Fan and Wu Laoba, walked into the city. Vehicles were not permitted inside the city; whether Immortal Emperor or commoner, everyone received the same treatment. This was because Liuli City had another layer of significance—it's the Buddha Capital of Middle State, the sacred site in the hearts of countless Buddha cultivators.

It certainly should not be desecrated.

Liuli City is the largest city in Middle State, with no less than a thousand temples, and six major city gates. Walking from one city gate to another at ordinary speed would take several days. Therefore, the city has numerous outposts with teleport formations for free movement within the city.

Glazed Glass is one of the seven treasures of Buddhism, characterized by its azure color and translucent glow. Ordinary buildings in Liuli City are rather mundane, but any temple is almost entirely constructed with top-grade Glazed Glass, the azure treasure light reaching skyward as if Buddhist Law covers the heavens, imparting an incredibly sacred feeling.

There are many plazas in the city, often frequented by famous monks lecturing, and Ning Fan encountered several high monks expounding teachings after walking only two stone streets.

The audience was quite numerous.

There are no ordinary people in the Dabei clan. Almost everyone is born with a Medicine Soul, naturally making them masters, but most have relatively low cultivations and aren't particularly enthusiastic about cultivation. Thus, their lives in the forbidden space of Middle State aren't too different from common people.

Masons, stonecutters, carpenters, painters... After observing a bit, Ning Fan noticed that the civilians living in Liuli City were mostly artisans, primarily serving the temples. There were also various merchants running inns and selling daily necessities, providing for the Buddha cultivators who came to a pilgrimage in Liuli City without charging a penny.

Considering the Dabei people's eagerness for gold and silver, this accommodating act towards monks was indeed rare.

"The customs here are truly interesting..." Ning Fan remarked with a smile.

"Yes, this place is really interesting. I claimed to be a Buddha cultivator, coming to Liuli City for a pilgrimage, and those fools wouldn't charge me anything; everything was free to eat, drink, and take. Later, they noticed my attire wasn't quite right—not the usual robe of a Buddha cultivator, nor the typical nomadic garb of the Dabei people—so I said I was a Holy Mountain Tomb Guardian, and they became even more reverent, with some wealthy merchants generously gifting me gold and silver, hoping I'd contribute to the Medicine Master Buddha's sanctuary... Haha, why should I go and donate to some laborious Medicine Master Buddha? Just by wandering around, I managed to swindle over two thousand taels of gold, hahaha..."

Wu Laoba was boasting incessantly; whenever Ning Fan stopped to observe the local customs, he ran into the community to con the residents of Liuli City.

"Does tricking these people give you a sense of accomplishment? Speaking of which, why are you becoming more like the Dabei people, so eager for gold? What use does it have for us path cultivators?" Ning Fan asked, baffled.

"No use at all, but fooling these idiots is fun. It's amusing and satisfying!"

"..." Ning Fan was speechless.

"..." Duolan was at a loss for words.

"Senior and Mr. Wu, if you're interested in the customs of Liuli City, why not walk around the city for a while longer while I go ahead and arrange our accommodations?" Duolan seemed preoccupied.

"Very well, you go and arrange the accommodations first; I want to look around a bit more."

Ning Fan understood that Duolan was concerned about the words spoken by the red-haired man and knew she chose not to confront him directly to avoid causing more trouble for himself.

Thinking about this, he couldn't help but add, "If you have something to handle in this city, don't worry about me, feel free to do it."

Duolan was taken aback, then she smiled with pursed lips, "But what if I do trouble you, Senior?"

"Then try not to cause me trouble..." Ning Fan replied, speechless.

"Yes, I will definitely not cause you trouble, Senior!"

Duolan looked at Ning Fan gratefully, found an outpost on the street, and teleported directly toward a location in the city.

Ning Fan did not question where Duolan would find accommodation. With his spirit sense, he could easily locate Duolan in the city, and naturally, Duolan would likely contact him actively anyway.

It could not be denied; he gradually developed a slight trust in Duolan, no longer as wary as in the beginning.

Wu Laoba didn't understand the verbal sparring between Ning Fan and Duolan, nor did he care. On the surface, Ning Fan looked at the surrounding scenery and culture, while he continued to deceive and fool the local residents. However, secretly, he often took out the Treasure-Seeking Turtle and searched for something in the city, his expressions becoming increasingly peculiar.

Strange, it's strange! Clearly, I sensed another piece of the Imperial Jade Fortune Set from within Liuli City, but after entering the city, I can't sense it anymore.

Could it be... because the distance is too close, it led the holder of the Imperial Jade Fortune Set to notice my search and thus hide it?

Hmph, I'll search every single house in the city with the star of misfortune and see where that holder is hiding...

Hmm? Got a signal!

Wu Laoba's mung bean-like small eyes sparkled with brilliance, yet he concealed his excitement well. Just as he was about to find an excuse to slip away, he suddenly experienced a sharp stomach pain and told Ning Fan, "Oh dear, master, bad news! Little Ba just ate something from those merchants, and I think it upset my stomach; I need to find a place to relieve myself, so I won't accompany you in the city..."

Strange, he, Wu Laoba, hadn't had stomach issues for tens of millions of years. Could this be due to someone's trap? However, it could serve as a good excuse to slip away.

"Having an upset stomach, are you joking..." Ning Fan said, speechless, suspecting Wu Laoba was treating him like a Dabei person now, believing such a lie?

Master cultivators with indestructible organs, having stomach trouble?

Pfffft!

It seemed to verify his words, Wu Laoba let out a foul-smelling fart, which sounded as if there was a leakage.

It turned out he really had an upset stomach... As an Immortal Venerable Master, having practiced fasting for years, he actually ate something that upset his stomach...

Ning Fan was speechless while secretly focusing his gaze, an Azure Spike flashed imperceptibly as he glanced around the marketplace, instantly feeling secretly alarmed.

There were quite a number of hidden masters living in seclusion here, including Immortal Venerables and Immortal Kings, each concealing their aura with great skill. Even with Ning Fan's sharpness, without using the Tianren Eye Power, he couldn't instantly see through them!

Among them, there were a few auras that seemed to have stepped into the realm of Immortal Emperor, yet absolutely didn't belong to the Five Emperors of Middle State but were those reclusive masters...

No wonder Wu Laoba fell for it. He probably tricked some fool among them, perhaps even one of those Immortal Venerables or Emperors was pretending to be foolish, putting him in a tough spot. The Buddhist disciples refrain from slaughter, and many of these powerful entities, willing to live in seclusion, are true Buddha cultivators with pure Buddhist Law and nearly zero Evil Qi, hence only giving him a small punishment, making him have a stomach upset...

"If you have matters to attend to in Liuli City, you can go ahead, no need to find excuses. Of course, act carefully, don't cause trouble for me. Liuli City is not as full of fools as you think..."

"Yes, yes, yes, Little Ba will remember, Little Ba won't cause trouble for the master..."

Feeling like he was granted amnesty, Wu Laoba covered his rear end and waddled off towards a small alley piled with trash, seemingly intending to resolve his issue on the spot instead of finding a latrine...

Some passing residents began to point at the alley...

Ning Fan pretended not to know him and started wandering around the city alone.

Without Duolan and Wu Laoba following him around, he could properly sort through his insights gained on Baihua Peak.

Ancient Demon Annihilation Dao... this kind of Ancient Demon Dao seemed utterly incompatible with the Buddhist atmosphere here, as if there's an impulse urging Ning Fan to tear this Liuli City apart, to destroy all the solemnity of Buddhist Law.

This is the hatred of the Ancient Demons towards Buddhist Law.

But it isn't Ning Fan's hatred for the Buddhist disciples.

This shows that Ning Fan hasn't truly mastered the essence of the Ancient Demons yet, unable to control that annihilating will of Ancient Demons easily. In this place where temple bells are constantly heard, it's an opportunity to temper his mind.

He needs to suppress the urge of the Ancient Demon Bloodline to destroy the Buddhist disciples at all times!

On the other hand, he also gained a thread of reincarnation insight on Baihua Peak that belongs to him.

Reincarnation feels unfamiliar, not because it has been encountered for the first time, but because of forgetfulness, because it cannot be remembered, because heaven does not allow it...

Is there anything strange about being unfamiliar with each other after reincarnation?

Is it truly not worth finding strange to be unfamiliar with each other after reincarnation?

Just like why flowers bloom, why rain falls, why leaves fall from trees... all are very common things, yet upon deep reflection, each contains profound truths. Buddhist Law precisely observes the microscopic to know the grand.

Being accustomed to everything around leads to not feeling strange anymore. But losing the heart for inquiry means many fleeting insights will indeed slip away.

"In the Era of Decline, the Daos of Ancient Demons, ancient demons, and Fiendgods are mostly lost, only the Ancient Buddha seems to be preserved completely till today. Buddha flourishes in the Western Heaven among the Four Heavens, a place I've never set foot in. The flourishing of Buddhism here is perhaps no less impressive than the Western Heaven..."

"Buddhism studies the reincarnation of all things. The bell tones of this city are piercing, comprising thousands of temple bells, collectively slightly resonating with my reincarnation insights, though tracing them finely reveals nothing..."

"On the one hand, my Ancient Demon Bloodline repels this place, on the other hand, my reincarnation insights yearn for this place... Whether it's repulsion or yearning, neither are my true intention; this proves my inability to completely control these powers yet."

"As for the Eight Execution Rings within me... they seem to yearn for this place as well, truly bizarre..."

After walking for an unknown amount of time, there suddenly was a bustling commotion up ahead, with people seemingly discussing something about an 'Innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine', something about a 'Blood Martial Arena', and something about a 'Soul Supplementing Treasure'.

Three boorish men suddenly squeezed out of the crowd, almost tyrannically knocking everyone out of the way as if rushing somewhere.

All three boorish men had the formidable cultivation level of Mid Stage of Shekong, though they held back, would the ordinary residents of Liuli City stand any chance? In a matter of seconds, they knocked down about sixteen or seventeen people.

Unfortunately, Ning Fan stood right in the path of the three robust men. They didn't look where they were going and directly collided with Ning Fan. However, instead of the expected scene of Ning Fan being knocked away, one of the robust men stumbled back from the impact and fell to the ground.

"Damn it, do you walk without eyes!" The sturdy man was about to curse when he suddenly noticed Ning Fan's attire, his expression immediately changed.

Guardians of the Holy Mountain!

His face unexpectedly showed respect and he said awkwardly,

"Forgive me, sir, I didn't see where I was going and bumped into you. Please, sir, don't hold it against me." There was no trace of their previous rudeness toward ordinary citizens.

Ning Fan didn't clarify his identity, just looked deeply at the three robust men, and asked, "What happened here? I think I heard someone talking about Innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine."

He certainly hadn't forgotten one of his purposes for entering the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain—collecting Innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine for the daughter of Chongming Phoenix Emperor.

"Uh? Aren't you a Guardian of the Holy Mountain, sir? How could you not know about this... Oh, you must be one of those who just came out of long seclusion, it's no surprise you don't know about the Blood Martial Arena."

"What is the Blood Martial Arena?"

"Uh, sir, as a Guardian of the Holy Mountain, you don't know about the Blood Martial Arena? Damn, I got it, you're not a Guardian of the Holy Mountain, you're a foreign cultivator. Ugh, I hit a foreign cultivator, scared the hell out of me!"

Realizing Ning Fan was a foreign cultivator, the three boorish men showed no further respect, cursing as they turned to leave.

Ning Fan, however, slightly flicked his sleeve, a golden light swept over the three sturdy men, rendering them immobile.

This is the application of the Momentum Character Secret, and the Momentum Character Secret, just like the Secret Art of Prestige, is an inseparable part of the Heaven Sealing Art. By dissolving the walking momentum of the three people with the Momentum Character Secret, once the momentum is gone, naturally they are unable to move.

It must be said that Ning Fan's understanding of the momentum and prestige of the Heaven Sealing Art is becoming more profound with each passing day.

Hiss!

The three people were all taken aback, knowing well that although Ning Fan is a foreign cultivator, he is one with unfathomable divine skills; otherwise, how could he have used such unprecedented means to immobilize the three of them?

If earlier they were respectful, mistaking Ning Fan for one of the Holy Mountain Tomb Guardians, now they were truly astonished.

"Don't rush off, you three. Tell me about the Blood Martial Arena, how about that?" Ning Fan smiled, but the three burly men felt a chill creeping up their spine. Unconsciously intimidated, they told Ning Fan everything they knew, only to be released afterward.

The Blood Martial Arena is an underground arena in Liuli City.

Where there's light, there's shadow, there's darkness. If Liuli City above ground is bright like a holy domain, then beneath it is a bloody purgatory.

The Blood Martial Arena is a place where cultivators are free to kill.

Those who enter the arena must wear a Blood Martial Mask to conceal their true identity, thus absolving them of any responsibilities as they kill.

Some come here to kill for fun, some to train through slaughter, while others watch the strong battle as a pastime.

To watch fights in the Blood Martial Arena, one must purchase tickets, the price varying according to the scale of the battle.

Those who fight and survive until the end can earn rewards, of course, rewards that must be exchanged with their lives.

Interestingly enough, the Blood Martial Master recently acquired an Innate Spiritual Medicine from the Fiendish Domain Continent. Since it's a soul-nourishing medicine, not one that enhances cultivation, the Blood Martial Master doesn't value it much, so he has offered it as a reward for the ranking battle in the Blood Martial Arena.

The ranking battle is a grand event held once in several decades at the Blood Martial Arena.

The Blood Martial Master may not value this item, but others certainly do, especially those in the Dabei Clan with their veterans wounded to the soul. Therefore, this Innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine has attracted many to participate in the ranking battle.

Night Spirit Ganoderma is something Ning Fan has never obtained, but could be used to heal the daughter of the Phoenix Emperor, making it quite alluring to him.

According to the three burly men, the ranking battle in the Blood Martial Arena is not finished in one go, but rather involves hundreds, if not thousands, advancing through one-on-one duels until the ultimate champion emerges.

There is risk, but as long as you are strong enough, even if you don't win, you can still emerge unscathed, as long as you aren't immediately killed...

Ning Fan doesn't dare claim he can certainly win the championship in the Blood Martial Arena, but he's confident that even if he faces an Immortal Emperor and is outmatched, he can escape.

Thus, the Blood Martial Arena poses nearly no risk to him, and he might as well try for the reward of the Night Spirit Ganoderma.

The only thing that concerns Ning Fan is the timing of the Blood Martial Arena.

"The ordinary arena battles at Blood Martial Arena happen daily, but the ranking battles are only held once in several decades. This time, the registration deadline for the ranking battle is three nights from now at midnight, with the start time four days from now at 11:15 AM... The timing of the ranking battle is not fixed; it is solely decided by the Blood Martial Master. It's curious that the ranking battle happens to begin close to the second round of the Tomb Seizing, isn't it..."

"There are seven days until the second round begins in Middle State, and the Blood Martial ranking battle starts three days before the second round of the Tomb Seizing. If some of the Blood Martial Arena participants are also those in the second round, their injuries or deaths could severely impact their performance in the Tomb Seizing... Or perhaps, the timing of the Blood Martial Arena intentionally attracts those from the second round..."

These thoughts quickly passed but didn't affect Ning Fan's decision.

He went to a certain inn on the street, paid a small amount of gold and silver, and used the city teleportation formation within the inn to transport himself directly to the underground world of Liuli City.

Blood Martial Arena!

This place resembles a subterranean city built amidst piles of rock, with thousands of stone houses clustered together and several hundred circular arenas of varying sizes at its center.

Dark, damp, reeking of blood, the arenas constantly echo with the loud shouts of men; on the roadside, occasionally men and women openly engage in primitive activities in the alleyway...

Ning Fan walked out of one of the underground teleportation formations, sweeping his spirit sense over the place, slightly frowning.

He doesn't like the chaos here.

The solid stone ground beneath his feet feels cold and hard. He remembers that underneath Middle State all is hard stone, crafted to be impregnable, in which even the powerful Hundred-li Stone Dragon cannot earth travel.

Yet someone managed to carve out such an underground city in the stubborn rock of Middle State, quite impressive indeed.

Just as Ning Fan stepped out of the teleportation formation, an alluringly dressed woman approached him, giggling,

"Are you here to watch the arena battles, sir? There's a fight today between a Shattered Thought Later Stage Master and an adult Grand Destiny True Dragon. It's today's most anticipated battle, tickets cost five hundred stone currency each. Would you care for one? If you buy ten at once, there's a special service I offer..."

Stone currency only circulates in Liuli City and some areas of the Dabei, crafted from Medicine Soul Stone, roughly equivalent to Dao Crystal.

The seductive woman threw a flirtatious look at Ning Fan.

But Ning Fan merely gave a dismissive glance, coolly saying, "I'm not here for the arena battles. I'm here to register for the Blood Martial ranking battle. Can you tell me where the registration place is?"

"Register for the ranking battle, tsk tsk tsk, sir, looking as handsome as you are, why go to the ranking battle and throw your life away? Perhaps you're out of money and thinking of risking your life in the ranking battle for it? Giggle, with your looks, if you really lack funds, I've got some connections. Tonight, come to me, and I'll tell you how to make money well."

The seductive woman laughed coquettishly, but Ning Fan's reply was icy cold, "Where's the registration place?"

"So unromantic..." The woman wasn't offended, laughed challengingly, guided Ning Fan where to go, and invited him for a night of pleasure.

Ning Fan naturally ignored her and headed straight for the registration place of the ranking battle.

This is one of the many arenas used for the qualification tests, and there are no spectators at the venue where over a hundred people are currently undergoing assessments.

A lot of people want to participate in the ranking battle, but not everyone qualifies; one must undergo a test to earn the right to participate.

The assessment involves only one task — withstand one attack from the examiner.

The examiner is a muscle-bound scarred old man who seems to be a Body Cultivator at the Peak of Shedding Void Stage. Among the hundred or so people here, only seven or eight successfully passed the test, though not without sustaining minor injuries, and are now adjusting their conditions on the spot;

the remaining ones are either waiting to be tested or failed to withstand the old man's attack yet still refuse to give up, wanting to try again.

"Are you here to register for the Blood Martial ranking battle too?" The scarred old man glanced at Ning Fan, shaking his head.

So skinny, unlike a Body Cultivator, not being a Body Cultivator would make it hard to withstand his attack, and be disadvantaged in the Blood Martial Arena.

"Yes." Ning Fan responded indifferently.

"Then go line up at the back."

Ning Fan nodded, went to the end of the line, and glanced at each of the examinees.

The weaker examinees only have Void Refinement, Void Fragmentation realms, while the stronger ones mostly have Life Immortal Realm, rarely True Immortal.

Among the examinees here, the highest cultivation belongs to three extremely familiar individuals.

Those three rough men who bumped into him previously!

"As expected of the Sea Witch Triad, their fame is well deserved! To think they can withstand Ancestor Kuang's tenth Demonic Punch! You know, those who could force Ancestor Kuang to unleash the tenth punch have always been Late Stage of Shekong elites! Three Daoists must have already half-stepped into Late Stage of Shekong, truly enviable!"

"Hahaha, if you train for another few tens of thousands of years, you might get the rudimentary skills of me and my brothers, no need to be overly envious!"

"With the power of three Daoists, there is a great chance to rank in the top hundred in the ranking battle!"

"Hahaha, naturally, my three brothers are the elite of Sea Witch, entering the top hundred is a piece of cake, too bad it's not a team battle, otherwise with our combination, we could retreat unscathed from Shattered Thought Early Stage, below Shattered Thought, we could sweep the field!"

"Tsk, under three Daoists' collective force, to retreat unscathed from Shattered Thought Early Stage, truly impressive!"

"Hahaha, it's because my three brothers are just that awesome."

As the three rough men were basking in the crowd's praise, suddenly a chuckle came from behind, immediately infuriating them.

Damn, who's laughing!

The three turned angrily to see Ning Fan's half-smiling expression.

"Ah, what a coincidence, you're here for the Guardian Ranking Battle too?" The tone is unexpectedly polite, with deep apprehension hidden within.

"Mm."

Ning Fan replied calmly and ignored the Sea Witch Triad; people with this level of cultivation weren't worth his attention.

As for those gazes gathered upon him due to his foreign cultivator outfit, he disregarded and offered no explanation.

More than just the Sea Witch Triad, there's another person here who feels familiar to Ning Fan.

A young man in an Ox Horn Mask, face unseen. From the back view, familiar, the aura hidden by the mask... not a trace exposed.

Only the eyes under the Ox Horn Mask seem familiar, giving a somewhat dull, hollow feeling.

