

Grasping 551

Chapter 551: A Snow White Beast's Shadow

One day after Ning Fan had left the Yang Heaven Palace, Ning Fan returned to the cloud mountain in the Scarlet Heaven Realm.

When the cultivators of the Scarlet Heaven Palace saw Ning Fan on top of the cloud mountain, each of them was as silent as the cicadas in winter. They bowed to him with their utmost respect, without daring to slight him, even though the seventh prince had said several times not to allow anyone to be respectful toward Ning Fan.

However, Ning Fan's name shook the entire Heavenly Cloud Country today. Which low-levelled cultivator would still be bold enough to disrespect him?

"Welcome, Palace Lord..."

A few hundred revered elders and divine messengers of the Scarlet Heaven Palace came out to receive Ning Fan cordially. Ning Fan, however, just darted a glance at them and then said with an indifferent tone.

.

"Go away."

With just a single look, he made all the revered elders and divine messengers there break out in a cold sweat as his eyes still contained the piercing and fearsome aura force of defeating all the other eight palaces!

Ning Fan then headed to the palace located in the belly of the mountain. No one dared to stop or disturb him.

Once he entered the palace, he went straight to the Scarlet Heaven Rain Stele.

The stele contained an extremely thick rain intent. It was the best place for him to master the rain technique.

At this moment, his white robes were besmeared with blood. The injuries he suffered were very serious.

Even though he had defeated Yun Ling using his Black Tempest Rupture Art, he was also hurt by Yun Ling's Rain Sealing Pagoda.

That Yun Ling was just a common Absolute Void Stage expert. Despite that, he still managed to inflict such damage to Ning Fan.

He had to admit that if he were to face an Absolute Void Stage expert who had converted their unital magic power to yuan, his chance of winning would not be large.

And, if he were to face a Void Fragmentation Realm, he could only put on a fight against them by using his trump cards like heavenly tribulation puppets.

He did not have time to heal his wounds now. He just hurriedly took a Sixth Revolution vulnerary pill and started getting busy with his work immediately after that.

He sat down in a meditative posture below the rain stele and raised a finger to point at the direction in front of him. Nine faint silver light masses appeared instantly.

Each of the light masses contained an incomplete set of the rain technique.

Thus, the nine light masses contained nine sets of the rain technique in total.

The Rain of Vast Heaven, the Rain of Yang Heaven, the Rain of Scarlet Heaven, the Rain of Vermilion Heaven, the Rain of Complete Heaven, the Rain of Serene Heaven, the Rain of Profound Heaven, the Rain of Altering Heaven, the Rain of Great Heaven...

The rain techniques of all the nine heavens were all in his hands. Next, all he needed to do was to cultivate the Rain Ancestor's famous technique – Heaven Prying Rain.

As long as he successfully learns the Heaven Prying Rain, it would not be difficult for him to enveloped the entire Central State with his Absolute Void Stage spirit sense. He could then start searching for the person he wanted to look for within the vicinity of Central State.

At this moment, Ning Fan only had a single thought in mind. It was this thought that drove him to defeat the eight other palaces and study their rain steles...

I must find my mother!

In order to achieve that objective, he would not mind how many trump cards he had to reveal or how many people he would offend.

Recalling the memories of the Weeping Blood Forest, Ning Fan closed his eyes in silence.

When he opened his eyes again, his expression already became calm. He then muttered to himself.

“There are three requirements for the cultivation of the Heaven Prying Rain. Firstly, one must possess the power of the divine, the demon and the devil race!”

“Secondly, one must successfully comprehend the nine sets of rain techniques of the rain steles and master them!”

“Thirdly, fusing the Nine Heavens Rain into one and using it. And that will be the Heaven Prying Rain!”

“I possess the power of the three races and I've obtained the nine sets of rain techniques. Moreover, I've already mastered the Scarlet Heaven Rain which belongs to the third heaven. Next, I will learn the rain techniques of the other Eight Heavens in proper order...”

Ning Fan opened his mouth and inhaled, swallowing the third light mass into his abdomen.

After that, he waved with his palm and held the first light mass at the center of his palm to learn it.

Even though the severe injuries on his body had yet to heal, Ning Fan paid no attention to them at all. The shadows of his fingers were moving rapidly as he was bitterly cultivating the Vast Heaven Rain Technique from the first light mass.

One month later, he had successfully learned the Vast Heaven Rain Technique. He swallowed the light mass and pulled the second light mass into his palm to comprehend it.

After he had learned the Scarlet Heaven and Vast Heaven Rain Techniques, he only spent twenty days learning the third set of rain techniques.

When he had completely mastered the first three types of rain techniques, he tried to display the Vast Heaven and Yang Heaven Rain simultaneously and fuse them into one.

Each type of those rain techniques could broaden Ning Fan's senses up to a vicinity of seventy million li* (500m per li).