These eyes...

They're Xianyu Chun's!

"What are you doing here?" Ning Fan approached the Ox Horn Mask young man, frowned and asked.

"You, who are you? Seems familiar..." The Ox Horn Mask young man, with a tone extremely familiar to Ning Fan, spoke words of near estrangement.

The tone lacks the usual silliness of Xianyu Chun, replaced with a sharp, piercing sensation.

"You don't recognize me... interesting, is it the mask affecting you?"

Ning Fan, without wasting words with the Ox Horn Mask man, his hands moved like lightning, palm already pressing on the man's mask before he reacted.

Intending to rip off the mask in one swift motion, upon contact, an indescribable strong force from the mask jolted him away. Luckily, the Body-protecting Golden Light emerged simultaneously, neutralizing the terrifying force repelling Ning Fan.

Face now serious.

The powerful force attached to the mask, comparable to an Immortal Venerable Strike... is there an Immortal Venerable level figure, yet Xianyu Chun wore this mask...

Moreover, in that fleeting touch, he seemed to sense... a trace of reincarnation aura from the mask.

Reincarnation, as foreign...

Is it the Power of Reincarnation causing Xianyu Chun, with the mask on, to regard him as unfamiliar... what is the mask's origin?

Chapter 1025: Afeng

The masked youth seemed shocked by Ning Fan's actions. His body flickered as he retreated, putting several zhang of distance between them. His gaze carried a hint of displeasure as he questioned coldly.

"What do you mean by this?"

If not for the fact that the masked youth didn't detect any hostility from Ning Fan, he would have almost thought Ning Fan intended to attack him. Internally, he was even more wary of Ning Fan's ghostly speed.

This sudden change attracted the attention of many of the examinees. The examiner elder also showed a trace of displeasure, but due to Ning Fan's attire, he opted for watching coldly instead of intervening.

"Peak of Shekong, and it seems he's already half a step into the Shattered Thought Realm. His cultivation is deeply hidden because of that mask, so much so that I couldn't discern his true cultivation when I first glanced at him. Compared to Xianyu Chun's previous cultivation, it's like they're two completely different people. Different cultivation, vastly different intellect and character. The only certainty is that he is indeed Xianyu Chun. Everyone in the world has their unique aura; even if the scent of blooming flowers is similar, there will always be differences. I've interacted with Xianyu Chun for so long, even if there's an ox horn mask concealing him, I wouldn't mistake his aura if I focused..."

A faint flash of azure light flickered in Ning Fan's eyes as he gradually discerned some clues from the masked youth and formed some conjectures, causing his expression to grow increasingly serious.

These conjectures couldn't be confirmed yet. Seeing the growing crowd of spectators and the ensuing commotion, he felt a headache coming on.

He was merely here to register for the Blood Martial Arena ranking battle and didn't want to stir up any trouble.

"Rest assured, I mean you no harm. I just recognize the other half of your soul, so seeing you here was unexpected..." Ning Fan explained via transmitted sound.

The masked youth's gaze immediately turned cold, as if his greatest secret had been exposed. He responded in a somber transmitted sound, "What other half of the soul, what are you talking about? I don't understand!"

"Never mind if you don't understand."

Ning Fan gave the masked youth a deep look, then turned around and walked to an empty area nearby, refraining from speaking to anyone else, waiting for the test to commence.

There were still over a hundred people ahead of him. Even though the assessment was simple and quick, it still took nearly two hours for Ning Fan's turn to come.

Among those hundred-plus individuals, aside from the Sea Witch Triad and the masked youth, only one or two people successfully registered; the rest didn't even qualify for the Blood Martial ranking battle.

After registering, the masked youth left. Faced with the examiner elder of Shekong Peak cultivation, the masked youth responded with ease, effortlessly making it into the selection.

The Sea Witch Triad, on the other hand, lingered there, showing some curiosity about Ning Fan's test.

The muscular elder in charge of the assessment and registration was a strong contender from the last Blood Martial Arena ranked in the top hundred, known as Ancestor Kuang. He was a body cultivator with explosive muscles that exuded a force capable of shifting mountains and overturning seas, twisting the space with a mere wave of his hand.

When it came to Ning Fan's turn to be tested, Ancestor Kuang merely glanced at him askance, arrogantly saying, "I'll tell you now, even if you're from the Holy Mountain Tomb Guardians, I won't hold back a whit. If you can take more than three punches from me, you can register for the Blood Martial ranking battle. If you can't withstand them or get injured, even if the Holy Mountain seeks revenge, I won't be held responsible!"

"Don't worry, I'm not from the Holy Mountain Tomb Guardians," Ning Fan said with a faint smile.

"So you're a foreign cultivator."

Ancestor Kuang's brows furrowed before he burst into laughter. Faced with Ning Fan, all his reservations vanished, and his aura became ferocious and exposed.

"Then you better watch out. I detest foreign cultivators the most, and I won't hold back for this assessment. Take this punch!"

Ancestor Kuang stomped the ground, instantly vanishing from sight, leaving not even a trace of an afterimage. Simultaneously, a slight movement of wind arose to Ning Fan's left, and he knew Ancestor Kuang attacked from this side, intending to close in and overpower with raw strength, a common body cultivation tactic. Ning Fan wasted no time, similarly shifting from his original spot.

In the next instant, from a nearby desolate area, a deafening sound of collision erupted. The space contorted violently, and then two figures emerged from that collision point: Ancestor Kuang and Ning Fan.

It was a clash of fists!

Ancestor Kuang used his signature move, the Demon-Breaking Fist, with full force! The enormous shockwave it created caused many examinees to stagger unsteadily, their expressions drastically changing.

Only then did the crowd realize that Ancestor Kuang hadn't used his true punching force in previous tests, as none of his earlier punches had ever caused such a huge shockwave.

Even the Sea Witch Triad appeared solemn. If Ancestor Kuang had approached their assessment with this level of seriousness, they wouldn't have withstood the tenth punch of the Demon-Breaking series. At this moment, the first punch alone carried the power equivalent to a previous combined ten punches...

Without Shattered Thought realm strength, it was almost impossible to withstand it!

Ancestor Kuang was confident in his punching power, his eyes filled with bloodthirsty desire. He wanted to dye the arena ground with the blood of this foreign cultivator!

Confident that his punch would send Ning Fan flying, the moment their fists made contact, his expression changed drastically with shock!

Despite the fist-to-fist collision, Ancestor Kuang felt as if he wasn't hitting Ning Fan's fist but rather colliding with a whole Cultivation Star. The punching force was unimaginably heavy!

The heavy punch was secondary; more astonishingly, it carried a bizarre force that erupted explosively, like a volcanic eruption!

In just an instant of contact, a crushing pain shot through his punch bone and even his entire arm, unable to withstand even a fleeting moment. The massive force knocked him back, spurting blood wildly as Ning Fan's punch sent him flying backward, his body resembling a meteor, before crashing heavily into the distant stone wall of the arena!

The crowd was shocked!

The Sea Witch Triad was drenched in cold sweat. This punch's power was something even some Shattered Thought Early Stage elders would struggle to resist. They thought if this punch landed on them, a one-punch kill was highly probable, uncertain whether Ancestor Kuang was dead or alive...

Crash!

The portion of the wall suddenly collapsed, and then Ancestor Kuang, covered in blood, emerged from the debris, wearing a composed look.

Hiss!

The entire crowd gasped in astonishment. Such a terrifying punch, yet Ancestor Kuang survived. Truly, he was worthy of being one of the top-ranked warriors in the Blood Martial Arena!

"Young man, your fist power is not bad. Here is your identity token, take it! Four days from now at 11:15 AM, use this token to go to Arena Number One to participate in the Blood Martial Ranking Battle. If you're late, you will be disqualified, so make sure not to be late."

Ancestor Kuang laughed seemingly relaxed and threw a stream of light to Ning Fan.

Ning Fan caught the stream of light in his hand; it was a blue wooden token filled with thunderous force. Putting the wooden token away, Ning Fan gave Ancestor Kuang a long look before turning and leaving.

"Registration ends today. Those who have not qualified can come back tomorrow to try again!"

Ancestor Kuang impatiently drove the examinees out of the arena, then closed the arena and left for his own abode.

As soon as he returned to his abode, he could no longer hold himself up and fell to the ground spitting blood.

"This person... is so strong..."

In fact, Ning Fan was also quite surprised to have heavily injured Ancestor Kuang with one punch.

Admittedly, with his Ninth Nirvana of Heavenly Demon cultivation, if he punched with full force, it would be easy to send a Peak of Shekong Body Cultivator flying. But he hadn't exerted his full strength in that punch; he had used less than one-tenth of his strength.

Less than one-tenth of his strength should not have been enough to batter a Peak of Shekong Body Cultivator so badly, it should have just slightly overpowered him at most.

Unexpectedly, after comprehending the true essence of the Ancient Demon, the power of this punch had significantly increased. Moreover, the punch naturally employed the force method of the Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike, his only self-created Ancient Demon divine skill so far, with a profound degree of mystery, which caused the contained power to explode suddenly, leading to a small critical hit!

This small critical hit directly enhanced the real power of the punch by more than double, far exceeding Ning Fan's expectations.

Thus, Ancestor Kuang met a miserable end...

Fortunately, Ning Fan instinctively held back at the last moment; otherwise, Ancestor Kuang might have been killed outright by even a tenth of his strength...

If that had happened, it might have triggered an incident in the Blood Martial underground arena...

"It seems that my newly created Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike exceeds my expectations. If I want to control it smoothly, it will require some strenuous cultivation..." Ning Fan thought to himself.

After the registration ended, Ning Fan didn't linger in the Blood Martial Arena but chose to leave directly. Just as he stepped onto the Teleportation Formation, he suddenly felt a sense of perception and glanced in a certain direction.

Then, the formation light took him back to the ground.

"It seems he noticed me, interesting... Is this the person who defeated Baihua Great Emperor's Dao Image head-on?" In the shadows, a man wearing a blue demonic ghost mask, whose entire body was illusory and translucent, smiled inscrutably. He was the true master behind the scenes of the Blood Martial Arena.

"Master, your guess is correct. According to the information received, this person is indeed the one who defeated Baihua Great Emperor's Dao Image. But the Baihua Emperor has been severely injured for a thousand years and is just a Zhongzhou Immortal Emperor; his divine skills are far inferior to the

Emperors of the Holy Mountain, so this Foreign Cultivator defeating Baihua Emperor isn't much of a big deal..." Behind the illusory man, several armored guards replied.

"You underestimate the Baihua Emperor. The waters of Baihua Peak are deep... that Bee Demon is unfathomable..." The illusory man stroked a scar on his chest, frowning.

"Bee Demon? What Bee Demon..." The several armored guards clearly were unaware.

"These matters are beyond your knowledge. Even the Central Continent Five Emperors, the Liuli City Three Hidden Emperors, and the Holy Mountain Nineteen Emperors have no right to know about this... it is one of the five supreme beings of the entire Dabei..."

"Five supreme beings?" The armored guards were shaken; it was the first time they had heard of the Dabei Clan having five supreme beings. But in the next instant, the three of them became bewildered, and the memory of the five supreme beings suddenly began to fade.

"Did Master just say something?" The armored guards asked in confusion.

"I spoke of things you shouldn't know... let's not talk about this, tell me more intelligence about the Foreign Cultivator, I'm quite interested in him."

"Yes. I have received another piece of information that the Foreign Cultivator has greatly angered Emperor Lou Tuo over a certain matter, and the Prime Disciple of Lou Tuo has secretly spread word to teach this guy a bloody lesson in the second round of the Tomb Seizing Battle..."

"Offending Lou Tuo? Interesting..."

"My informant at Tiandu Peak passed me an extremely confidential message; it's said that this Foreign Cultivator named Ning Fan seemed to have seen 'complete success' in the text exam of the first round of the Tomb Seizing..."

"Oh? Seen 'complete success'..."

The illusory man suddenly became solemn, recollecting something, and fell into a brief silence.

"In the history of Dabei, only three people saw 'complete success' before becoming an Immortal Emperor. The Death Emperor of Vacant Flame, the Ming Luo of Holy Mountain... this guy is quite something."

"Weren't there three people? Who's the other one?" The armored guards seemed curious, hearing such secrets for the first time.

"The other one was a formidable figure who once broke into the Sacred Tomb, whose aspirations were as high as the sky, thinking the world could be conquered but was successively defeated by the five supreme beings. To fulfill a promise with one of the supreme beings, he has remained silent and unseen within the Dabei Clan ever since..."

"Five supreme beings? What are the five supreme beings, and does our Dabei Clan have such a title?" The armored guards were visibly shaken, but then lapsed into bewilderment and forgottenness.

"...Did the Master just say something?"

"Hmm, yes, things you shouldn't know. Make arrangements for me to participate in the ranking battle in four days, and the second round of Tomb Seizing in seven days. Arrange a fitting identity for me. I'm interested in this Foreign Cultivator, perhaps I could gain some insights from him, breaking through the final barrier to the Quasi-Saint level."

"Yes!"

...

Ning Fan was naturally unaware that the illusory man was a ruthless individual who was half a step towards a Quasi-Saint, but he sensed that the man was formidable as well.

Ning Fan had to admit that the foundation of the Dabei Clan was profound. Beneath the Blood Martial Arena, there was a powerful being almost close to the Quasi-Saint level; in the small Liuli City, there

were no fewer than three presences comparable to an Immortal Emperor, who remained hidden from the world. Coupled with the Central Continent Five Emperors and the Immortal Emperors of the Holy Mountain, this Dabei Clan was definitely a superpower like the Dark Clan and the Southern Clan, not an ordinary Eastern Heavenly power to be compared with...

After all, they were the lineage of Saints.

What Ning Fan didn't expect was to encounter the somewhat enigmatic Xianyu Chun in this Blood Martial Arena...

The strangeness of Xianyu Chun, whether related to the old man with the water jar he had previously mentioned... but judging by his symptoms, the other party didn't seem malicious.

Upon returning to the surface, Ning Fan secretly activated his spirit sense, trying to find where Duolan had settled in the city and by the way, looked for Wu Laoba to see what he'd been up to during the time Ning Fan signed up for the arena.

He found Duolan, but Wu Laoba seemed to have vanished, unable to be located within the city.

Could it be that he's trapped somewhere, unable to be sensed?

Ning Fan frowned, thinking that although Wu Laoba loved to cause trouble, he always knew how to avoid misfortune and court fortune. He shouldn't have provoked those he couldn't afford to. However, since Liuli City was a place filled with powerful figures, the old monsters' aura concealing techniques here were astonishingly profound. Even Ning Fan, a Heavenly Immortal Practitioner, needed considerable effort to break through them. If Wu Laoba truly made a slip, provoking some great power and disappearing, it was not impossible...

Whoosh!

Suddenly, a frantic, illusory message-transmitting flying sword burst through the sky over the long street of Liuli City, alarming countless passersby.

The flying sword headed straight for Ning Fan, and upon breaking apart, a message directly entered Ning Fan's divine sense.

"Master, save me!"

It turned out to be a cry for help from Wu Laoba!

Ning Fan's gaze immediately darkened; this guy indeed caused trouble again. Only, given Wu Laoba's strength, he couldn't escape and had to resort to asking for help, indicating that the opponent wasn't ordinary.

To help or not to help?

With a turn of thought, Ning Fan quickly made up his mind. Although Wu Laoba was not loyal, there was a cause and effect with the old monster, and during their recent time together, Ning Fan had received many benefits from Wu Laoba. Since Ning Fan brought Wu Laoba into Dabei, he naturally couldn't ignore the situation.

Plus, Wu Laoba always did things with restraint, never offending anyone to the point of no return. Most Dabei hermits disliked killing, and there may still be a chance for a peaceful resolution...

Having decided, Ning Fan immediately pushed his Rain Technique to the extreme, and a veil of rain fell over Liuli City.

All were Ning Fan's all-pervasive rain thoughts!

"Hey, why is it suddenly raining?" The pedestrians on the long street dispersed as the sudden drizzle fell.

Can't find him, just can't find him!

Ning Fan felt a chill in his heart. With his mysterious rain thoughts, even if Wu Laoba were trapped in a place where an Immortal Emperor resided, there should have been a trace of detection, yet searching

the entire Liuli City, Ning Fan could find no trace of Wu Laoba, evidently indicating that the opponent's divine skills exceeded his understanding!

Could it be that the opponent was a Quasi-Saint level...

If the opponent truly had power comparable to a Quasi-Saint, how could Wu Laoba have the opportunity to release a message-transmitting flying sword for help? Or was it deliberate, wanting him to go there?

In such a case, even if he didn't save Wu Laoba, the opponent probably already had his eyes on him.

"It seems this person is worth seeing. If this person wishes to see me yet conceals Wu Laoba's aura, not allowing me to investigate, is it a test of my abilities... but if this is indeed a test, then it doesn't seem malicious..."

"Or perhaps, this isn't a test but a prompt... If I can find the opponent under such powerful concealment, it might be a significant improvement..."

Ning Fan closed his eyes, standing quietly in the rain, his spirit sense sweeping across the entire Liuli City again and again along with the fine rain.

Can't find it...

Still can't find it...

His understanding of the Rain Technique had long been close to nature, indistinguishable from natural rain.

What's needed to improve is not the understanding of the Rain Technique, but... the control of his spirit sense?

Ning Fan seemed to grasp a key point, just as he intended to try. Suddenly, a woman holding an umbrella walked toward him from the dense rain curtain.

She stood there alone on the long street, in the rain, holding an umbrella, looking at him with an indescribably complex gaze.

"Vast Expanse Butterfly, do you need help?"

Ning Fan's eyes immediately sharpened.

Not only because of the woman's words.

But also because... after she removed her veil, her face was remarkably similar to Dugu's.

But... why was the aura of this woman so similar to the auxiliary demon soul of that Bee Demon, almost as if she were another auxiliary demon soul of the Bee Demon!

What on earth...

"It seems you don't recognize me..."

Don't recognize me!

Ning Fan remembered hearing this phrase in the Scripture Tower gifted by the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor.

Within that Scripture Tower, there was a stone door he couldn't open, from which this phrase emerged, once invoking an inexplicable sadness in him...

"Who are you really, the auxiliary demon soul of the Bee Demon in the Hundred Flowers Emperor's Treasury, or someone else entirely..."

Ning Fan frowned.

This woman's voice did not bring the same soul-stirring sorrow as the voice from behind the stone door.

Although the two voices bore a certain degree of resemblance...

"I am Afeng, Xiu Fang's Afeng, the little turtle you're looking for is at Nan Yao Temple outside the East Gate..."

The woman looked desolately at Ning Fan, then walked away holding the umbrella.

Ning Fan thoughtfully watched her back until she disappeared from view, leaving an indescribable feeling lingering in his heart...

Who exactly is this woman!

However, this line of thought was quickly interrupted by some troubling noise from others.

In the rain curtain, a group of playboys suddenly rushed out after the woman left, blocking Ning Fan's way.

"Who are you! You're wearing the Foreign Cultivator's attire, are you a Tomb Guardian of the Holy Mountain! But even if you are, we won't give Afeng to you!"

"Afeng is mine! Anyone who vies will die!"

"Nonsense, Afeng is mine!"

"Damn it, you dare to snatch Afeng from me, didn't we say we were coming to teach this guy a lesson?"

"I'll teach you a lesson first!"

"You dare hit me, watch me beat you to death!"

They turned out to be a group of suitors infatuated with Afeng in Liuli City.

These people were originally envious of Afeng's interaction with Ning Fan and planned to rough up Ning Fan, but as they approached, they started a quarrel among themselves, leading to a fight between five or six people.

Such foolish dialogues, truly in the style of the Great Humble Ones.

Ning Fan naturally had no interest in the farce in front of him, his figure blurred as he walked past these playboys.

He forcibly terminated his thoughts about the woman in his mind, focusing on rescuing Wu Laoba first.

The one trapping Wu Laoba was probably a Quasi-Saint.

That woman... she didn't seem simple either...

Using the Teleportation Formation at a certain inn on the street, Ning Fan instantly teleported outside the East Gate.

This was an outlying area, with only two or three scattered residences, and besides, a notably dilapidated temple with a plaque reading Nan Yao Temple.

Because of its remote location, Nan Yao Temple currently only had a few travelers occasionally passing by its gate.

As Ning Fan approached Nan Yao Temple, a sudden gust of chilling wind emanated from inside the temple, yet the passing travelers seemed not to notice, ignoring the eerie wind completely.

The main gate of Nan Yao Temple unexpectedly opened by itself.

A slightly formal voice came from inside the temple gate.

"You found this place under the guidance of the dead bee, which doesn't count as your merit. Such a shortcut has cost you a great advantage that this old man intended to give you. What a pity, what a pity..."

"Senior, is the guidance you want to impart to me the ultimate use of the divine sense... Myriad Miles Wander?" Ning Fan's eyes showed a trace of reminiscence.

The Myriad Miles Wander divine skill, he had inadvertently used at the beginning of his cultivation journey... yet he had never fully understood it.

Today seemed to be an opportunity.

Upon Ning Fan speaking, the old man inside the temple gate immediately made a surprised noise.

Evidently surprised by Ning Fan's easy insight into this point...

Chapter 1026: Mental Armor Formula

Myriad Miles Wander is a Great Divine Power, with the profound ability to stretch one's spirit sense to an infinitely thin degree, allowing it to extend infinitely far.

Once, when Ning Fan had just embarked on the path of cultivation, he accidentally performed this divine power. At that time, his spirit sense was still very weak, but by stretching it to the extreme, it extended beyond the Rain Immortal World and reached the Northern Heavens.

This is also a divine power with a high risk factor. Back then, Ning Fan nearly lost his life because he couldn't retract his spirit sense. Fortunately, he was saved by the Tablet Master Immortal Emperor, Meng Xuanzi, and survived.

And today, there is yet another mysterious old monster who wishes to guide him in Myriad Miles Wander, which is indeed interesting...

Outside the gate of Nan Yao Temple, Ning Fan looked up at the sky. Apart from the light drizzle, there was clearly nothing in the sky, yet he seemed to be seriously observing something, counting something, and gradually grew solemn.

"One layer, two layers, three layers..."

"Ten layers... twenty layers..."

"Two hundred layers..."

"Four hundred layers..."

"One thousand one hundred and forty-nine layers..."

Some passersby, curious about Ning Fan's actions, stopped and looked at the sky with him, but they couldn't see anything in the sky. When they asked Ning Fan, he didn't answer, so they eventually left with bewilderment.

They thought that this man counting against the sky was really a strange person. Naturally, due to Ning Fan's attire, they dared not voice these thoughts.

After an unknown period, Ning Fan withdrew his gaze and slowly closed his eyes. The invisible power of the spirit sense began to swirl around him.

If anyone could see these invisible spirit senses, they would be shocked to discover that on the surface of Ning Fan's spirit sense, some runes were slowly forming. Those runes were colorless and formless, seen only by those with profound magical eyes, able to see the Dao Principle of Wood flowing on the runes. These wood runes were condensed with the power of the Dao Principle of Wood, and the condensation process was extremely clumsy and difficult, lacking fluency.

As time passed bit by bit, more and more runes gathered on the surface of Ning Fan's spirit sense, forming a thin cocoon on the surface of the spirit sense power.

As soon as the thin cocoon formed, Ning Fan's spirit sense power obviously improved in a certain aspect. But unfortunately, before Ning Fan could carefully comprehend it, the thin cocoon, seemingly because the method was incorrect, cracked with a sound.

Nearly an hour of hard work was in vain.

Ning Fan frowned, but then he laughed bitterly and relaxed, cupped his fists towards the direction of the temple, and said,

"Senior has a mind to guide me, but I can't comprehend the method within, I fear I've disappointed Senior."

A voice from within the temple said, "Disappointed? No, young friend has truly surprised this old man. You're unaware of the method of the Mental Armor Formula, yet with just a glance, you could mimic it to such an extent. Your comprehension is extraordinary, something this old man has rarely seen in my lifetime."

"Senior praises me too much, I dare not accept it," Ning Fan said politely, but inwardly he was secretly alert, having made a guess.

Mental Armor Formula...

Was it that terrifying divine power that covered the spirit sense with a runic cocoon, doubling the toughness of the spirit sense?

Undoubtedly, the mysterious old monster who led him here knows the Great Divine Power of Myriad Miles Wander. The seemingly empty sky actually held an infinitely thin thread of spirit sense, connecting all the way to Nan Yao Temple. As long as Ning Fan could see that mental thread, even without the guidance of the woman with the umbrella, he could have found his way here all by himself.

The people who can see that mental thread are rare, and it is only because Ning Fan had practiced the Divine Art Chant and the Heaven Prying Rain Technique, honing his perception of the spirit sense to an extremely delicate level, that he could see the fine line in the sky. For others, even those with the power of an Immortal Venerable or Immortal King, it wouldn't necessarily be visible.

This resulted from the mysterious old monster's deliberate exposure of the mental line, not hiding it. If he had wanted to hide it, Ning Fan wouldn't have known there was a mental thread in the sky.

The reason passersby couldn't see it was due to their inadequate cultivation, thinking it strange that Ning Fan would count layers toward the sky.

They didn't realize that Ning Fan was counting the number of cocoon layers on that mental thread, a total of one thousand one hundred and forty-nine layers, reflecting the terrifying toughness of this mysterious old monster's spirit sense!

"Myriad Miles Wander is a Great Divine Power. As my cultivation gradually increased, I have tried to cultivate this divine power, but I have never been able to master it. To initially master this skill, one needs to have the True Immortal realm, and it requires a cultivator to have significant comprehension of spirit sense cultivation to achieve the first step of Myriad Miles Wander—drawing the spirit sense into thin threads... As for the second step of enhancing the toughness of the mental thread, few can accomplish it..."

Drawing the spirit sense into thin threads refers to the method of stretching the spirit sense into thin strands, requiring the cultivation of micromanagement of spirit sense to a certain degree to achieve this step. Among a hundred True Immortals, often only one or two can achieve this. These individuals can stretch their spirit sense into threads one-tenth to one-twentieth as thin, thereby increasing the coverage area of their spirit sense by ten to twenty times, but this is often their limit and they cannot achieve the infinite thinness and distance theoretically possible in Myriad Miles Wander.

Because the thinner the spirit sense is stretched, the lower its toughness, and the more easily it can snap. Infinitely thin mental threads are also infinitely fragile, breaking with a breeze, making them practically unusable for executing spells.

Enhancing the toughness of the spirit sense is the biggest challenge in mastering Myriad Miles Wander. Because of this limit, many can achieve the first step of Myriad Miles Wander, but very few in the Era of Decline can truly master this skill, not even Quasi-Saints like Xiang Mingzi and Daoist Wood Pine.

But the old monster in this temple actually knows Myriad Miles Wander! Just by glimpsing a fragment, the old monster in this temple is certainly not to be underestimated...

Internally, Ning Fan smiled wryly. Wu Laoba had fallen into this person's hands, and he did not know how to retrieve him...

"Do you know why I am advising you?" asked the voice within the temple.

"I do not know."

"Because I sensed a trace of the Divine Art Chant from you, although it seems incomplete. I once had a karmic connection with the Immortal Emperor Tai Chang of the ancient Heavenly Court. He was the Supreme Mind Emperor, not adept at spell dueling, but his insights into spirit sense were profound. Below the Saint level, I've never seen anyone surpass him in spirit sense mastery. If not for the benefits I've received from him, with my aptitude, I might not have been able to cultivate Myriad Miles Wander to this extent... What is your relation to Tai Chang? Are you his disciple's descendant?"

"I'm afraid to disappoint you, but by chance, I merely practiced the incomplete technique of the Immortal Emperor Tai Chang. I am not his disciple's descendant," Ning Fan thought for a moment and answered truthfully.

"That is truly a pity... If you were his disciple's descendant, due to my promise with him, I would be obliged to help you master the true Myriad Miles Wander; but if you aren't, then I needn't fulfill this promise. A little guidance should suffice, but to expect me to teach you the complete Eight Divine Art Secrets for no reason is absolutely impossible. The guidance ends here, and now we should discuss your footman's matters." The elder sighed regrettably, retracting the mental thread hidden in the sky, and his voice gradually took on a cold tone.

The fate between Ning Fan and the Immortal Emperor Tai Chang was one thing.

The offense of Ning Fan's footman to him was another thing entirely!

"I wonder how my footman Wu Laoba offended you, Senior. Please enlighten me," Ning Fan, though knowing the opposite's strength, remained calm because the elder's words, though cold, expressed no true killing intent. The matter might yet have room for negotiation.

"Hmph, so that little turtle's name is Wu Laoba? He fancied one of my treasures and wanted to take it, so he gambled with me. Now that he has lost the gamble, he's trapped inside my water jar. If you want to save him, it's not difficult. You just need to gamble with me as well."

"What kind of gamble?"

"I bet you can't live to enter Nan Yao Temple and come face to face with me. But if you can accomplish this, then I've lost the bet, and you can take away that little turtle. But if you lose the bet, and you're dead, I'll be sure to mix your flesh and blood into the mud!"

Ning Fan's heart skipped a beat.

If he lost, it would mean he would die inside Nan Yao Temple, on the road to meet that mysterious old monster... This Nan Yao Temple must be fraught with dangers.

"Your relationship with that little turtle doesn't seem to be very good. I've imprisoned him for less than half a day, and he's cursed you eighteen hundred times. For such a disloyal servant, you'd better not wager with me!"

Before the old man finished speaking, he suddenly let out an 'eh,' realizing that Ning Fan had no hesitation and directly stepped into Nan Yao Temple.

So decisive!

"Interesting boy..." The old man's voice drifted further away, becoming unintelligible.

Ning Fan's gaze was calm as he stepped into the temple entrance. His relationship with Wu Laoba was not close enough to sacrifice himself, but for the karma between Wu Laoba and the old monster, he wouldn't leave Wu Laoba alone.

Even if the opponent seemed to be a Quasi-Saint!

The instant he stepped into the temple, the rain outside was forcibly halted.

Ning Fan was slightly moved. The temple was just one door apart, but it felt like two completely different worlds. With his cultivations, once inside the temple, he couldn't extend his spirit sense outside, as if imprisoned in the eerie monastery.

From the outside, Nan Yao Temple looked like a small rundown temple.

From the inside, Nan Yao Temple's gloomy towers number over ten thousand, desolate smoke wafts through the air, ghosts howl to the skies, bones litter the ground, broken blades and snapped staffs are visible everywhere, bloodstains haven't dried...

It was unlike a Buddhist sacred land, but rather like a ghost den!

"Wrong, this is... an illusion!"

Ning Fan suddenly realized why passersby ignored the temple's overwhelming Yin energy.

Turns out he was the only one caught in the illusion, and stepping into the temple was the moment the illusion was fully triggered...

"Break!"

Ning Fan's left eye flashed with demon light, shooting a violet-black beam into the eerie temple world, creating a fissure in this world.

He used the Fuli race's illusion deciphering talent skill!

As the crack opened, Ning Fan leaped towards it, and the scenery before him changed instantly. He found himself still standing outside Nan Yao Temple, maintaining the initial posture of counting the sky, the rain continued to fall, and the Yin energy in the temple had disappeared.

Escaped the illusion, realizing he hadn't entered the temple but had been caught in an illusion from the start...

"This person is so strange, he's been looking at the sky for two hours, I wonder what he's counting..."

"Shh, don't speak casually, this person is one of the Holy Mountain Tomb Guardians..."

Some passersby pointed at Ning Fan.

Ning Fan was speechless, how did these people know he'd been looking at the sky for two hours, were they standing on the roadside for an hour? Isn't that boring...

Roar!

Those few passersby mocking Ning Fan suddenly turned into evil ghosts, rushing at him, and the ground split open to reveal a hellish lava burning beneath.

Only then did Ning Fan realize he hadn't escaped the illusion at all, he was still trapped within the illusion, the Fuli Breaking Illusion talent was powerful, but he was far inferior to the mysterious old monster, unable to escape the opponent's illusion!

"There are two ways to break an illusion: one is using cultivations, divine skills, magical treasure, to forcibly break free; the other is having external companions to wake you up. If neither is present, illusion can become a deadlier weapon than other divine skills... Undoubtedly, this is a life and death test, the old man wasn't lying about that..."

"I can't decipher this illusion with my cultivations alone, but aside from my illusion-breaking ability, I also have the Fuli race's illusion-rebounding ability. In a sense, illusion rebound is more terrifying than illusion deciphering, especially when deeply trapped in the opponent's illusion, if you can find a weak spot, you might have a chance for a reversal..."

Ning Fan dodged the evil ghosts pouncing at him, while evading, he observed his surroundings, his eyes flashing azure light. After a long time, his gaze suddenly turned to the hellish abyss within the ground fissure.

"In this illusion, the lava seems to be the most dangerous area, but if I'm right, the weak spot of this illusion is hidden right there..."

Ning Fan shook off the crowd of evil ghosts and leaped into the hellish lava.

The terrifying temperature of the hellish lava would strip the skin off even an Immortal Emperor if entered without defenses.

The lava was an illusion, ordinary defenses can't withstand its temperature, and trapped in the illusion, Ning Fan's true self couldn't use his defenses, so he resorted to using his own illusion power to defend against the lava.

The seldom-used Dao technique he understood until now was put to use!

As he descended, black gas flowed out from his body, enveloping him. That black color was the color of night, formed from the perfection of the Demonized Dark Night Dao Elephant!

Deeply entrenched in the opponent's illusion, Ning Fan naturally couldn't replace the opponent's illusion world directly with his black night. But to mobilize some power of the black night illusion to resist the opponent's illusion damage was still doable.

The approaching lava was mostly blocked by the black gas, though a few managed to penetrate his illusion defenses, splashing onto him.

Scorching, a soul-piercing scorching. Each time the lava burned him, Ning Fan felt his heart spirit depleting significantly, quickly weakening.

No matter how weak Ning Fan became, his expression remained calm. After entering the lava, he kept swimming downward, this seemingly unfathomable hell was actually not that deep! After traversing the initial scorching lava, Ning Fan suddenly felt a coolness washing over him, as he fell into a stone chamber. This stone chamber was built within the depths of the lava, its walls covered with illusion runes, and an Ox Horn Crystal floated in the air.

That Ox Horn Crystal was the power source of this illusion, and it was also the weak spot!

Ning Fan waved his sleeve, sending vast swaths of black gas toward the Ox Horn Crystal, as if trying to taint it.

But before the black gas could approach, formation light shot from the crystal, transforming into complex restrictions, sweeping away all the black gas.

Ning Fan scanned lightly, this stone chamber spanning less than ten steps had over a thousand defensive formations, and these formations were interlinked, merely breaking one or two wouldn't work, they'd soon regenerate. Only by perceiving all formations and breaking them cleanly could he approach the Ox Horn Crystal.

Ning Fan carefully observed the restrictions here, finding it reminiscent of a mortal gazing at the sky filled with stars, only the complexity far exceeded his expectations. Staring for too long made him feel dizzy.

Do not gaze for too long, unable to find a way to break the formation in a short time.

Ning Fan suppressed the desire in his heart to escape the illusion urgently. He was not anxious anymore, choosing instead to sit cross-legged inside the stone chamber, slowly studying the formation.

One day, two days, three days...

One month, two months, three months...

As spring passed and autumn came, Ning Fan sat in the stone chamber for hundreds of years. Then one day, he suddenly stood up, unleashing thousands of golden ribbons like lightning in an instant, directly breaking the restriction with countless roars!

After which, he raised his hand to use his own illusory dark mist to contaminate the Ox Horn Crystal, and with the Fuli Talent Skill of illusion rebound, he directly took control of the illusion here!

In an instant, the blue-robed elder making pottery in the temple suddenly had a surprised look in his eyes and fell into confusion, but he regained his senses moments later.

As for Ning Fan, the scenery before his eyes suddenly changed, and he returned to his senses.

He was still standing outside the temple, maintaining the posture of looking up at the sky.

People by the roadside pointed at him.

"This person is quite strange; he's been looking at the sky for an hour now, not sure what he's counting..."

"Shh, don't speak carelessly, this person could be a Holy Mountain Tomb Guardian..."

The hundreds of years of meditation in the stone chamber were merely an illusion; the outside world was still at the moment when he was trapped in the illusion.

Just upon hearing these somewhat similar words, a feeling of unease sprung up in Ning Fan's heart. Could it be that he hadn't escaped the illusion yet! Would the mountains collapse and the earth split in the next moment...

Fortunately, this time he truly escaped, as a voice of praise resonated from inside the temple.

"Very well, you won, take your henchmen home. I didn't expect you to not only escape my illusion but also rebound it back to me, causing me a moment of bewilderment... You, not bad!"

Ning Fan exhaled a long murky breath and walked into the temple. The temple had none of the countless dark towers from the illusion; it was just a small, rundown temple of Nan Yao.

The two-sectioned courtyard had an inner courtyard where an elder in a blue leather jacket, with braided hair, sat, a base before him. He was rolling strips of clay as thick as an arm into the shape of a pot. As the base rotated, he smeared the clay pot's surface with muddy hemp fibers, occasionally using a wooden stick to even out the rotating pot's mouth.

In the courtyard, there were quite a few clay pots drying; not even a drop of rainwater fell into the temple.

Further out, a small kiln was built, seemingly for firing pots. Outside the kiln, a youth wearing an Ox Horn Mask was applying glaze to some pot blanks.

This was the very person Ning Fan had seen when signing up at the Blood Martial Arena.

"Why are you here, are you perhaps tracking me?" The youth, suspected to be Xianyu Chun, stood up suddenly, his gaze sharp on Ning Fan.

He seemed entirely unaware of the conflict between Ning Fan and the blue-robed elder.

Ning Fan had anticipated meeting Xianyu Chun here and wasn't too surprised, giving him a deep look but saying nothing.

The blue-robed elder then spoke.

"Friend Chun, go busy yourself; it's none of your business. He's here to see me! By the way, remember our deal, you must fire me two million pots in your lifetime; you still owe me one million nine hundred ninety-nine thousand seven hundred sixty-two. No slacking!"

The blue-robed elder shot the masked youth a stern look.

The masked youth, deeply apprehensive, glanced at the blue-robed elder and then at Ning Fan, eventually saying nothing more and obediently returned to glazing the clay pots.

The aura the blue-robed elder displayed was extremely weak; on the surface, he seemed just like a common street vendor, but as his gaze focused, Ning Fan instantly felt a crushing pressure like mountains and seas.

A Second-Grade Quasi-Saint, yet even stronger than that Daoist Wood Pine, truly a terrifying mighty figure!

"I know this person; why is he here?" Ning Fan used the Secret Art of Prestige to relieve the elder's pressure and asked.

If he was not mistaken, Xianyu Chun staying here to apply glaze to clay pots seemed like some special kind of cultivation practice... hardly seemed malicious.

"You are here to take away your henchman, not to gather information. Asking too much is not good!" the elder frowned.

"If I don't get to the bottom of it, I can't be at ease regarding this person's safety." The implication was that he was worried the elder might be plotting against Xianyu Chun.

This was the worst-case scenario. If this Second-Grade Quasi-Saint elder had malicious plans against Xianyu Chun, Ning Fan admitted he was powerless to resist.

"You overthink. Mr. Niu never engages in scheming, if someone is to be killed, they're killed directly; if harm is to be done, it's done directly. Whether it's this kid, you, or your turtle servant, it's all the same!"

Having said that, the elder impatiently pointed at a water jar in the corner of the courtyard, then continued making pots, ignoring Ning Fan.

Wu Laoba was in that water jar.

Ning Fan approached and saw that the jar was half-filled with water, containing a strange large fish, seemingly weighing over ten pounds—quite plump; in the jar was also a sesame-sized black turtle, with naïve big eyes, surprisingly resembling Wu Laoba's Eternal True Body shrunken countless times.

As for the strange fish, upon closer inspection, it seemed to be an ancient extinct Yellow Springs Whale, said to be a breed living in the Netherworld, yet was being kept as a pet by the elder, appearing to have shrunken countless times...

No, not shrunken, rather... near and far illusion!

This jar of water seemed close at hand, yet in reality, it was very far, very far... No matter how Ning Fan reached out, he couldn't touch the water in the jar.

It was as if these two fish and one turtle lived in another world, another... reincarnation!

No wonder Wu Laoba couldn't escape, because Wu Laoba didn't understand reincarnation...

"You carry a trace of reincarnation aura, very faint, but truly comprehended by you. Use it to fish out your servant, I see no need for my assistance." The elder said without lifting his head.

"Hm, I can handle this myself, no need for the senior's assistance."

Luckily, Ning Fan had just gained some understanding of reincarnation, otherwise, he wouldn't have dared to boast about rescuing Wu Laoba.

But who would have thought... that Wu Laoba would actually be cursing him, haha, seems like he's itching for a beating.

...

In the world inside the jar.