However, if he combines two types of the rain techniques into one, he could sense things that were at least at three hundred million li* (500m per li) away.

Unfortunately, there seemed to be an unbreakable barrier between the two types of rain techniques, disabling them from fusing with each other.

Ning Fan sighed dejectedly and gave up fusing the rain techniques for the meantime. Right after that, he started learning the rain techniques of the six remaining heavens. With the foundation that was established from his previous experience, the cultivation of the remaining rain techniques became a lot easier.

He only used twelve days to master the Vermilion Heaven Rain, seven days to master the Complete Heaven Rain and three days to master the Serene Heaven Rain.

As for the Profound Heaven Rain, Altering Heaven Rain and Great Heaven Rain, he only spent one day each.

After two and a half months, Ning Fan finished mastering the remaining eight types of rain techniques, making him successfully complete the cultivation of all the Nine Heavens Rain Techniques.

Only the final step was left before he could master the Heaven Prying Rain – fusing the Nine Heavens Rain into one... Would he be able to succeed this last step...?

“Lonely Heaven Rain!”

With a grim expression, Ning Fan suddenly performed hand seals to display the Vast Heaven Rain which rapidly drained away his magic power.

In an instant, light rain began falling upon the vicinity of seventy million li* (500m per li) around the Scarlet Heaven Cloud Mountain and every tree and bush became within Ning Fan’s senses.

Ning Fan inhaled deeply and changed his hand seals.

“Twin Heaven Rain!”

He attempted to fuse the Yang Heaven Rain into the Vast Heaven Rain, making them into one. However, it was still a failed attempt.

“You failed again, huh... Indeed, the Rain Ancestor’s technique can’t be mastered so easily.” In the Profound Yin World, Luo You made a gentle sigh.

Ning Fan gritted his teeth and clenched his fists tightly. He was reluctant to accept the result... He had already obtained the Nine Heavens Rain Technique but he could not fuse all of them into one...

Even though he knew that his mother was in the Central State and he would have a chance to relocate her as long as he succeeds in fusing the Nine Heavens Rain, he could not master that technique completely...

He just could not accept it!

He suppressed his frustration after failing to display the technique and consumed some pills to recover his magic power.

One day later, his magic power was restored to ninety percent. He tried to combine the rain techniques together but he still could not succeed.

One day. Two days. Three days...

One month passed, two months went by and then three months...

In the fourth month, Ning Fan finally succeeded in fusing the Vast Heaven Rain and Yang Heaven Rain into one!

The moment the two sets of rain techniques combined, the range of the drizzling rain extended to three hundred million li* (500m per li) around the Scarlet Heaven Realm.

Ning Fan almost saw all the living beings beyond the vicinity of three hundred million li* (500m per li)!

However, just as he was about to see everything clearly, the barrier between the two sets of rain techniques appeared once again. Ning Fan felt a sharp pain in his Sea of Consciousness as he coughed out blood suddenly. He failed to accomplish the fusion of the rain techniques again...

"The Nine Heavens Rain can't be fused together... I can't use this technique to find her..." Sorrow flashed within Ning Fan's eyes before he closed them.

He had already become extremely skilled with the Nine Heavens Rain but he still could not command them to fuse into one.

It was not because his comprehension was not good enough but because his rain intent was too weak...

In the past, Ning Fan combined his Divine Intent of Rain, Devil Intent of Devil and Demon Intent of Fu li into one and created the Second Step of Intent Realm – Memory Intent Realm.

However, by looking at the three intent realms individually, the grade of his original rain intent realm still stopped at the Eighth Grade.

The Heaven Prying Rain was extremely heaven-defying. It fused its intent with the rain and used the rain to pry upon the heaven. If one's rain intent is not powerful enough, they would not be able to pry into the heavens...

Unless Ning Fan increases the grade of his rain intent realm and practices it to a higher level, he would never be able to fuse the Nine Heavens Rain into one...

“Ning Fan... Don't be discouraged. Since you aren't able to display the Rain Ancestor's technique with your current rain intent, then find a way to improve your rain intent. With absolute faith and sincerity, one can even cut open metal and rocks... One day, you will master this technique. I have confidence in you. Regarding the progress of cultivation, haste does not mean speed...” In the Profound Yin World, Luo You comforted him. It was uncommon for her to act so seriously.

“I understand...”

It might be easy for one to understand the logic of what he experienced but it was hard to dispel the sorrow in him.

In the world of mortals, if someone's relative passes away, everyone would understand the fact that a dead person cannot be brought back to life. Therefore, they would repress their grief and accord with the inevitable loss.

However, how many of them could truly repress their grief...? And how could the sorrow in one's heart be truly repressed...?

With blank eyes, Ning Fan stood there in silence.

After a long time, he dismissed the vacant look in his eyes and slowly regained his calm.

He wanted to find his mother as soon as possible. However, what could he do if he could not master this technique...?