This was a boundless underwater world. Wu Laoba, in his turtle form, was swimming and cursing, while a Yellow Springs Whale, as massive as the starry sky, followed behind him with sympathetic eyes.

This Yellow Springs Whale wasn't very intelligent; it couldn't understand how such a heartless master could exist in the world to cruelly abuse such a cute little turtle.

The Yellow Springs Whale's aura was incredibly strong, almost comparable to some weaker Immortal Emperors. Initially, Wu Laoba, who was trapped in the water jar, thought the Yellow Springs Whale was weak and easy to bully, but it turned out the whale subdued him in an instant. Fortunately, Wu Laoba immediately conceded, and the not-so-bright Yellow Springs Whale generously forgave him and agreed to Wu Laoba's request to become sworn brothers.

"Second Brother, are you listening to what Big Brother is saying?"

"Roar roar—" trying to say 'I'm listening' from the Yellow Springs Whale.

"Truly pitiful, Second Brother, you can't even speak, but luckily I understand a little of the beast language of rare species, who would have thought, who would have thought it would come in handy today! Are you sympathizing with Big Brother? You are truly my good Second Brother!"

"Roar roar roar roar, roar roar roar roar roar, roar roar roar roar roar—" No sympathy, we are brothers, brothers don't talk about sympathy!

"Good brother, let me continue then. Next, I will start my 1,842nd complaint: that damn star of misfortune hasn't come to save me, definitely saw the enemy was strong and abandoned my little life, disloyal, not righteous! If it were him in trouble, I would definitely save him at all costs. I'm Wu Xiaoba, the most loyal turtle in the world, I would never be as heartless as that star of misfortune!"

"Roar roar roar—" Heartless!

"Next, I will start my 1,843rd complaint: that star of misfortune who plays with fire and urine every time they get something good never shares with me, even snatches my magical treasure, tell me, shouldn't such a master be struck by lightning!"

"Roar roar roar roar—" Struck by lightning!

"Next, I will start my 1,844th complaint: that damn star of misfortune actually thinks I'm a Longyang, which is a huge insult to my personality! I'm Wu Xiaoba, how could I like men, I'm the most normal turtle in the world! And my 1,845th complaint, what right does the star of misfortune have, what right does he have to... hey, Second Brother, what are you looking at, Second Brother?"

In the midst of cursing, Wu Laoba suddenly noticed the whale's eyes were off. A glance showed Ning Fan's smiling face reflected in the endless water region.

Immediately, his whole body shook! Damn, the star of misfortune is here, how much did he hear!

"...Now... ahem ahem... I want to make one last complaint... that uh, I want to accuse the star of misfortune of being dashing and wise, with unmatched skills and world-shaking spells, damn it, I'm not convinced! How can there be such a perfect person in the world, making us ordinary folks unable to survive! Okay, I'm done complaining, next let me tell you a story, the story's name is 'I Have a Good Master, I'll Be Loyal for a Lifetime'..."

Haha.

Before Wu Laoba finished speaking, he suddenly felt a darkness before his eyes, and in the next instant, he had the sense of leaving the water region, and the Eternal True Body that was forcibly restrained finally dissipated.

Beside the jar, Ning Fan shook the water from his hand, and a tiny sesame-sized figure of Wu Laoba landed, instantly enlarging back to his original form.

"Complained and then changed your tune, don't you think it's a bit late?"

As Ning Fan spoke, Wu Laoba felt as if thunder was striking him.

Done for, changing his tune was too late!

"Master, I, I..." Wu Laoba shivered a bit, yet also felt an inexplicable emotion.

He didn't really expect the flying sword to actually call the Master to save him, just wanted to scare that old man in green to let him know he had backing outside.

Who would have thought, that he truly managed to summon his Master...

If he had known how much Master cared about his safety, even if he was blinded by lard, he wouldn't have cursed Master!

"Haha, plenty of time to complain once we return, no rush." Ning Fan smiled, but Wu Laoba had an urge to slap himself to death.

The star of misfortune is definitely angry!

Anyone who risked their life to save someone only to get cursed in return would be angry! This damned loose tongue, it's over!

Ning Fan really wasn't angry, just somewhat speechless at Wu Laoba's nonsense. He had been accused of over 1,800 things, he was genuinely curious about what they all were.

Is he really that sinful? If so, that's quite impressive. As for this Wu Laoba, he never expected loyalty from him.

"We'll discuss your matter back home, for now, just be quiet."

Seeing Wu Laoba still wanting to make excuses, Ning Fan couldn't be bothered to listen anymore and instead approached the old man in green, cupping his fists in gratitude.

He thanked him for his generosity and for not taking offense at Wu Laoba's transgression, sparing his life.

He thanked him for the guidance, if contemplated thoroughly, Ning Fan might be able to derive the method to strengthen his divine sense from today's guidance, thereby mastering the true Myriad Miles Wander.

The old man didn't raise his head, seemingly ignoring Ning Fan's gesture.

Just before Ning Fan opened his mouth, he unexpectedly spoke.

"Though you're not a descendant of Tai Chang, you are fated with him as well. If you're willing to pay the price, I can pass on the complete Divine Art Chant to you, so that Tai Chang's divine skill won't fall into decline."

"Oh? Senior would be willing to teach me the complete Divine Art Chant?" Ning Fan was slightly moved, and asked, "What price would the junior need to pay, in exchange for the complete Divine Art Chant?"

"Come another day, today I'm possessed by the Green Ox Spirit, focused solely on making this jar, not discussing transactions—wait until the Yellow Ox time to talk about this once more!"

With that, the old man lowered his head again, working on the base of the clay jar.

#### Chapter 1027: Display of Authority

After leaving Nan Yao Temple, Ning Fan took Wu Laoba to the nearest relay station's teleportation formation, directly transporting them to a bustling area north of Liuli City—a slave market.

The Dabei people maintain a system of slavery, where those who become slaves are often criminals, and they can be traded in the market.

The status of a slave is even lower than that of a foreign cultivator. Having witnessed the strict hierarchy of the Dabei people many times, Ning Fan was not particularly surprised by the flourishing slave market here.

The reason for coming here was that the place Duolan was looking for a foothold happened to be here.

Generally speaking, most of those who come to Liuli City to participate in the second round of competitions will stay in the guest houses specially prepared by the city. Of course, there are also a few who prefer to stay alone and arrange their own accommodations, which is also tacitly approved by Liuli City.

Duolan did not choose to stay in a guest house in the city but chose this place. The reason, Ning Fan could vaguely guess, was mostly related to some trouble Duolan encountered.

'Chulie sinner Luoshi, pays respect to the young master! I did not expect the young master to also come to Liuli City to watch the second round of the tomb-taking competition. Luoshi thought that with your status, you would directly participate in the third round... But this is also good, there is something in Liuli City that requires the young master's decision, please be our master, be Chulie's master!'

'Have disciples staying in Liuli City had problems?'

Ning Fan sighed slightly. Duolan, being the Chulie Holy Maiden, really had a hard time. She couldn't enjoy the benefits of being a Saintess, couldn't even cultivate on the Holy Mountain, yet had to run around dealing with various problems of the Chulie Lineage. If it was him, he would probably only care for himself and not bother with unrelated people.

Inside, this woman actually has a kindness, different from the Buddha's rhetoric of universal salvation. This kind of genuine goodwill is closer to the Buddhist law...

"Unfortunately, the waters in Liuli City are too deep, and there are many powerful old monsters who can suppress me with a wave of their hand. Moreover, my status as a foreign cultivator is awkward, whereas Duolan's identity as a Saintess makes it easier to resolve various troubles here, much better than if I stepped in..." Ning Fan thought to himself.

Wu Laoba, who was cautiously following Ning Fan, shivered when he realized Ning Fan had brought him to the slave market.

This star of misfortune, this star of misfortune... Could he have lost faith in him and decided to sell him?

It's no wonder. It's rare for the star of misfortune to show goodwill, going through danger to save him, but he had been complaining behind his back...

What behavior is this!

This is ungrateful behavior!

This is beastly behavior!

Wu Laoba felt a twinge of self-blame, for the first time in his life feeling a bit guilty towards Ning Fan, and a bit ashamed...

Of course, he was more worried that if Ning Fan really sold him... he would suffer a huge loss!

Ning Fan was the turning point of his bad luck. Only by following Ning Fan could he cultivate the Dark Luck Technique to its peak and touch the limits of the Dao. He was reluctant to leave Ning Fan to follow another master he didn't know!

He also heard that slaves sold to Liuli City rarely meet a good end. Female slaves could be ordered, humiliated, gifted, or played with at will. Attractive male slaves would meet the same fate as female slaves, while less attractive ones... would be sent directly to the dark underside of Liuli City—the Blood Martial Arena, to fight to the death for the amusement of the powerful...

Wu Laoba touched his big face and thought to himself that he was quite dashing. To be sent to the Blood Martial Arena to fight to the death was one thing, but if some old lady fancied his looks and bought him home to abuse him, that would be a huge insult to his character!

No, he couldn't let the star of misfortune sell him!

Thud!

Wu Laoba very skillfully dropped to his knees in front of Ning Fan.

Ning Fan furrowed his brows, wondering what Wu Laoba was up to again, and said, "What do you think you're doing! If you think you can avoid punishment with this kneeling, that's absolutely impossible! Your behavior today was out of line! The waters of Liuli City are too deep, if you cause trouble elsewhere, I don't care. Even if you encounter problems, you can handle them. But this place is different, if something happens again, I'm not sure I can save you a second time!"

Listen, though the star of misfortune's tone was cold, every word was out of concern for him! Advising him not to cause trouble! Worrying about his safety!

Wu Laoba couldn't help but feel pleased inside, thinking more and more that, beneath Ning Fan's usual cold demeanor, there was human warmth. He was a rare master, and feeling guilty, he became more unwilling to leave Ning Fan. Rolling his pea-sized eyes, he put on a pitiful expression and pleaded,

"Master wishes to punish Little Ba, and Little Ba has no complaints. But I have one request: no matter what, don't sell Little Ba as a slave to others. Little Ba's life belongs to the master, and in death, I am the master's ghost. I'm loyal to master, and the sun and moon can bear witness. I absolutely refuse to be sold to another master to perform those acts of wooing with beauty. Little Ba... Little Ba can't do it..."

"Wooing with beauty? You?" Ning Fan was momentarily stunned, then looked at Wu Laoba in slight disbelief.

With this appearance, if he really became a slave, he most likely wouldn't have the chance to use his looks to serve anyone, but would be directly sent to the Blood Martial Arena to die.

The Blood Martial Arena, its waters were equally deep. According to the information given by the Sea Witch Triad, an Eternal Immortal Venerable had even died there once, though that was a long time ago...

The nature of the Blood Martial ranking battles is different from the second round of the tomb-taking competition. Ning Fan was determined to win the South Sea Spring Water, but as for the innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine rewarded at the Blood Martial Arena, he would take it if he could, but if not, he would fully retreat. After all, the Dabei clan is vast and resourceful, and the clues to the innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine can be found elsewhere. It's not worth the risk...

Seeing that Ning Fan seemed to be contemplating something, Wu Laoba was alarmed, thinking Ning Fan was seriously considering selling him, and he grew anxious.

In his urgency, unlike usual, he shouted loudly, "Even if you're going to sell me, star of misfortune, wait until I've repaid your kindness! I, Wu Laoba, may have questionable character, but I never leave debts of gratitude unpaid. You saved me once, and I must return that favor!"

Some onlookers who were unaware of the full story began to point and whisper in their direction. Tsk tsk tsk, the love and hate between a dashing young man and an ugly old man—this kind of unlikely love story, even in Liuli City, where male love stories are widespread, is quite rare, truly intriguing.

Though the voices of those discussions were not loud, with Ning Fan's hearing, he could hardly fail to notice. His expression turned somewhat unpleasant.

This Wu Laoba really knows how to make trouble for him!

But surprisingly, this time he finally said something human, which made Ning Fan see him in a different light. Not owing people favors, huh... That's truly Wu Laoba's character. Back in the day, the old monster accidentally saved Wu Laoba once, and Wu Laoba felt he had to repay the old monster. With his extremely tricky personality, being able to do this is indeed repaying every kindness.

It wasn't a waste saving this person.

"Don't worry, since we're master and servant, I won't sell you. However... you just cursed at me, and now you're yelling at me so loudly, isn't that a problem?"

Ning Fan smiled slightly, and Wu Laoba immediately felt a strange chill rushing to his forehead. Damn, in the excitement he forgot the star of misfortune's terror. If there's ever a day when the star of misfortune displays humanity, it must be today! But in other moments of the star of misfortune's life, there's absolutely no humanity, ready to kill over a disagreement!

How dare he speak to the star of misfortune like that!

"Ma-ma-ma-ma-master, I-I-I-I'm wrong... I-I-I-I..."

"If you're wrong, you deserve punishment. I'll give you some punishment later. For now, stand up, shut your mouth, follow me, and don't cause any more disturbance."

After speaking, Ning Fan directly walked towards a certain direction in the slave market.

As Ning Fan turned around, Wu Laoba's mournful, timid face immediately transformed into a sly grin. He stood up, patted his knees, and jogged to catch up with Ning Fan, secretly pleased. Pretending to be timid occasionally in front of the star of misfortune indeed could win some sympathy from him. Wu Laoba would never admit that genuinely fearing Ning Fan.

"Selling slaves here, hybrid of Sanyan Fire Realm demon beast and human race, half-demon slaves only three hundred silver!"

"Perfectly beautiful female slave, Yin energy intact, only eight hundred silver!"

"Medicine slave possessing Water Soul, priced at thirty gold!"

"Shape-shifting demon beast, Nascent Soul cultivation, priced at one hundred gold!"

The place was filled with various shouting, along with buyers' laughter and some slaves' cries.

Occasionally some disobedient slaves would be whipped by the master.

And some female slaves were stripped naked and displayed in front of everyone, completely devoid of dignity...

Ning Fan frowned, hurriedly walking through the crowd, uninterested in the slave trading here. Though there weren't many cries here, laughter filled the place, and there was plenty of sunshine, yet Ning Fan felt this place was even darker than the Blood Martial Arena.

But thinking carefully, it's not only Liuli City with such darkness, where in the cultivation world could there lack these dark aspects?

This wasn't the cultivation atmosphere he liked, but it was a reality he was powerless to change. Faced with such reality, Purple Dou Immortal Sovereign could create an era of peace in Zi Dou Immortal Domain with his own efforts, while he could barely protect himself in the cultivation world.

'In this world, there's nothing that can't be done; it's only a matter of whether you're willing to do it. It might be laughable for a mere mortal boy to dream of changing the world. But if it were me, I'd truly rewrite everything in this world... Have you ever had ideals in your heart?'

Amidst the crowd's bittersweet laughter, he suddenly remembered Purple Dou Immortal Sovereign's question.

But it was only a thought; for now, he was powerless to do anything, using all his strength even just to protect those around him.

The Dark Clan bullied him, yet he couldn't retaliate openly.

Daarbei Emperor Lou Tuo bullied him, and he could only slightly resist, not daring to kill his way to Emperor Lou Tuo's domain.

What he lacked wasn't courage but strength...

"The Mental Armor Formula is greatly beneficial to increasing my strength. It might be worth it to discuss a trade with the elder at Nan Yao Temple when Huang Niu spirit is present!"

Green Ox Spirit, Huang Niu Spirit...

Upon thinking of this, Ning Fan finally felt inclined to ask Wu Laoba about his entire process of encountering misfortune.

Wu Laoba, as usual, exaggerated, divulging today's experience. Initially, he wanted to hide the matter about the Imperial Jade Fortune Set from Ning Fan, but due to inner guilt, he gritted his teeth and told Ning Fan as well.

This is how it happened.

Last time, Wu Laoba unintentionally snatched a Post-heaven Twelve Nirvana Magical Treasure—Imperial Jade Fortune Crown from a poor victim of the Dabei Clan. This crown isn't a single treasure but a set, comprising four parts: crown, armor, boots, and sword. The more parts worn, the greater the enhancement to fortune. If gathered completely, it can almost rival an Innate Mid-grade Treasure, highly praised in Wu Laoba's master's Treasure-Seeking notes, desired even more than items like the Water-Flooding Realm Bottle.

It's, after all, a treasure that can elevate the strength of Black Fortune! For cultivators of Dark Luck Sect, gathering the complete set serves as a supreme protective treasure!

With the fortune crown obtained in the Dabei Clan, Wu Laoba's strength greatly increased, naturally seeking the other three parts to complete the set.

Wu Laoba theorized that since one piece was found in the Dabei Clan, there's a high likelihood the other parts exist there. Hence, he employed Treasure-Seeking Turtle for nightly searches, and indeed found some sense leading towards Liuli City.

That sense was coming from the elder at Nan Yao Temple. Very likely, he had the second piece of the Imperial Jade Fortune Set!

"So, you went to provoke that elder because of the second piece of the Imperial Jade Fortune Set?" Ning Fan asked.

"Yes! If this treasure wasn't so vital for us cultivators of Black Fortune, Little Ba wouldn't be so persistent in searching for it. It's only blameworthy that the waters run too deep in Liuli City. Little Ba never imagined that a mere old pot-maker could be such a terrifying strong figure, even though Little Ba had enquired beforehand. He learned that the elder's surname was Niu, without any background in Liuli City, just a roaming merchant frequently seen across the Dabei Clan regions, crafting pots for the official temples, typically doing official work, sometimes selling a bit at various markets..." Wu Laoba rambled on, narrating the information he gathered beforehand.

He was indeed cautious. Before provoking the old man from Nan Yao Temple, he gathered a lot of intelligence. Unfortunately, if a second-grade Quasi-Saint has the intent to conceal, the usual intelligence cannot expose them. Wu Laoba was really complacent these days, and thus became careless.

"The old man is surnamed Niu, is that right? And his words mentioned the Green Ox Spirit, Yellow Ox Spirit... I recall Burying Moon mentioned that the reason she once had a karmic connection with Baihua Great Emperor was because she was severely injured by an Ox Demon... During that time, she was of the Immortal Emperor Realm, capable of injuring her, these Ox Demons must be few in number, could it be exactly this person... If so, back then, could Baihua Great Emperor possibly save Burying Moon from such a formidable Ox Demon..."

What cultivation level did Baihua Great Emperor possess, even if his Dao of formations talent was high, how could he save a person from the hands of a second-grade Quasi-Saint?

Or perhaps, at that time, the Ox Demon had no real intention to kill, and let Burying Moon escape?

Or maybe Baihua Great Emperor had some other concealment... or both?

Ning Fan felt a bit troubled. From stepping into Baihua Peak to arriving at Liuli City, he had encountered many inexplicable confusions, including the uncanny Xianyu Chun, and the odd comments from the woman claiming to be Xiufang Afeng... Though his mind was not dull, he disliked intrigue, deceit, and never-before-seen complex circumstances.

While pondering, a commotion suddenly broke out ahead. The crowd formed a large circle, seemingly something happened.

Ning Fan walked closer, and his gaze turned cold.

It was a slave trying to escape, only to be whipped publicly by his master.

The slave was a brawny man, possessing the powerful cultivation level of the Initiate Realm of Shekong, but due to being restricted by the Punishing Ring, he could only exercise the cultivation of Gold Core level first step.

The man was covered in wounds, both new and old, seemingly having suffered countless abuses.

But his eyes did not show the inferiority typical of a slave, rather, they were filled with indignation, filled with defiance.

The man was wearing foreign cultivator attire, not a Holy Mountain Tomb Guardian, but... a foreign cultivator!

It seems this person entered Supreme Pill Sacred Domain with Ning Fan as part of a batch of Old Monsters of East Heaven. According to bystanders, after his cultivation was sealed, he came to Liuli City, seemingly offended a local noble, and was captured, abused, and sold as a slave!

If his cultivation were intact, this person, relying on his Shedding Void Realm cultivation, naturally wouldn't be so destitute, but the Punishing Ring restricted the foreign cultivators too much, making it impossible for him to resist the harassment of not-so-cultivated nobles and ended up captured alive!

A Shedding Void Realm old monster, a powerful entity in Eastern Heaven, yet here he's beaten like a slave, how can he be satisfied!

"That uncle is so pitiful..." a child on the roadside showed some compassion, while his parents shook their heads and said.

"Child, don't pity this person. He is a lowly foreign cultivator and offended the Lou family, one of the ten nobles of Liuli City! Nobles are above us commoners, much less the ten nobles, don't forget, offending

the nobles is one of the Twelve Prohibitions of this Dazu against foreign cultivators, no one can save him..."

"The Lou family are the same bloodline descendants as Emperor Lou Tuo, this person offended the Lou family, even if sold, no one will dare to buy him." Some bystanders sighed.

"Otherwise, I would want to spend some money to buy him and set him free as a benevolent act..." There were indeed compassionate people, yet facing the wrath of the crimes committed by this man, no one dared save him.

"You dare to run! How dare you run! A mere foreign slave trying to escape from my clutches. I won't sell you, I'll beat you to death here today, let the citizens of Liuli City witness my methods! Foreign cultivators are nothing but pigs and dogs, killing you is nothing!"

A sullen-looking herdsman shouted while swinging a thunder-glowing whip, desperately flogging the foreign cultivator. He seemed to be Lou Laosan, a member of Liuli nobility.

As for the foreign cultivator, perhaps his Mana was exhausted, leaving him crouched like a dog on the ground, allowing Lou Laosan whip him, blood, and pus flowed all over, yet he himself remained defiantly enraged, roaring,

"What kind of aristocrats, what kind of Lou family, I'm Li Ying and I won't submit! I merely did not yield the way to the Lou family's son, and he severely injured me. I merely retaliated. How can it be said I violated the Twelve Prohibitions, why not pursue the matter of the Lou family's son hurting me, I won't submit!"

"I am the Star Lord of the Divine Hero Star in Eastern Heaven Immortal Realm, I was the number one young person in Eastern Heaven four million years ago. I am the cultivator Li Ying, not a dog! Ridiculous that the son of the Lou family also poisoned me with Rotting God Deadly Poison, trying to devour my consciousness with this unresolvable poison, refining me into a puppet, haha, dream on! Even if I die as Li Ying, I will not die as a slave, nor will I die as a puppet! I'll take one with me even in death!"

Out of nowhere, the foreign cultivator burst forth with energy, suddenly leapt from the ground, broke free from chains, and pounced towards Lou Laosan.

In a moment of blood-red eyes, the foreign cultivator chose self-explosion, with the intention to regain the last fragment of dignity with his own life!

Ning Fan's eyes flashed coldly, turning the palm to rescue, but a gentle hand suddenly rested on his shoulder, pulling him back a few steps with a strong force, leaving him no time to save the foreign cultivator.

With a loud bang, Li Ying exploded into a bloodbath and shredded meat, while Lou Laosan, caught under him, was equally blown to death!

Fortunately, Li Ying's cultivation was restricted, and due to Mana exhaustion, the self-explosion's impact was extremely limited, only taking the life of Lou Laosan rather than endangering countless civilians.

The gathered crowd immediately fled like beasts and birds, leaving the once bustling slave market suddenly desolate, with just Ning Fan, Wu Laoba, and the man who kept a hand on Ning Fan's shoulder.

He was a young man reeking of blood stench with considerable strength, half a step into Immortal Venerable cultivation level. But the force of that grip, as per Ning Fan's estimation, likely surpassed that of a First Calamity Immortal Sovereign. This person seemed to possess a fearsome mastery over Body Refinement...

"Due to your intervention, two lives are gone." Ning Fan coldly remarked, cold light shone around, shaking off the bloody man a few steps back, leaving him slightly astonished.

According to his intelligence, Ning Fan should have been sealed of cultivation, how could he have the strength to repel his full-force attack seems unfathomable...

The bloody man became apprehensive, but this caution swiftly turned to near-maniacal pleasure.

The more complex the better! The blood of such a person is more qualified to prove his existence! Truly a fantastic prey! Master really didn't deceive him!

"You, this foreign cultivator, heavily indulged in slaughter, do you care for the names of two mere mortals, don't joke! You ought to seek the ultimate in killing like I do. We are of the same kind, thus you must die! Tomb Heist second round, kill say someone in a battle, but do not disappoint me then!"

To Ning Fan's words, the bloodthirsty man responded nonchalantly, his figure flickering as he turned into a streak of blood light and disappeared from the spot.

It seemed he could slightly ignore the forbidden force of the Dabei Clan and use some escape techniques! Quite skillful...

As he left, a whisper-like voice echoed mockingly in Ning Fan's ear.

Ning Fan's gaze suddenly turned cold, but then he gently closed his eyes, feeling a suffocating mix of frustration and an unventilated anger.

Indeed, as the bloodthirsty man said, Ning Fan, the devil lord Ning, was someone who had emerged from a mountain of corpses and a sea of blood; why would he care so much about other people's lives?

He truly didn't care about the life of Lou Laosan, but Li Ying's self-detonation and death angered him.

Previously, he had only heard of the struggles of foreign cultivators in Dabei, but due to his own extraordinary power and various fortuitous encounters, he rarely experienced injustice because of his foreign status in the Dabei Clan.

The few times it happened, like during the first round of Tomb Seizing, he resolved it with his own tactics without any loss...

But Li Ying was not as lucky as him; his only resistance against the Dabei was to self-detonate and perish...

"Damn, so what if we're foreign cultivators, does that mean we can be casually insulted as dogs! Aren't these Dabei people just born with Medicine Souls, why should they be superior and treat us foreign

cultivators like dogs to be slaughtered... Damn it, I can't stand it! It's one thing to fight honorably on the cultivation road, but to be humiliated like this, it's truly hateful!"

Wu Laoba roared loudly, but after roaring, his voice suddenly lowered.

"It's all that person's fault for ambushing me and binding me with this blood rope, otherwise I would've saved him in time! Damn it, what kind of damn rope is this, the more I struggle, the tighter it gets! And the one who attacked me didn't even seem to be an Eternal Immortal Venerable, yet he had such skills..."

Wu Laoba's body was unknowingly bound by a blood rope, binding him round and round like a dumpling, before he barely managed to break free.

It was also the bloodthirsty youth's handiwork!

"Was that person called Li Ying? He died because of me." Ning Fan remained silent for a moment before speaking.

Wu Laoba was immediately confused, "Master, why is this so? Li Ying's death is indeed regrettable, but it's a common occurrence in the cultivation world. Little Ba vented a couple of times, cried out in wrong for this person, and that should be enough to fulfill the chance meeting we had. Master doesn't need to take this person's death upon himself."

But Ning Fan shook his head, "No, the reason this person died was actually orchestrated by someone. This was an intimidation tactic, and if I'm not mistaken, it was that person just now, trying to give me a warning! Informing me that as a foreign cultivator, in his eyes, I am nothing more than a pig or a dog, and killing me is a trivial matter!"

Ning Fan did not believe it was a coincidence, otherwise, why would the bloodthirsty man show up here by such coincidence and call him out by name?

That whisper-like transmission before leaving was undoubtedly a provocation!

"My master, Emperor Lou Tuo, wants me to take your life in the second round of Tomb Seizing, you are doomed to die!"

Ha, so this bloodthirsty youth is a disciple of Emperor Lou Tuo! Wants to take my life in the second round of Tomb Seizing, then bring it on!

Hmph!

With a wave of Ning Fan's sleeve, a purple-black spiritual light suddenly flew out from his sleeve, transforming into a spirit wheel, absorbing towards the place where the foreign cultivator self-detonated.

Then, Ning Fan retrieved the spirit wheel.

"This is... an Ancient Demon Spirit Wheel! What did Master do!" Even with Wu Laoba's experience, he was curious about the close proximity to the Ancient Demon Spirit Wheel.

"Nothing, let's go."

Ning Fan naturally couldn't be bothered to explain to Wu Laoba that he used the spirit wheel to collect Li Ying's soul.

An immortal's death results in the scattering of thoughts, which should be a sure death, but the Fu Li Spirit Wheel has the extraordinary ability to gather the souls of those cultivators who died with unfinished business.

And if one day Ning Fan's cultivation is sufficient, he could even use the Fu Li Spirit Wheel to allow those indomitable souls to reenter reincarnation and transform into Fu Li.

Duolan settled in an old mansion in the slave market, a plaque hung outside the mansion bearing the large characters 'The 47th Prison'.

Inside the old mansion, there were some people with shackles on their wrists and ankles serving, and when Ning Fan and Wu Laoba arrived, two delicate servant girls with jingling shackles on their feet came out to greet them.

"Are you the powerful foreign cultivator who saved the Holy Maiden? Please accept our gratitude!"

The two girls appeared to be sincerely grateful, with tears streaming down their faces, kneeling and not getting up.

Ning Fan paused slightly, nodded, waved his sleeve to create a breeze, and helped the two girls to stand.

In his mind, he thought that Duolan must have explained their relationship to these people as a benefactor relationship... No wonder, a master-servant relationship is not to be spoken of.

These two girls with shackles seemed to have some bloodline connection to Duolan.

Could they be disciples of the Chu Lie lineage? And likely those with some slight kinship...

Chapter 1028: Supreme Ox Demon

The two girls welcomed Ning Fan through the main gate. Once inside, he saw two neat rows of dozens of old and young people kneeling, saying things like 'Thank you for saving our Chulie Holy Maiden' and 'Great kindness cannot be repaid.'

These people were also wearing shackles.

Ning Fan's expression was calm, but he felt somewhat awkward inside. He was not truly the benefactor of the Chulie sect. On the contrary, he still bore the blood debt of the Chulie disciple Pi Xiong and had captured the Chulie Holy Maiden as a soul-locked slave, hardly deserving such grand ceremonies.

With a wave of his sleeve, he caused a gust of wind that helped everyone up, saying, "I don't like others kneeling to me. Please refrain from doing so in the future."

"Understood, understood," all the old and young people nodded in agreement.

An elderly man standing at the front row asked, "Lord Duolan and Leader Luo are in the main hall discussing matters and instructed us to treat Lord Ning well and not neglect any details. We have already arranged a courtyard for Lord Ning and prepared the dan refinement room, meditation room, and study. We have also added some new items. Lord Ning might want to take a look first, and if you're not satisfied, I'll have it all replaced immediately..."

"No need to trouble yourselves, I can live anywhere," Ning Fan replied, scanning the shabby clothing of the people around him.

This place was called the 47th Prison, and these people, all wearing shackles, were most likely prisoners. Yet, there was a trace of bloodline connection between all of them and Duolan, either distant or close...

"Lord Duolan instructed me to tell Lord Ning that you may act freely here. As for matters concerning the Chu Lie lineage, you need not worry and need only prepare fully for the second round of the tomb fight," the old man continued.

Ning Fan nodded, it seemed Duolan could handle the trouble here, so he need not worry about it.

As it was already late, the old man sent someone to escort Ning Fan and Wu Laoba to their quarters. The room's furnishings weren't luxurious, but it was evident that a lot of thought had gone into it, with many new additions.

The two women who had previously welcomed Ning Fan stayed behind to serve him.

The two stood by the screen, slightly hesitant, occasionally glancing fearfully at Wu Laoba's mischievous expression; whereas with Ning Fan, they were at ease, without fear, and sometimes even blushed at his gaze.

This left Wu Laoba feeling rather aggrieved. He considered himself quite handsome and charming, but these young girls didn't appreciate it, only favoring Ning Fan's gentle and scholarly appearance. Ah, the taste of these young girls these days is utterly lacking...

"Are you speaking ill of me in your mind again?" Ning Fan gave Wu Laoba a deep look, causing Wu Laoba to shudder, wondering if the star of misfortune could read his mind. Just as he was about to defend himself, Ning Fan continued,

"I told you earlier there would be punishment for today's events, have you mentally prepared yourself?"

"Yes... I am ready. Little Ba is willing to accept any punishment, just please, master, don't sell off Little Ba, don't make Little Ba serve others with his charms," Wu Laoba still remembered the incident at the slave market.

Pfft.

The two serving girls couldn't help but laugh, drawing an angry glare from Wu Laoba that scared them pale.

Faced with someone like Wu Laoba, Ning Fan truly felt at a loss, unable to decide between scolding or not, fingers tapping on the table as he pondered how best to punish him. Alas, he had no experience in this area, struggling to come up with a fitting punishment.

The purpose of punishment is for Wu Laoba to learn a lesson, but this fellow seemed to be the sort who'd fall into the same trap a dozen times and still do it again... So then, what use is a punishment?

But if he doesn't punish him at all, who knows how arrogant this guy might become, so a light warning is necessary...

After a long while, Ning Fan finally made a decision and said to Wu Laoba, "Your punishment is to inquire about the Innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine, how does that sound?"

Since he couldn't think of a punishment, Ning Fan might as well employ Wu Laoba's specialty to some effect...

"Just inquiring for information? That's too lenient; the master must be reluctant to punish Little Ba. Truly, the master's heart is soft, warm, merciful..."

"It's not merely about inquiring. If there are spiritual medicines you can obtain, under the right circumstances, you must secure them!"

"This... that's a bit difficult. Although Innate-level spiritual medicines are not uncommon to us who've lived through eons, they're not as common as ordinary vegetables. If it's just inquiring, Little Ba can put in some effort, but obtaining them, well..."

Wu Laoba looked bitter. After being saved by Ning Fan, his inner resolve had slightly changed. He was determined not to refuse Ning Fan's requests anymore, planning to repay the life-saving debt somehow. However, due to this incident, Wu Laoba had developed a fear of the foolish members of the Dabei clan, worried that the next fool he encountered might be another formidable Quasi-Saint, which made him hesitant, no longer daring to act with impunity, relying on his Black Fortune, within the Dabei clan.

"Don't worry; I'm only asking you to acquire them through normal means. Innate spiritual medicines still have a price. At worst, it's just a trade. If the things you have can cover it, trade them. If not, come find me, and I'll figure something out."

"If it's just a simple trade, Little Ba is willing to share the master's burdens!"

"Good, you may rest now."

"Yes, Little Ba will leave immediately and not disturb the master's important affairs!"

Wu Laoba gave Ning Fan and the two girls a mischievous glance, chuckled, and exited.

Ning Fan had heard such jokes many times before and naturally paid them no mind, but the two girls turned crimson with embarrassment.

They were only sent here as regular maidservants, not for any intimate services... How could that ugly old man say such things about them? Clearly, judging people by appearances, that Wu-surnamed elder was no good person.

Unaware of being silently criticized, Wu Laoba let out a sneeze in the corridor, baffled.

"It's getting late. I wonder if Lord Ning has a habit of bathing. If so, I'll go and prepare hot water for you," asked the two girls respectfully after Wu Laoba left, feeling more at ease with Ning Fan.

Bathing... ahem ahem ahem...

Ning Fan felt somewhat embarrassed to admit that since becoming a cultivator, he often went decades without bathing, as his mana could cleanse him instantly. Many habits from his mortal days had long been abandoned.

Meditating for months or years at a time—if you still hold on to the habit of bathing, can you even continue pursuing the Dao...?

However, the Dabei kept many mortal habits, so Ning Fan told himself it was best to adapt to the local customs.

"Very well, but let's hold off on heating the water. I have some questions for you first. Could you tell me your names and your relationship with Miss Duolan?"

"My name is Chunjun, and she's Shadow Carrier. We, along with the other prisoners here, are blood relatives within three generations of the former Chulie Emperor and are considered true clansmen of the Chulie Holy Maiden," answered one of the slightly older women.

"I see."

Ning Fan nodded, inwardly noting that these people were indeed related by blood to Duolan and couldn't be judged merely as ordinary disciples of the Chulie lineage.

At the same time, Ning Fan was intrigued by the names of these two women. Chunjun and Shadow Carrier both appeared to be names of ancient swords. Such sharp-edged names given to women were rather unusual.

"You two are named after ancient swords, yet you don't seem to have practiced the Sword Dao?"

"Sir, you might not know this, but it was our uncle—the former Chulie Emperor—who named us. He was obsessed with swords, not us. We are better at herding sheep and planting herbs but practicing swordsmanship is beyond us. In our Dabei, not everyone is required to cultivate. Our uncle—the former Chulie Emperor—also taught us: if there's no desire, don't tread the Dao. Hence, the punished living here are mostly not of high cultivations; there is only Leader Luo Shi among us at the Peak of Shekong. But because we are not of high cultivations, we can keep our lives..."

If there's no desire, don't tread the Dao...

Ning Fan muttered these words, feeling a surprising alignment with the former Chulie Emperor's thoughts. Cultivation is not necessarily a beautiful thing; it would be better to live an ordinary life. If not for the many strong foes, compelling him to enhance his cultivations, Ning Fan would prefer indulging in nature and lead a simple life instead of living amidst such bloodshed and turmoil.

But there is no choice...

"Tell me, what is this 47th Prison, and why are you all wearing shackles like prisoners?" Ning Fan asked again.

The two women were slightly surprised, "Sir doesn't know? It's no wonder; Sir is a foreign cultivator, so it's not surprising you don't know. In our Dabei, the rule is that if an Immortal Emperor commits a grave crime, it implicates their relatives, but the implication extends only for three generations. Yet, it's not a direct implication; instead of execution, our lives are spared to atone as slaves. We were implicated due to the former Chulie Emperor's matter. We are unsellable slaves residing in Liuli City's prison, working for Liuli City. Once the sentence is served, we can shed our slave status and live as ordinary people there. Leader Luo Shi and a few clansmen completed their sentences earliest, but we still have some time, hence still in this prisoner guise. It's not too bad, merely because of the interference from the Spirit Sect lineage... Ah!"

The woman named Shadow Carrier was in the middle of explaining when Chunjun abruptly covered her mouth and signaled her with a look: The Lord Duolan instructed us not to reveal this to Lord Ning Fan!

Not revealing it, does that mean Ning Fan wouldn't know?

With his Mind Reading Technique, Ning Fan already saw the master behind the Chu Lie disciples' plight and furrowed his brow slightly.

Judging from their hearts, Duolan handled the matter reasonably well so far. Well since Duolan asked him not to intervene, Ning Fan refrained.

After asking the two women a few more questions, Ning Fan had them boil water.

Then he dismissed the women and, like a commoner, took a long-awaited bath after decades...

The next day, he awoke without seeing Duolan, as she seemed to be out on business. As for Wu Laoba, he was out probing for news on the Innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine.

Ning Fan didn't wander around Liuli City but stayed in the house meditating, continuing to organize the insights he gained at Baihua Peak. While he made some progress on the Ancient Demon Annihilation Dao, understanding reincarnation seemed elusive.

Three days passed quickly, and on the fourth day, at 5:45 AM, Ning Fan notified Chunjun and Shadow Carrier and set out. At 11:15 AM, the Blood Martial ranking battle would begin!

The ranking battle, as the name suggests, aims to determine one hundred ranks. The top hundred strong contenders can become Guest Elders of Blood Martial Arena, enjoying corresponding privileges. Naturally, the higher the rank, the better the benefits.

Moreover, each ranking battle offers generous rewards, attracting countless participants every time it's held, though the number of those reaching Arena Number One is limited.

Tickets for the ranking battle were sold at exorbitant prices by Blood Martial Arena, with even the worst seats costing two hundred thousand Stone Currency. Two hundred thousand Stone Currency is roughly equivalent to two hundred thousand Medicine Soul Stones...

There was an exchange place for Medicine Soul Stones to Stone Currency, of course, but Ning Fan didn't need to exchange Stones to buy a ticket. He was there to compete directly.

By the time allocated, Ning Fan had long arrived timely at Arena Number One of the Blood Martial Arena. Like other participants, he stayed in an independent lounge before entering, and was requested to wear a mask and special armor to conceal identity.

All participants were given a mask, ranging from animal shapes to ghostly forms; Ning Fan even saw a mask identical to Xianyu Chun's with ox horns among them.

Ning Fan also received a mask, a fire fox mask.

Upon close examination, Ning Fan realized these masks were exceptionally adept at concealing one's aura, although not as effective as his Innate Ghost Mask, the difference was minimal. These masks seemed to have limited use, roughly usable four or five times before becoming ineffective, not a lasting item.

It's understandable though; with over a thousand participants in today's ranking battle, of course, they couldn't issue truly good items to each.

"Everyone participating in this battle, remember to follow the rules of Blood Martial Arena. Once you enter the battle, you're no longer your former self but a warrior, a warrior who cannot pursue retribution even unto death! There are three major prohibitions here; anyone who violates them will be executed without pardon! First, during battle, do not reveal your identity openly here! Second, do not identify others' identities during the competition! Third, do not attack the Adjudicator!"

Before entering the arena, all participants heard this transmission; Ning Fan was no exception.

In the pre-competition lounge, there were dozens of robes and armor, all custom-made by Blood Martial Arena, and Ning Fan could choose one to wear. He was not allowed to wear his own clothes in the competition.

There were types of armor Ning Fan hadn't seen before, as well as the familiar Four Heavens attire.

Ning Fan's fox face mask was bright red, so he easily chose a fire-red battle armor, which wasn't a full body armor, but had little decorative plate protection, with pathetic defense, purely for appearance.

This ensured fairness, for if Blood Martial Arena armors were of high defense, it might affect competition outcomes, which is impermissible.

Interestingly, the moment he wore the armor, the mask, and armor seemed to harmonize, activating a restriction between the two, transmitting a message to Ning Fan.

It turned out while masks might seem similar, the armor was unique, with different combinations giving distinct codes. In Blood Martial Arena, Ning Fan's name held no meaning; only the armor's code was known to the audience!

"Remember your code—Slaughter Fox!"

Slaughter Fox... Ning Fan wore the fox mask, yet the code was Slaughter Fox, seemingly ominous, but Ning Fan wouldn't bother with such trivialities.

Once in the arena, he found many shared similar name collisions.

For instance, someone wore a ghost head mask but their code was Ghost Slayer.

Someone wears the Emperor's mask, but the code name is Emperor Butcher...

Hmm?

Not sure if it was an illusion, but amidst the crowd entering, the contestant named Emperor Butcher seemed to glance in his direction, with a gaze as cold as ice, giving Ning Fan a sense of danger.

That coldness bore no malice, simply indifferent from wading too much through the bloody mist. Such a deeply demonic gaze was rarely seen in Ning Fan's life, even he felt a bit of awe! It seemed the Blood

Martial Rank Battle truly gathered hidden talents, making the endeavor to win the Innate Spiritual Medicine not easy, and Emperor Butcher required some caution...

Never mind, it's worth a try!

Presiding over the rank battle was an elder in a red long dress, with the cultivation of the Shattered Thought Early Stage, known in the Blood Martial Arena as the Adjudicator.

The Adjudicator could not be attacked, and this prohibition was added because in previous years, someone managed to kill all other contestants single-handedly, and unsatisfied, even killed the Adjudicator, angering the Blood Martial Arena. They wanted to kill him, but he left the Blood Martial Arena alive, truly remarkable in spirit skills.

Time slowly ticked by, and gradually almost all contestants donned masks and armor upon entering the arena, with only a few absent, either late or withdrawing.

The Adjudicator looked at the time and closed the door to the resting room, officially ending the entry. A roar and cheers suddenly erupted above the circular arena.

Gradually, the cheers unified into a single, synchronized word.

Kill! Kill! Kill!

Whoever seized the first place, the audience didn't care, what they wanted to see was slaughter, was blood splattering everywhere!

Of course, some people came to gamble, betting on the first place of the rank battle, top ten, top hundred, all as a form of entertainment.

"Everyone seems impatient, so I shall not waste words. The format of the rank battle is the same every session. This session has one thousand one hundred and forty-two registrants and one thousand and sixty-six in attendance, thus requiring a total of five hundred and thirty-three life and death stages..."

The Adjudicator clapped his hands, and a rumbling noise came from the ground beneath the arena, as unexpectedly, five hundred and thirty-three cylindrical stone platforms rose from the floor like mechanisms.

Each cylindrical stone platform is ten zhang wide; within that space, life and death must be decided.

A giant, mirror-smooth stone screen also rose from the ground, displaying over a thousand names. Frontmost are winners from past rank battles, while the rest are in random order, mostly those who never scored before. As people improve their records, the rankings will continue to change.

Every contestant receives an identity token before the match, used for entry and for competing.

The initial rounds adopt continuous bouts, first with duels in pairs. This stage requires no life or death outcomes. The five hundred and thirty-three life and death stages have numbers, and contestants' identity tokens indicate which stage to ascend, pairing them randomly, with a decision required within an incense's burn duration, or both counted as 1 loss.

If a decision is made, the victor receives 1 win, the defeated 1 loss.

If a life stage must appear within ten breaths and still unascended, it also counts as 1 loss.

This random pair dueling continues, during which ten losses result in disqualification. Death equally results in disqualification.

Elimination continues until fewer than one hundred contestants remain, ending the paired duels.

Then comes the most thrilling chaotic battle, finally determining the top hundred ranking.

Not all in the top hundred survive... And to win the Innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine—Night Spirit Ganoderma, first place must be achieved.

"Rank battle, begin!"

With the Adjudicator's word, the text on each contestant's identity token flashed instantly.

A number appeared on Ning Fan's identity token, [117], and upon seeing this, Ning Fan leaped several times to the corresponding life and death stage.

His opponent also appeared, a burly man like a mountain of flesh with a wild boar mask, his battle attire couldn't conceal the fat covering him.

This man looked uncouth, with a weak cultivation of Late Stage Enlightenment!

Seeing this weak opponent, Ning Fan scanned other places with his spirit sense and quickly found Xianyu Chun at Life and Death Stage #74.

Xianyu Chun went by the code name Plodding Bull, fitting well as a name, for though clumsy, could carry heavy loads over miles.

"Heh heh, facing me, Swine Emperor, and still looking around is asking for death!"

The burly man grinned with menace, flicking his sleeves to unleash dozens of magical treasures shining with spiritual light towards Ning Fan, some surpassing Acquired Five Nirvana treasures.

Such full force would throw even an Initiate Realm of Shekong into disarray, likely aiming to finish Ning Fan quickly. Unexpectedly, Ning Fan waved his sleeve, collecting all his magical treasures, then punched, making the burly man unable to see the punch's shadow before he felt all his bones shatter, spewing blood while being hurled out of the ring.

Swine Emperor, 0 wins 1 loss!

Slaughter Fox, 1 win 0 loss!

Hiss!

Some audience members immediately noticed the instant win on this life and death stage. Such a quick victory over a Late Stage Enlightenment opponent marked the contestant named Slaughter Fox as formidable!

However, when people realized Slaughter Fox spared the Swine Emperor's life, dissatisfaction arose.

They wanted to see blood, wanted slaughter! If only a serious injury, it was tolerable, but Slaughter Fox clearly had the strength to kill the Swine Emperor in one hit, yet showed mercy, causing some discontent!

But alas, what did these people's dissatisfaction have to do with Ning Fan?

He's here for the Night Spirit Ganoderma, not to be a sideshow. Though this place is a life-and-death arena, there is no deep-seated enmity between the participants, and everything is in a state of life or death. Even if he spares the life of the Swine Emperor, he won't need others to chime in!

"Noisy!"

Ning Fan's voice was filled with demonic energy, and the overwhelming Evil Qi immediately startled many of the jeering audience, causing some to break out in a cold sweat, no longer daring to speak rashly.

Of course, most people were not focused on Ning Fan's life-and-death platform but were watching other events.

"The 97th life-and-death platform features a duel between the Bronze Sparrow Immortal and the Ape Disciple. That Ape Disciple is not weak, ranking 49th in the previous ranking battle, but it's unfortunate he's facing the former top-ranked Bronze Sparrow Immortal—terrible luck indeed!"

"On the 280th life-and-death platform, there's the Sword Corpse! This person ranked fourth several years ago and disappeared for a while due to some reasons but now reappears! With his return, he might challenge the Bronze Sparrow Immortal for the top spot!"

"These two are nothing. I heard the Pagoda Master from the Shuitian Division personally entered the ranking battle for the Night Spirit Ganoderma. That's a Half-step Immortal Lord's cultivation. I just don't know which one is Pagoda Master as I haven't seen the symbol of the Mysterious Spirit Pagoda. Seems Pagoda Master is intentionally hiding his identity..."

"Heard the Holy Mountain Tomb Guardians are also here to compete..."

Simultaneously conducting 533 matches, there are indeed too many places to watch. Ning Fan has never revealed his fame, so even though some people noticed him, they were very few.

He ended his match early and simply watched others battle from his platform. Many matches ended quickly, with some fighting to death and others with equal power striving to decide a winner within a stick of incense, often resulting in mutual destruction...

After a stick of incense, 402 life-and-death platforms concluded their fights, while the rest ended in draws, each getting 1 loss.

Only one round resulted in over thirty deaths and more than a hundred severe injuries, unable to continue fighting; after such a selection, only 905 can continue.

Then the arrangement for the second round appeared; Ning Fan's number was 392.

With a few leaps, Ning Fan appeared on the corresponding life-and-death platform. His opponent was at the Peak Crossing Truth Realm; needless to say, he sent him flying with one punch.

Another instant victory!

Slaughter Fox, 2 wins 0 losses.

After the second round ended, Ning Fan's record was over 300; not many can win two matches in succession.

Then in the third round, the opponent was at Mid Stage of Shekong, and he won again!

Fourth round, fifth round, sixth round...

Slaughter Fox's results soared; here, few could trouble Ning Fan. After ten rounds, he had 10 wins and 0 losses, ranking up to 55.

This finally drew some attention.

"Slaughter Fox? Never heard of him, is he a first-time competitor?"

"This person won ten consecutive matches—all instantly! Could he be the dark horse of this ranking battle!"

After ten rounds, only over 400 competitors remained.

Eleventh round, twelfth round, thirteenth round... twentieth round.

Ning Fan continued nearly instant victories; even those at the Peak of Shekong couldn't withstand his Ancient Demon Annihilation punch. His record was ranked ninth!

Alongside him, eight others kept winning streaks; these eight also took note of Ning Fan!

Strangely, the initial threat Ning Fan felt from the Emperor Butcher didn't maintain a winning streak. 19 wins and 1 loss, the only loss was against the previous top-ranked Bronze Sparrow Immortal.

"Bronze Sparrow Immortal is at Shattered Thought Later Stage, did the Emperor Butcher lose because he was inferior or on purpose..."

This match carried on till the twenty-ninth round; there were finally only a hundred participants left, not more, not less.

Ning Fan's record was still ninth, maintaining a perfect win streak, but others ahead were also undefeated. Nonetheless, the name Slaughter Fox had earned quite a following.

Though Ning Fan hadn't killed anyone, his style of instant victories made quite a spectacle.

Xianyu Chun 22 wins 7 losses, ranked seventy-fifth.

As for the Emperor Butcher... 21 wins and 8 losses, each loss against top eight, considered by many as bad luck.

Curiously, Ning Fan always sensed the Emperor Butcher's gaze intentionally or unintentionally sweeping over him.

That chilling sensation... could not be a mistake! This person couldn't possibly be weak enough to keep losing, but if deliberate, what was the reason...

"Have you seen the Supreme Ox Demon, right?"

Suddenly, a voice transmitted to Ning Fan's ear; remarkably, it was the Emperor Butcher speaking!

"Supreme Ox Demon, what's that?" Ning Fan's expression sharpened, transmitting a reply, guessing this Supreme Ox Demon must be the venerable bull quasi-saint from Nan Yao Temple?

"Hehe, interesting..."

Seeing Ning Fan speak of the Supreme Ox Demon without confusion or forgetfulness, the Emperor Butcher's eyes gleamed momentarily but ceased interactions with Ning Fan.

Inwardly he mused, this foreign cultivator indeed has prowess; able to ignore the ubiquitous Five Finger Illusion throughout the Great Humble Ones, his talent in Illusory Art is truly astounding. After all, even some Immortal Emperors don't have the ability to remember the five supremes...

#### Chapter 1029: Illusionary Control Position

After the first round of elimination, the top 100 contestants here within the ten losses category can take a two-hour rest. After that, the second round of fighting will begin in the same location.

As the Adjudicator clapped his hands, over five hundred life-and-death platforms here rumbled back into the ground. Then, the arena transformed, and from the empty stone ground, hundreds of massive blood lotuses sprang forth like stone breaking through the earth.

Ning Fan had inquired about the rules in advance. By the time the Blood Martial ranking battles reached this stage, a two-hour rest would be followed by a brawl.

Once the brawl begins, the blood lotuses here will continuously produce lotus seeds over time. The contentents here must fight for these seeds, and when the brawl ends, their final ranking will be determined by the number of lotus seeds they possess.

Those who achieve a ranking will receive rewards from the Blood Martial Arena. The higher the ranking, the more generous the rewards. As for the Night Spirit Ganoderma, it will only be awarded to the person ranked first.

There are over a hundred participants in the final brawl, but it's impossible for all of them to survive to the final rankings. This is a personal brawl, but there are no restrictions on the Masters forming alliances. During this brief rest period, many contestants have already begun covertly recruiting allies to better protect themselves and achieve a better score in the ensuing brawl.

Ning Fan is currently ranked ninth, attracting many to seek alliances with him, but most of them are Shedding Void Realm old monsters with no Shattered Thought Rank experts trying to recruit him.

Ning Fan naturally looked down on help from Shedding Void cultivators and rejected all of them.

In the first round of elimination, he didn't encounter any Shattered Thought Rank opponents, so although he is currently ranked ninth, some Fragmented Thought Elders consider it luck. In their view, if Ning Fan, like the Emperor Butcher, was unlucky to repeatedly encounter people ranked in the top eight, he might have suffered eight losses.

After all, as a newcomer participating in the ranking battles for the first time, even with an impressive record, doubts are inevitable.

Compared to Ning Fan, the newcomer, Xianyu Chun seems more favored. Despite not being at Fragmented Thought cultivation, he received team invitations from several Fragmented Thought Elders. It appears that Xianyu Chun is not new to the ranking battles but has participated several times as an experienced contestant. The name of Plodding Bull has long spread, even previously during the last Blood Martial ranking battle, he had a draw with an Early Shattered Thought, earning him significant fame.

As a result, even with a current record of 7 losses, Xianyu Chun is far more popular than Ning Fan because the other contestants know him well.

While most people are busy forming teams and alliances, there are a few who disdain forming groups, choosing instead to meditate on the spot without speaking to anyone.

Like Bronze Sparrow Immortal, the first place in the previous ranking battle, who prides herself on her strong Fragmented Thought Later Stage cultivation and disdains forming teams. She is a long-haired person in silver armor, whose heavy armor can't hide her graceful figure, vaguely revealing she is a woman, though her aura is cold without a trace of warmth.

Like Sword Corpse, who is also at the Fragmented Thought Later Stage and disdains forming teams, with a fierce demeanor warning people away. His body emanates corpse Qi, which occasionally transforms into thin, black swords in the air, a seemingly bizarre combination of corpse and Sword Dao abilities.

There are also some intimidating Fragmented Thought Elders who disdain forming teams.

And the Emperor Butcher, equally disdainful...

"This person asking about Supreme Ox Demon, what's the deeper meaning..."

While Ning Fan was pondering, a figure suddenly approached him, wearing a square Ox Horn Mask—it was Xianyu Chun.

If Ning Fan was correct, Xianyu Chun seemed to have just rejected several team invitations from Fragmented Thought Elders. Coming to him now, could it be to propose forming a team?

"Are you... the master I recognize from another part of me? Sorry, before now, I had not yet received recent memories of that other part of me, so I did not recognize you. My apologies, I hope you can forgive me." It was a transmitted voice, with a tone carrying some guilt.

Ning Fan's eyes suddenly narrowed... Another Xianyu Chun, indeed intriguing, to able to recognize him through this mask.

It should be known that he could achieve this thanks to the all-pervasive powerful Yunian and the strong perceptual abilities of Unity of Heaven and Man. Aside from him, even Immortal Venerable and Immortal Kings might not see through the mask's concealment.

Yet this Xianyu Chun could do it... Such a terrifying perceptual ability.

"Indeed, Xianyu Chun is an extremely rare soul twin, and you are his other half." Ning Fan replied.

Even in the previous registration, Ning Fan noticed something peculiar about Xianyu Chun's body. The cultivation world is not short of special individuals possessing dual souls, referred to as having dual personalities in mortal terms.

Although dual souls exist, they are not that rare, some are innate, and some are acquired. But the ability to cultivate each soul separately, possessing different cultivation, is extremely rare.

The half of Xianyu Chun with incomplete mental clarity, though his cultivation is not high, his aptitude in the Medicine Soul path is once in ten thousand years.

And this half of Xianyu Chun with intact mental acuity seems to have even higher aptitude...

"This matter is the greatest taboo on me, even the other half doesn't know of my existence. Therefore, when you mentioned the half-soul last time, I was somewhat rude, and I hope you won't take offense." He does not acknowledge a masterly title, indicating that this Xianyu Chun does not recognize his master status, which suits him fine as he does not seek to take this person as a disciple.

"Everyone has secrets they don't want others to touch; I can understand."

Ning Fan's response made Xianyu Chun slightly relieved. He holds no great affection for Ning Fan, nor any animosity. Yet, from the other half's memories, he felt the other half's extreme admiration and reverence for Ning Fan, hence he hoped his demeanor would not create a rift between the other half of the soul and Ning Fan.

After some deliberation, Xianyu Chun spoke again, "May I call you Daoist Ning?"

"You may."

"Daoist Ning, if possible, I hope you immediately withdraw from the Blood Martial ranking battle."

"Why?"

"If you perish here, the other half of me would surely be heartbroken. He has witnessed close kin die in front of him, birthing me... My existence's purpose is to continually become stronger to protect him. I cannot permit another heartache! With your cultivation, you might survive against Shedding Void foes, but against Fragmented Thought Elders, it might spell death. Fighting is blind, better to leave early!"

Ning Fan was momentarily speechless.

So, Xianyu Chun did not come to form a team but to persuade him to drop out... His strength seems underestimated by this half of Xianyu Chun.

"I will not drop out; there are things I want here. If I don't try, I won't leave." Ning Fan shook his head.

"If there is something you need, I can help you get it! Is it Nirvana Mother Stone Marrow from the top twenty? Or perhaps Thunder Tempering Pill from the top fifteen, or are you just after the Holy Blood Lotus Seed here..."

Ning Fan merely smiled without speaking, showing no intention to leave, making Xianyu Chun utterly helpless.

Seeing him about to persuade further, Ning Fan suddenly changed the topic, "This part of you hasn't fully received the recent memories of the other half, correct?"

"Yes, it's true the reception isn't complete."

If fully received, he would have known my strength, clearly not fully absorbed yet...

"Despite many perils faced by Xianyu Chun, you never appeared at crisis times, I've never sensed your existence before... There must be a limitation to your emergence?" Ning Fan questioned again.

"Yes."

"Alright, I understand now. Go back and rest for a while, make preparations for the upcoming brawl."

Xianyu Chun still wanted to say more, but Ning Fan gestured him away—more helpless now, secretly deciding since this stubborn foreign cultivator persists on staying, he would have to look after this person a bit on behalf of the other half.

The one-hour rest went by quickly, and the silence of the arena was suddenly shattered by deafening shouts.

As the Adjudicator clapped his hand, the hundreds of blood lotuses on the stone ground shot up beams of blood light, and within the blood light, lotus seeds were wrapped in delight.

"It has begun!"

Figures soared high, capturing the flying lotus seeds into their hands and storing them into their identity tags. These Blood Martial identity tags were actually spatial magical treasures, used during the skirmish phase to store lotus seeds. With each seed collected, the blood light on the tag increased a bit.

These lotus seeds bore the name Holy Blood Lotus Seed, and were said to be greatly beneficial for body refinement. After the rank battle concluded, all the seeds the participants collected belonged to them and served as a form of reward.

Ning Fan flickered and, along with the others, rushed towards the convergence of blood light, collecting those lotus seeds and storing them in the identity tag at his waist.

Three Holy Blood Lotus Seeds in hand!

Not far away, three Shedding Void stage old monsters saw Ning Fan acquire three seeds in one go and were extremely envious. They wanted to seize them but hesitated due to Ning Fan's current ninth ranking. After weighing their options and gritting their teeth, they ultimately chose to risk it and charged at Ning Fan.

The breath of these three was somewhat familiar to Ning Fan, and upon reflection, they seemed to be the Sea Witch Triad who had suffered under his hands...

Haha, truly one finds acquaintances everywhere in life...

Boom!

Without a word, Ning Fan greeted them with an almost brutal punch, sending the Sea Witch Triad flying while spitting blood, though it didn't harm their lives.

The trio showed immediate horror in their eyes, clearly recognizing Ning Fan's intent, and without daring to persist, they turned tail and fled.

Ning Fan was not interested in pursuing them, flickering away to collect other lotus seeds. In less than twenty breaths, he had gathered over twenty seeds.

After twenty breaths, the speed of lotus seed generation from the Blood Lotus slowed considerably, occasionally producing more seeds but not as many. The crowd stopped busying themselves with collecting seeds and started fighting and seizing from each other, aiming to enhance their scores by obtaining ready seeds from others.

The battle instantly turned white-hot from the start, with screams echoing incessantly, and soon enough, bodies appeared on the ground.

With over twenty lotus seeds, Ning Fan's score was ranked thirty-third, naturally attracting some envy. An old monster with the code name Blind Elephant, ranked fifty-eighth, set his eyes on him.

This person, Blind Elephant, was an old monster at the early stage of Shattered Thought realm, carrying a strong scent of blood, having killed several people, but with only eleven lotus seeds.

If he killed Ning Fan and took Ning Fan's seeds, his score would soar. With a sinister smile, he directly let out a strange roar and turned into an icy light, charging towards Ning Fan.

"Early stage Shattered Thought, huh..."

Ning Fan's eyes squinted slightly, as the Ancient Demon Annihilation Punch roared out, directly sending the old Blind Elephant flying and spitting blood.

He had shown restraint with that move, but it was enough to make the old Blind Elephant horrified, clearly not expecting Ning Fan's strength to be so terrifying that he could blast an early-stage Shattered Thought figure flying with one strike.

Luckily for him, he wasn't attacking Ning Fan alone; he had helpers. His expression quickly regained its composure, shouting fiercely, "If neither of you acts now, then when!"

But as the old Blind Elephant shouted, from Ning Fan's shadow below suddenly emerged two black figures, who, without a word, thrust their swords at Ning Fan.

In the instant those two emerged, Ning Fan, as if hit by a Body Sealing Technique, was forcibly locked in place, seemingly about to be stabbed by the two emerging figures.

His expression remained tranquil; he had long noticed their ambush within the shadow and while unconcerned about their mere Body Locking Ability, he surged his mana, breaking the seal directly. With a wave of his hand, he shattered their swords and sent the two figures flying back, their bodies crumbling during the retreat.

Those two were half-step into the Shattered Thought realm, brought by the old Blind Elephant as assistants. Their cultivation had not truly reached the Shattered Thought realm, but their ambush techniques were extremely clever, with the old Blind Elephant luring enemies ahead and them delivering the sure-kill strike — an undoubtedly successful technique.

Yet, it failed!

"He shattered Acquired Eight Nirvana Treasures with bare hands, this person is incredibly strong!"

"But I have seen this person's duel records. He is merciful and soft-hearted, never killing opponents, definitely a Buddha cultivator specializing in compassionate Buddhist Law! This is his greatest weakness. If he kills us, his Buddhist virtues will suffer. He surely hesitates, we needn't fear him!"

"Our bodies are destroyed; if we return without gains, how could we be satisfied? Attack!"

Blind Elephant and the two ambushers were part horrified by Ning Fan's strength, part ridiculing Ning Fan's softness — it was why they dared assault Ning Fan.

There is a type of Buddha cultivator who doesn't kill not out of reluctance but fear. No matter how powerful, these individuals are not truly intimidating! In their view, Ning Fan was one of those.

What they loved most was killing these Buddha cultivators; if successful, they gain, and if defeated, they preserve their lives.

But alas, they were utterly mistaken. Ning Fan was not a Buddha cultivator, nor was he merciful. In previous duels, he didn't wish to become a spectacle, hence refraining from killing, but that didn't mean he'd be lenient towards those actively attacking him.

Especially the old Blind Elephant, repeatedly harboring murderous intent against him. In cultivation, dare to kill, and you must be prepared to be killed!

Accept the fate of death without complaint!

"Die!"

Ning Fan flickered, disappearing instantly. Almost simultaneously, the trio charging ahead exploded as if hit with a powerful strike, followed by the thunderous sound of breakage resonating across! Blood rain scattered across the sky, Evil Qi soared shockingly, and from the surrounding audience seats came countless fervent exclamations!

"He... he actually instant-killed three strong opponents, two half-step Shattered Thought, one early stage Shattered Thought!"

"It's Slaughter Fox, this person is incredibly strong!"

"Wasn't he unable to kill? Yet he acted!"

"Body Cultivation! His Body Refinement attainments are terrifyingly high!"

"Slaughter Fox! Slaughter Fox! Slaughter Fox!"

More and more people started chanting Ning Fan's rank battle alias.

The two half-step Shattered Thought figures had a total of 7 lotus seeds, and with the old Blind Elephant's seeds, Ning Fan gained 18 seeds from the battle, bringing his total to 41 seeds, raising his rank to 27th!

More participants began to take Ning Fan seriously, even the likes of Bronze Sparrow Immortal and Sword Corpse started to cast their attention towards Ning Fan.

Xianyu Chun, struggling against an early Shattered Thought opponent, was immensely shocked. He believed that, although Ning Fan was formidable, his strength was limited and couldn't compare to his all-out efforts. But as it turned out, Ning Fan was far stronger than him by a considerable margin. He, at most, could have a hard fight against an early Shattered Thought, with uncertain victory, whereas Ning Fan was capable of instant-killing one; his strength was indeed terrifying!

"With such strength, he could indeed become a mentor to another me..." Xianyu Chun thought to himself, recognizing this for the first time.

Killing the old Blind Elephant was but a minor task for Ning Fan, carrying the momentum of murder. In moments, no one dared cause him trouble, so he took the initiative to make trouble with others, forcibly smashing identity tags of several Shedding Void stage strongmen. He snatched their lotus seeds, and in merely a hundred breaths, he robbed six or seven people, raising his seed count to 55.

Yet his ranking dropped to 29. Clearly, within that period, some gathered more lotus seeds than he did, surpassing him in rank.

The vast battlefield gradually divided into two areas. One area contained people with merely one or two seeds, battling fiercely, killing each other.

The other battleground was the duel area for Shattered Thought rank old monsters — a place where Shedding Void stage cultivators dared not tread!

In a short time, more than ten people had died and over twenty were gravely injured, unable to continue the battle, and fled the arena, removed by the adjudicator.

There are still 63 fighters left!

"Are you called Slaughter Fox? Heh heh heh, hand over your Holy Blood Lotus Seed, and I'll be merciful enough to leave your corpse intact!"

A flash of blood light appeared, and a figure with Mid-Phase Shattered Thought cultivation emerged in front of Ning Fan.

It was an elder wearing a wine gourd mask, code-named Wine General, reportedly ranked fourth among the previous top fighters. He had advanced flawlessly in the first round, ahead of Ning Fan.

The elder waved his hand, and several bloodfire shadows swept towards Ning Fan.

Ning Fan felt his blood begin to boil and swirl chaotically within him, clearly influenced by the opponent's Blood Dao Cultivation Technique.

This influence alone could cause a fatal blood explosion in weaker Shattered Thought Early Stage cultivators. This elder, positioned at Mid-Phase Shattered Thought, was undoubtedly a person of exceptional strength!

"A strong contender in Mid-Phase Shattered Thought... Blood Dao secret techniques are lethal when harnessed well, yet against the Ancient Demon, it's merely trivial."

Ning Fan smirked, not resisting the boiling in his blood but instead allowing his magic blood to lead, making the boiling more fierce.

The elder had initially launched a blood attack on Ning Fan, but gradually, the situation shifted. At some point, the elder's control over Ning Fan's blood was suddenly lost; not only that, but he himself began to feel his own blood being influenced by Ning Fan!

"Explode!"

Ning Fan suddenly shouted, and the elder could no longer control his own blood, causing his blood to violently explode within, his body rupturing into a cloud of blood mist. However, the mist quickly reconsolidated into a body, albeit with slightly diminished aura, suggesting some level of injury.

"Unexpectedly, you are the Ancient Demon. According to ancient records, the Ancient Demon is the ancestor of all demon soldiers, while Blood Dao secret techniques are just a lower-tier demon merit law. It was my mistake to confront an Ancient Demon with these!"

The elder's aura shifted suddenly from Blood Dao to the solemnity of Buddhist Law, waving his hand to unleash a golden sword ray. The Sword Qi swept across the sky, painting it a golden hue, accompanied by the sound of ten thousand Buddhas chanting scriptures.

"It's the Thousand Buddhas Demon-Slaying Sword! This Wine General's true identity isn't a demoness but the abbot of Glass City Xuantong Temple!" The audience exclaimed in shock, though many were immediately executed by swift black shadows for exposing contestant identities.

Even spectators must not violate the Blood Martial Arena's rules by revealing competitors' identities!

The golden sword ray was incredibly formidable, imbued with divine skills of Buddha Law, inherently presenting significant harm towards Ancient Demons—naturally, a demon-slaying weapon!

Ning Fan instinctively sensed danger from the sword ray, intending to activate the God-Extinguishing Shield for some protection, but soon his fiery magic blood dismissed the thought, as infinite demonic voices roared within him, birthing intense battle fervor!

I cannot retreat! Against Buddha cultivators, one must not retreat!

Roar!

Ning Fan's entire being erupted with demonic thoughts, and the will of the Ancient Demon Annihilation Dao nearly seized his sanity instantly, yet he regained it in an instant.

This is the proof of his incomplete grasp of the Ancient Demon Annihilation Will—yet at this moment, he had no time to ponder more, having to comply with this will, gradually benefiting from it!

Boom!

A resounding bang echoed as Ning Fan directly struck the golden sword ray with his fist!

The moment fist met sword, Ning Fan's body was instantly torn apart by the divine skills imbued in the opponent's sword, his entire arm reduced to blood mist!

Seeing this, the elder laughed triumphantly and disdainfully said,

"To think a mere Ancient Demon would dare take a head-on hit from the Buddha's demon-slaying treasure; how foolish! Die!"

He gestured again, causing the golden sword ray to slice towards Ning Fan once more.

Ha.

Facing the elder's mockery, Ning Fan merely smiled coldly, his right arm igniting with ancient demon fire, regenerating his severed limb instantly before all the spectators.

It's the Phoenix branch's Flame Nirvana Technique!

"There's even an ancient demon god skill! And within this ancient demon god skill, there's a fusion of demon starfall and a recovery technique I cannot fathom..."

The Wine General elder frowned slightly, yet the sword light didn't pause. At this moment, Ning Fan regarded the sword light as nothing, once more unleashing fist energy against it. The results repeated—Ning Fan was knocked back, but his arm didn't explode this time, only the bones shattered, although his flesh remained intact.

The elder frowned deeper, sensing subtle enhancements in Ning Fan after each encounter yet unable to articulate the nature of these improvements. Yet he wasted no time, continuously controlling the sword to launch another assault at Ning Fan.

Ning Fan repeatedly relied on the Nirvana Rebirth Technique to heal his wounds, repeatedly recklessly confronting the sword edge of the Thousand Buddhas Demon-Slaying Sword!

In one confrontation after another, the injuries Ning Fan suffered from the Buddha sword diminished further and further. Gradually, he started sustaining no visible injuries, using his physical defense to withstand the Thousand Buddhas Demon-Slaying Sword attacks!

He began gaining resistance against the Buddha Law demon-slaying force within the sword, even starting to suppress it. In the final encounter, nearly brute force alone shattered the opponent's Buddha sword!

"Impossible! A demon being able to resist same-level Buddha Law, this is simply unprecedented!" The Wine General elder's expression drastically changed, yet greater shocks awaited him.

From Ning Fan surged a demonic aura that instilled terror, followed by exceptionally strong fist energy that warped space, unleashed by Ning Fan.

Amidst heaven and earth, the spectacle of myriad Buddha peaks collapsing took shape!

This is the Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike, masterfully understood by Ning Fan...

Upon this single strike, Ning Fan's strength momentarily felt drained. The sheer magnitude of the fist energy couldn't be conveyed, even as the elder wielded another Buddhist magical treasure to intercept it, it was shattered by one punch, leaving him recoiling and vomiting blood—fear gracing his features for the first time during retreat!

As he retreated, the fist aura continued escalating like an erupting volcano, rapidly exceeding his full defensive capacity. Upon his body-protecting spirit armor shattering, his body collapsed completely amidst retreat; only his Spirit narrowly escaped, even the mask shattered, leaving him unable to conceal his identity any longer!

One punch defeated Mid-Phase Shattered Thought cultivator!

"So this is the case... The so-called Buddha suppressing demon is merely suppression at the level of will—Heaven's will suppressing demon will! Right now, I cannot alter the demon's fate being suppressed by Buddha, nor can I counter Heaven's will, but if it's merely suppressing the will of this Shattered Thought cultivator, I can manage. When my will dominates, reversing suppression over Buddha from demon isn't impossible—at least within this person, it can be done!"

"And what surprises me is, the more clashes with authentic Buddha Law, the stronger my control over the Ancient Demon Annihilation Dao grows, the greater the synergy! If I engage in enough confrontations, I might completely harness this power!"

Ning Fan examined the Ancient Demon Annihilation Will within him, finding his control over this power strengthened somewhat, evidently gained from the duel with the elder, he felt quite satisfied.

But the Wine General elder's eyes gleamed with madness; his identity entirely exposed, he now felt unrestrained, he couldn't leave Ning Fan destroying his body unavenged! He bit the bullet and unleashed ultimate techniques he previously refrained from using, fearing exposure.

"You are strong! But what does that matter? This technique, I didn't intend to use it, but now I must! Ming Fire Overlap, One Fire Ignite!"

The Wine General elder used some secret technique unknown to the details, his Spirit shrinking considerably, seemingly suffering immense loss.

In the sky emerged an enormous golden lamp spectacle, initially with an extinguished wick, but suddenly igniting as strands of azure flame light threads emanated from the wick!

It's just a faint thread of light!

Yet it possesses indescribable power, as if a mere strand of light could subdue all beings and dispel all darkness. Even though employed by the drunken old man in his weakened state, it was enough to instantly kill ordinary Intermediate Shattered Thought cultivators. Indeed, the power was terrifying!

"Bright Flame Overlapping Technique! This is the absolute skill of the Bright Buddha's disciples! Run quickly!"

Some contestants who were close to Ning Fan were shocked and fled, yet they were still too slow. As that faint thread of light softly descended, the area within a hundred zhang of Ning Fan suddenly transformed into a world of dazzling golden light!

Millions of threads of light penetrated everything within a hundred zhang around Ning Fan, releasing sharp cries like those of thousands of birds, directly killing six or seven Shedding Void and Shattered Thought cultivators who couldn't escape in time!

Below Immortal Venerable, no one could see clearly what happened within that dazzling hundred zhang. There was only the destructive fluctuations of light continuously emanating from the hundred zhang radiance!

"The Slaughter Fox is probably dead..." Some of the spectators who were focused on Ning Fan shook their heads repeatedly.

The drunken old man thought the same and laughed heartily, as it was his dying Spirit using divine skills. If it couldn't kill Ning Fan, he would have lived in vain.

However, the next moment, he couldn't laugh anymore.

The hundred zhang light dissipated, revealing a somewhat cracked stone floor and an unscathed Ning Fan!

Even the underground stone of Middle State, known for its hardness, was damaged, yet the Slaughter Fox was unharmed—how could this be!

Impossible!

The old man stared wide-eyed, but he had no choice but to believe. Ning Fan's figure flickered and moved directly in front of the heavily injured drunken old man's Spirit, his five fingers pressing down relentlessly to kill him.

If one dares to kill, they must be prepared to be killed!

That was also why Ning Fan activated the God-Extinguishing Shield defense, allowing him to remain unscathed; otherwise, relying solely on Ancient Demon Corpse and Ancient Chaos Nirvana Divine Skills, he wouldn't dare to take such powerful divine skills head-on. After all, his ancient demon cultivations were lower than the drunken old man's, making it a leap-level battle, forcing him to use some means.

Deathly silence, a moment of silence on the spectator stands! Killing the drunken old man was not shocking, but walking out unscathed from Bright Flame Overlapping by a high-level cultivator indeed surprised everyone!

The number of lotus seeds increased to 129, ranking ninth! Again, it was the same position, but this time no one believed Ning Fan relied on luck to achieve it!

Even if the Bronze Sparrow Immortal made a move, it wouldn't be possible to kill the drunken old man so quickly. Ning Fan's strength was enough to compete for first place if put in the last competition, undoubtedly making Ning Fan one of the black horses of this year's Blood Martial Rank Battle!

"This person will be a hindrance in this Rank Battle, and should be eliminated at the first instance!"

With a cold glance at Ning Fan's direction, the Sword Corpse suddenly turned into a gust of wind, rushing toward Ning Fan. The spectators erupted into cheers, clearly excited about the upcoming contest between the Slaughter Fox and Sword Corpse.

However, unexpectedly, that gust of wind transformed from the Sword Corpse was intercepted midway by a figure who stomped him to the ground.

"He is mine, you can't take him."

The one who stepped on the Sword Corpse's head, coldly indifferent, was unexpectedly the overlooked Emperor Butcher!

No matter how the Sword Corpse struggled, he only lay on the ground like a dead dog, unable to escape from Emperor Butcher's foot!

From the first round, Emperor Butcher's record was mediocre, coupled with participating in Rank Battle for the first time, he wasn't considered a formidable figure by the spectators. Yet, his move now, easily stepping one of this year's Rank Battle's black horses—the Sword Corpse—under his foot, shocked everyone!

Easily subduing a Later Stage Shattered Thought, this Emperor Butcher... what cultivation does he have? Could he possibly be someone who's half-step into Eternity Realm!

"No, not half-step Eternity; this person, this person..."

An old monster, struggling against a Shedding Void Stage cultivator, suddenly smacked his previously unbeatable opponent dead, astonished.

This old monster mingling among Shedding Void was unexpectedly a half-step Eternity, yet his cultivations couldn't fathom the depth of Emperor Butcher's strength!

That Emperor Butcher is absolutely a true Eternal Immortal Venerable or even higher!

With him here, who can claim the first position!

Several others, like this old monster, purposefully suppressing their cultivations while mingling among others as half-step Eternity, showed startled expressions, frightened by Emperor Butcher's displayed strength.

"Get!"

Emperor Butcher scanned indifferently, instantly sending countless Masters retreating wildly, clearing out a large space just for his duel with Ning Fan.

"Slaughter Fox, battle with me!"

This voice carried unmistakable majesty, echoing across heaven and earth, lingering, causing many to bleed from mouth and nose.

It was not Immortal Venerable's prestige... but Immortal King!

"I am not your opponent now."

Ning Fan frowned deeply; he had already noticed Emperor Butcher but didn't expect Emperor Butcher to be so formidable. With him around, attempting to seize first was undoubtedly a wishful thought.

"Indeed, you are not my opponent now, then how about this!"

Only to see Emperor Butcher open his palm, gripping his fingers towards Ning Fan, causing changes to the Punishing Ring within Ning Fan's body, inexplicably making it disappear bit by bit under Emperor Butcher's divine skills!

Was the Punishing Ring destroyed by this person?!

Ning Fan was both shocked and enraged; shocked that this person could destroy his Punishing Ring remotely, as this divine technique was indeed unfathomable.

Naturally, enraged that the destroyed Punishing Ring meant he lost his foothold in the Dabei Clan with many matters unresolved, he didn't want to cause any disputes, he couldn't yet be hunted by the Central Continent Five Emperors, so why all the endurance, what was it for!

"No, the Punishing Ring isn't destroyed, this is... Illusionary Control Position power! The Punishing Ring's disappearance... is just Illusory Art!"

The opponent is not an Immortal King! But an Immortal Emperor, and still a Control Position Great Emperor!

The instant Ning Fan realized, his long-sealed Calamity Blood Cultivation, due to the mysterious disappearance of Punishing Ring, instantly recovered!

An exceedingly strong aura, also reaching the Eternity Realm, surged wildly from him, sweeping through the entire arena as if he was conquering it!

"Eternal Immortal Venerable! This Slaughter Fox... turned out to be an Eternal Immortal Venerable!"

Countless spectators were astounded!

Then it was an unprecedented fervent cheer!

Chapter 1030: Emperor Butcher... Lady!

The battle of the eons has rarely appeared in past ranking battles. Whenever it does, tickets sold by the Blood Martial Arena often go for more than a million stone currency. Watching a battle of eons for just 200,000 stone currency is surely a stroke of luck!

The previously chaotic battles in the arena suddenly paused.

The originally disordered shouting suddenly unified, leaving only two voices!

Emperor Butcher! Emperor Butcher! Emperor Butcher!

Slaughter Fox! Slaughter Fox! Slaughter Fox!

Common spectators cannot comprehend the horror of Emperor Butcher, only thinking this is an equal duel of Eternal Immortal Venerables. Even the strong individuals present, even those few old freaks on

the brink of the Eternity Realm, can only vaguely sense Emperor Butcher's strength akin to an Immortal King, but cannot perceive more.

Only Ning Fan truly felt the terror of Emperor Butcher! His eyes flashed azure spike, and Emperor Butcher's secrets gradually became completely exposed before him.

Not only is he a Control Position Great Emperor... he is actually a half-step Quasi-Saint Control Position Great Emperor!

"So it's you!"

Ning Fan's face remained unchanged, but his heart shook. This Emperor Butcher was clearly the half-step Quasi-Saint who secretly investigated him during his registration!

Even now, having restored Calamity Blood Cultivation, Ning Fan would never arrogantly think he could defeat such a formidable opponent!

Winning first place in this ranking battle seems implausible. More concerning to Ning Fan is the motive of Emperor Butcher's appearance here. What reason does such a powerful figure have to participate in mere ranking battles? Could it be... he's here for him...

"Heh, this Blood Martial Arena must not randomly identify the opponent's identity, it's taboo, don't violate it." Emperor Butcher seemed to laugh in reminder, but inside, he was greatly shocked, obviously not expecting the foreign cultivator before him to recognize even a trace of his aura despite the mask and his concealment!

Unity of Heaven and Man, huh? Heh, seems like he underestimated this person. Indeed, this person can be utilized.

"Words are of no use, you came here before the Battle for the Tomb, you must be a battle-loving and murderous person. Here, you need not disguise your murderous nature, let's fight freely!"

Shush!

Emperor Butcher's figure flickered, disappeared from the spot, and almost simultaneously, a shadow appeared before Ning Fan's eyes, accompanied by the sound of a sharp weapon tearing through the air. Before his eyes could clearly perceive, his body instinctively reacted; with a flip of his hand, wielding his Dao Weapon, the seven stars weight of the Reverse Sea Sword chopped down upon the shadow!

Boom!!!

A loud explosion rang out, resulting in both figures being thrown backward, evenly matched.

Unprepared, Emperor Butcher obviously did not expect Ning Fan's Dao Weapon to be so heavy, and let out a muffled hmmm, forced back dozens of steps by Ning Fan's sword. Retreating across the stone floor of the arena, each step left a half-inch deep footprint on the incredibly hard stone ground, before stabilizing his stance, he held his hand with a somewhat real and illusory bronze sword, somewhat unexpectedly looking at Ning Fan as if recognizing him anew.

Neither was Ning Fan relaxed; Emperor Butcher's attack came too quickly, although Ning Fan instinctively defended with the Reverse Sea Sword, he was caught unprepared, similarly being shaken back dozens of steps.

Strange... this Emperor Butcher, a dignified Control Position Great Emperor, does not seem to have very strong physical strength...

Emperor Butcher! Emperor Butcher! Emperor Butcher!

Slaughter Fox! Slaughter Fox! Slaughter Fox!

The cheers from all around the arena suddenly grew louder; amid the cheers, Emperor Butcher launched another attack. This time, he didn't opt for close combat but instead offered the bronze small sword skyward. As the sword trembled, it suddenly transformed into a Jiaolong covered in copper rust.

The Jiaolong's eyes flashed with azure lightning, and it abruptly opened its mouth to spew out thousands of arm-thick azure lightning arcs. The arcs converged, forming an enormous lightning web, which fell downwards, aiming to ensnare Ning Fan.

"Is this Thunder Dao Spell... its power is completely unlike an Immortal Emperor's might."

Ning Fan held the Reverse Sea Sword in his right hand while he pointed his left hand at his brow. The Tai Su Lightning Star glowed faintly. Then, his left hand rubbed against the sword blade fiercely, imbuing the Reverse Sea Sword with a distinctive Thunder Control Position power. With a swing toward the sky, it easily split the lightning web apart. With another sword, it cut the copper rust Jiaolong along with the subterranean sky, causing the Jiaolong to wail as it shattered into countless light spots and vanished.

"So that's how it is. This person is not his true self but an Illusory Art-formed body, disdainful to battle me with his true Immortal Emperor cultivations." Eyes glancing toward Emperor Butcher, Ning Fan narrowed his eyes, immediately understanding.

Yet Emperor Butcher was taken aback, seemingly not expecting Ning Fan to cleave his copper sword Jiaolong with one blow. Ning Fan seemingly accomplished this because... he utilized a hint of Thunder Control Position Power, thus effortlessly destroying the thunder-attributed copper sword...

"To think such a humble Immortal Venerable cultivation can comprehend a slice of Palm Position Power. It appears sending merely a thousandth of an illusory body to fight this child might be presumptuous... this child, truly intriguing!"

Emperor Butcher flipped his hand again, about to retrieve another magical treasure, but Ning Fan dashed forward first, with the Reverse Sea Sword horizontally slicing in. Even before the sword reached, the heavy wind pressure it generated had already blown away a large pile of participants far behind Emperor Butcher!

The participants were immediately horrified, unable to imagine what kind of heavy sword could stir such wind pressure.

The wind pressure tousled Emperor Butcher's long hair, yet his body did not move an inch. Facing Ning Fan's aggressive sword, he didn't even defend, only allowing his body to become slightly transparent, letting the sword slash directly into him.

Then, the Reverse Sea Sword passed through, unaccompanied by sounds of flesh being cut, and Emperor Butcher remained unscathed!

Ning Fan only felt as if the sword cut through transparency, flipping the sword back, unleashing near a hundred strikes within moments at Emperor Butcher, yet none could injure him, while the frenzied wind pressure blew away countless more participants.

"Illusion Explosion!"

A strange laugh rang out, and Emperor Butcher's nearly transparent body suddenly exploded, the destructive ripple engulfing Ning Fan and erupting from the center of the arena, drowning all participants in its wake!

"What... it's the self-destruction of the Eternal Immortal Venerable! We must combine our forces, or none of us can survive this shockwave!"

The Bronze Sparrow Immortal, Sword Corpse, and some other Eternal Old Freaks who had been concealing their half-step Immortal Lord cultivations all shouted in a tense manner. No one had anticipated that the Slaughter Emperor would suddenly self-destruct; indeed, for many, this was their first time witnessing the power of an Immortal Venerable's self-destruction!

Such a destructive shockwave would even harm an Immortal King caught within, not to mention these ants who hadn't reached the eons realm!

These people couldn't even join forces before being consumed by the shockwave, followed by cries of agony resonating one after another.

Death! Death! Death!

Neither the Bronze Sparrow Immortal nor the Sword Corpse, nor even the half-step Immortal Lords — almost none could survive this Immortal Venerable's self-destruction!

After the shockwave killed all the contestants, it surged towards the audience seats on all sides of Arena Number One, which had a Formation. Yet strangely, the Formation did not activate its defenses at this moment, and the audience seats were wiped out by the shockwave, destroying even the entire arena due to the Immortal Venerable's self-destruction!

Countless shadows hidden in the dark finally couldn't sit still, revealing themselves as figures wearing Blood Ox Masks, clad in black, with Fire Bull totems painted on their garments.

These figures belonged to the Blood Martial Arena, including some Immortal Venerable experts. Together, they suppressed the shockwave from the Slaughter Emperor's self-destruction, preventing it from spreading further.

Despite suppressing the shockwave, the entire arena became a wasteland, with not a single person left alive, and not a complete corpse to be found.

"Revered Snow certainly went big this time; wasn't the plan to test that foreign cultivator? Now, there won't even be a piece of that cultivator's corpse to find next time," sighed an elder wearing a Blood Ox Mask, exuding the aura of an Immortal King.

Suddenly, his eyes filled with shock as a section of the ruins collapsed, and Ning Fan emerged unscathed.

With the God-Extinguishing Shield's protection, Ning Fan naturally wouldn't be killed by the Immortal Venerable's self-destruction. However, this time, facing the Immortal Venerable's self-destruction, he hadn't activated the shield's defense, yet remained unharmed.

"Slaughter Fox, you're actually still alive!" The elder of the Immortal King was enormously surprised.

"Of course, I'm alive; and not only me, but everyone caught in this self-destruction is still alive, isn't that right, Senior Slaughter Emperor?"

Ning Fan suddenly raised his hand and grabbed the sky with his five fingers. The world within his sight was like an oily canvas, torn down forcefully.

As the canvas was torn, the battered Arena Number One disappeared, replaced by hundreds of swaying Blood Lotuses and a perfectly intact arena.

At the center of the arena stood Ning Fan and the Slaughter Emperor.

The contestants and spectators, who were supposed to be dead from the Immortal Venerable's self-destruction, were shockingly still alive, albeit with confused minds, as if trapped in an illusion.

Illusory Art! The Slaughter Emperor's self-destruction was an illusion! An illusion even the elder Immortal King couldn't discern!

But Ning Fan saw through it effortlessly!

"It's actually the Revered Snow's Illusory Art!" The black-dressed men were taken aback, then disappeared in shame, hiding in the shadows again.

Being subordinates of the Revered Snow, they failed to realize it was the Revered Snow's Illusory Art, instead bustling about within the illusion, truly disgraceful to the Revered Snow.

What shocked them even more was that the Illusory Art, which they couldn't discern, was easily seen through by the Slaughter Fox, qualifying him to command the Revered Snow's attention — truly remarkable...

"Interesting, I initially thought you would see through this illusion within ten breaths, which would be impressive enough, but you actually discerned it from the very beginning. You know, this technique uses Palm Position Power, an Immortal Emperor might not even break through it swiftly." The Slaughter Emperor suddenly smiled, praising.

"Senior's Illusory Art is profound; if not for my measures against illusions, I might not have seen through it," Ning Fan smiled slightly, replied.

"But one thing I didn't expect is that such a demoness filled with Evil Qi like you would break my illusion to save others..."

As the Slaughter Emperor finished speaking, all the confused individuals suddenly spewed blood and collapsed, fainting one by one with severe injuries.

The self-destruction was merely an illusion, but illusions can still be damaging!

If Ning Fan hadn't broken the illusion swiftly, those lost in the illusion of self-destruction would definitely have died from exploded divine senses!

"Pity, I thought you were like me, fond of slaughter, but it seems we're not alike," the Slaughter Emperor sighed, somewhat disappointed.

Ning Fan, however, ignored the Slaughter Emperor, swiftly arriving beside the fainted Xianyu Chun, and using Demon Starfall to heal her injuries completely in a very short time!

"Did you save people for her? We might not be on the same path, but this makes you more interesting to me," the Slaughter Emperor admired.

If not for his acquaintance with Xianyu Chun, he probably wouldn't have broken the Slaughter Emperor's illusion.

Breaking an illusion from the Control Position Great Emperor is not easy. Even if the Slaughter Emperor was merely a trivial illusion body double of the Great Emperor, Ning Fan still exhausted over seventy percent of his Heart Spirit to forcefully break the illusion. Although he appeared composed, his Heart Spirit was extremely weary!

If such a level of illusion were to occur again, Ning Fan doubted he could break it even if he exhausted his Heart Spirit.

"Now, all contestants have lost their combat abilities, leaving only you and me. Shall we continue this duel, Lady Slaughter Emperor?" Ning Fan, after saving Xianyu Chun, suddenly approached the Slaughter Emperor with a smile, inquiring.

Of course, the last word 'lady' was transmitted via sound.

Thus, this question seemed completely normal to all the men in black, but in the ears of the Emperor Butcher, it instantly fueled his anger.

"What do you mean by lady this, lady that! I have no idea what you're talking about!"

Sneer!

It was Ning Fan who took advantage of the momentary disturbance in the Emperor Butcher's heart, suddenly approached swiftly, and used a Yin Plucking Finger, tapping the neck under the Emperor Butcher's long hair.

Instantly, the illusory form, which possessed one-thousandth of the Emperor Butcher's cultivation, collapsed softly into Ning Fan's arms.

"Now, does Senior understand what I meant? I've won this rank battle!"

"Bewitching technique! Haha, truly despicable, but I like it!"

Boom!

The body of the Emperor Butcher collapsed softly into Ning Fan's arms, suddenly let out a strange laugh, faded, and disappeared. As soon as the Emperor Butcher vanished, the Punishing Ring that had disappeared from Ning Fan reappeared mysteriously in his Dantian, once again locking a large part of his cultivation.

Thus, among all participants in this rank battle, only Ning Fan remained conscious, calmly collected the Holy Blood Lotus Seeds from all the unconscious people, and easily claimed first place.

Except for Xianyu Chun, whom Ning Fan was acquainted with, and left the lotus seeds untouched, everyone else's lotus seeds were entirely taken away!

In other words, in this rank battle, only two people had any results.

Second place, Plodding Bull, with 13 lotus seeds!

First place, Slaughter Fox, with 609 lotus seeds!

"What about the adjudicator? Aren't you going to award the prizes for the rank battle?" Ning Fan asked with a smile towards a hidden direction outside the arena.

Suddenly, an adjudicator with a peculiar look emerged from there.

It wasn't just him; everyone hiding in the shadows, looking at Ning Fan, also had peculiar expressions.

In their understanding, their Revered Snow was a man, and this Slaughter Fox seemed to be a man too...

The Revered Snow actually collapsed into the arms of Slaughter Fox! Thunderous indeed, truly thunderous!

And faced with the nearly teasing remarks from Slaughter Fox, Revered Snow didn't feel humiliated but instead said something even more thunderously astonishing.

I like it!

I like it!!

I like it!!!

The Revered Snow actually likes this Slaughter Fox! Indeed, there are many who favor men in Liuli City, but who would have thought Revered Snow would also start to fancy this path...

With this thought, the adjudicator elder showed unprecedented respect when facing Ning Fan. For no other reason, Ning Fan was the first man liked by the Revered Snow since he began to favor men, a very special status, not to be offended carelessly!

"Please wait a moment, Lord Slaughter Fox, I will send someone to award you the winning prizes. Do you want to attend the subsequent ceremony? As per the procedure, once the rank battle concludes, a celebration for the victor should be held. However, this rank battle is somewhat special; only two people won ranks, and the second placer, Lord Plodding Bull, is still unconscious..."

Thump!

The adjudicator elder suddenly felt a flash of anger at this.

Logically speaking, the unconscious Plodding Bull should have had his lotus seeds taken by Ning Fan, thus losing his rank score.

But Ning Fan uniquely spared Plodding Bull and kept his Holy Blood Lotus Seeds!

Why!

Could it be that the Plodding Bull is actually the lover of this Slaughter Fox!

This is not good; Revered Snow's newly budding affection seems to already have a major rival?

The devoted adjudicator elder suddenly had the thought of giving Plodding Bull another strike while he was unconscious, to eliminate him and clear the rival for the Revered Snow.

But this thought was quickly extinguished; Revered Snow is very disciplined, and the rules of the Blood Martial Arena do not allow adjudicators to take action against participants. If he did this, what awaited him wouldn't be a reward from the Revered Snow, but annihilation...

Forget it, we should let the Revered Snow handle this affection themselves; as subordinates, we shouldn't interfere.

Ning Fan frowned slightly, feeling that the adjudicator elder's attitude towards him was very strange, the way he looked at him very strange as well, but he couldn't pinpoint exactly what was odd.

Pitiful him, who could use the Mind Reading Technique to understand women's hearts, couldn't see into men's hearts, and naturally missed the thunderously wild thoughts in the adjudicator elder's mind, which had already categorized Ning Fan as someone with an affection for men.

Soon, the prizes were delivered, and after a few simple words from the adjudicator, they were awarded to Ning Fan.

Unfortunately, there was hardly anyone truly listening to his speech. Many of the armored men in the Blood Martial Arena were busy clearing the battlefield and tending to the wounded.

As for Ning Fan, he was not interested in the words of the adjudicator. He just waited for the Night Spirit Ganoderma to be in his hands before leaving.

To his delight, the Night Spirit Ganoderma, which he thought he would miss out on, was successfully obtained. His mood was understandably good, as he had finally found another piece of the Innate Soul-Nourishing Spiritual Medicine.

What surprised him even more was that apart from the Night Spirit Ganoderma, the other prizes turned out to be quite useful as well.

Twelve drops of Nirvana Mother Stone Marrow! Each drop was extracted from a Five-Star or above Nirvana Mother Stone mine, significantly enhancing Body Refinement cultivation. Just how significant, Ning Fan couldn't yet assess, because in three days, the second round of the tomb war would begin, and time was quite tight. He still needed to recover the Heart Spirit exhausted from breaking the Illusory Arts!

Apart from the Nirvana Mother Stone Marrow, the prizes also included one hundred Thunder Tempering Fruits, which were also excellent for enhancing Body Cultivation.

One piece of Innate Twelve Nirvana spirit equipment, a claw-like iron gauntlet called the [Nightmare Dragon Claw], made from the claw of a dragon-shaped demon beast of Immortal Emperor level in a Tenth-grade Fierce Domain, is completely black like refined iron. It can greatly increase the attack power of Body Cultivation, allowing the power to be augmented by several degrees and then used to slash at enemies with iron claws.

This spirit equipment is something Ning Fan could refine within three days, so he integrated the Nightmare Dragon Claw spirit equipment into his left hand, adding another method of physical attack.

A Lapis Lazuli Guest Medal. This is the highest status among the guest elders of the Blood Martial Arena, and holding this token allows one to enjoy numerous privileges in the Blood Martial Arena.

What surprised Ning Fan the most was that among the prizes, there was an item, a perfectly round Luminous Pearl the size of a baby's fist.

This item was not originally listed among the official prizes of the Blood Martial Arena but was added afterward.

The item carried traces of the Slaughter Emperor's Illusory Arts. When Ning Fan activated the Heavenly Eye and examined it closely, he was somewhat moved.

This Luminous Pearl was actually condensed using the Palm Position Power of the Slaughter Emperor. When worn, it could temporarily dissipate the Punishing Ring within Ning Fan, allowing him to regain his Calamity Blood cultivation for a short period!

The item's durability was low, probably usable only around three times...

After repeated inspections, Ning Fan did not find any flaws with the item. Remembering various actions of the Slaughter Emperor, he had some guesses and surmised that the Slaughter Emperor would not tamper with the pearl.

"With this item, my chances of success in the second round of the tomb war are undoubtedly higher."

Ning Fan carefully stored the Luminous Pearl and then began a three-day session of meditation.

During these three days, Xianyu Chun visited once, seeing Ning Fan busy with heart spirit recovery, he did not disturb him but cupped his fists from a distance outside the door, seemingly in gratitude.

He also tasked a maid to convey a message to Ning Fan.

'The time of the Yellow Ox has not yet arrived, but when it does, I will inform Senior Ning at the first opportunity.'

No longer addressing him as a Daoist but as Senior, likely awed by Ning Fan's astonishing power.

With the conclusion of the Blood Martial Arena ranking battles, the feats of the Slaughter Fox and the Plodding Bull spread wildly throughout Liuli City. The Plodding Bull was one thing; those well-informed knew that the Plodding Bull's achievements included some leniency, but not the Slaughter Fox. This name spread throughout Liuli City almost overnight. By the second day, vendors were already selling fire fox masks identical to Ning Fan's mask on street corners.

Masks from the ranking battles have always been favored by the residents of Liuli City, especially the fire fox mask, which gained enormous sales due to the Slaughter Fox effect.

Unfortunately, no one knew who the Slaughter Fox truly was. They only knew it was an Eternal Immortal Venerable who achieved a powerful first place in the ranking battles after defeating another Eternal Immortal Venerable, the Slaughter Emperor!

There were rumors that the Slaughter Fox was indeed a contestant in the second round of the tomb war, but few would believe such rumors.

Due to the bone age restrictions of the second round of the tomb war, rarely did Eternal Old Freaks participate. The possibility just wasn't high, and it wasn't surprising that people didn't believe it.

In this atmosphere, Liuli City finally welcomed another grand event—the second round of the tomb war!

Especially after one incident, the attention of the Liuli City residents on the tomb war soared to an unprecedented level!

Lou Tuo's prime disciple, Sha Bailou, openly issued a challenge to a certain foreign cultivator!

"Ning Fan of the Southern Frontier Tamu Clan, if you participate in the second round of the tomb war, I will take your life!"

A secret was soon unearthed by some: it turned out that Lou Tuo's prime disciple, Sha Bailou, was the very person who committed a great crime in the Blood Martial Arena thousands of years ago!

There was once a person who single-handedly killed all the contestants in the ranking battle, even slaying the adjudicator, inciting the wrath of the Blood Martial Arena, yet still managed to escape unscathed from underground. Since then, before the start of the Blood Martial Arena ranking battle, a rule prohibiting any action against the adjudicator was added.

It was that perpetrator—Sha Bailou!

And Sha Bailou was precisely the person who, during the slave market, intimidated Ning Fan with the tragic scene of a foreign cultivator's death.

"Unbelievable! Little Ba cannot stand this! Sha Bailou is too arrogant. A mere Half-step Immortal Lord dares to look down on the master like this! No need for master to take action, Little Ba will fight Sha Bailou to the death!"

In Ning Fan's room, Wu Laoba expressed his loyalty to Ning Fan, holding the freshly obtained news with fury...