He was not a person who liked sighing in despair. Letting go of his sadness, he started to face reality.

Since his rain intent was not strong enough, then he would find ways to improve it!

“The Central State of the Rain World produces a type of divine intent stone in abundance which can slightly raise the level of a cultivator's intent realm... Countless Nascent Soul Realm and Divine Transformation Realm cultivators also use this item to comprehend their intent realm... When I am fully recovered, I will use the power of the divine intent stone to raise my intent realm. For now, I shall deal with my injuries first!”

After he had defeated the lords of all the palaces in the Heavenly Cloud Country, he suffered extremely grave injuries. However, he did not care about treating his wounds and spent around half a year learning the Rain Ancestor's technique.

As his body had the Black Star Technique that was healing his wounds automatically, he was already nearly sixty percent healed after half a year had passed. Unfortunately, he took the backlash from the rain technique several times which then inflicted a serious damage on his Sea of Consciousness...

In that case, he would have to spend quite some time to heal his injuries fully.

Since he decided to stop comprehending the rain technique, he naturally no longer needed to stay below the rain stele.

With a sway of his body, he entered the Yuan Yao World and got into the dark golden pagoda, starting to heal his wounds on the seventh floor of the pagoda.

Only after staying inside the pagoda for three years was he fully recovered.

Three years on the seventh floor within that pagoda was only equivalent to approximately nine days in the outside world.

He put on some clean clothes and began sorting out the loot he obtained from his battles against the palace lords in the Heavenly Cloud Country.

He still did not have a suitable sword sense to control the five sword spirits. Hence, he still let them be in an unconscious state.

The Rain Sealing Pagoda that he seized from Yun Ling's hands was a quite excellent magic treasure.

When he battled against him, he had to suffer losses even with his abilities. Now, with this pagoda in his hands, Ning Fan was confident to put up a fight even against an Absolute Void Stage expert who had converted their unital magic power to yuan magic power.

While he was perusing the delicate silver pagoda, he sighed gently upon noticing the startling cracks on its body.

On his way back from the Vast Heaven Realm, he already discovered the origin of this pagoda.

The Rain Sealing Pagoda was once the strongest offensive treasure of the Rain Palace which had a terrifyingly destructive power that could instantly kill an expert at the First Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm. Besides, it was also the fourth prince's natal magic treasure.

However, during the day Yun Tianjue broke through to the Void Fragmentation Realm, he murdered him and also destroyed this treasure.

But even though the treasure's power was greatly damaged today, it still was a precious supreme treasure.

As Ning Fan touched the cracks on the Rain Sealing Pagoda, another thought rushed within his heart.

He continued stroking the cracks that were left by a sword in silence. From those cracks, he could feel an utterly mad sword intent that was overwhelmed with sorrow.

It was Yun Tianjue's sword intent... When he murdered the fourth prince on that day, it was unknown how anguished he felt inwardly.

"The fourth prince was already dead whereas Yun Tianjue lost his memories. The old man with seven colors of light is the only one left who knows the truth of what happened that year... So even the clues are cut off now, huh..."

Ning Fan sighed and kept the Rain Sealing Pagoda. With a leap, he returned to the inner part of the mountain.

After resting for several days in the inner part of the mountain, he had already completely dismissed his battle intent of wiping out the Heavenly Cloud Country as well as the sorrow of being unable to relocate his mother and regained his tranquil state of mind.

Then, he got out of the mountain and returned to the Scarlet Heaven Palace located at the peak of the cloud mountain. To his surprise, Yu Chong Er was also waiting for him within the palace.

She had already stayed in the Scarlet Heaven Palace for one month just to wait for Ning Fan to get out of his seclusion.

"Your injuries are all healed?! Great!" Yu Chong Er was overjoyed upon seeing Ning Fan's qi that had become stable.

"Mm. Those were just some minor injuries. I'm fully recovered now." Ning Fan said calmly.

“Minor injuries? You’ve taken the attack of the Rain Sealing Pagoda head-on. How could the injuries you suffered be minor...? That’s the Rain Sealing Pagoda, you know...?” Yu Chong Er stared at Ning Fan like she was looking at a monster.

Even if the person who took a direct hit from the Rain Sealing Pagoda was an Absolute Void Stage expert who had achieved yuan magic power, they would also be killed or grievously injured.

Ning Fan, on the other hand, managed to heal all of his injuries in just half a year after withstanding a direct attack from that pagoda... He really was like an unkillable cockroach that had exuberant vitality.

She stared at Ning Fan as hard as possible, trying to find out his mystery. However, when Ning Fan looked her in the eye, her cheeks immediately blushed, pulling her back to her original purpose of coming.

“Oh yes. The reason why I came is to pass you a message. The Rain Sovereign has just exited his seclusion and he is sorting out the comprehensions he obtained from his seclusion. Perhaps he will summon you in another few days.”

“Is that so...?” Ning Fan muttered deep in thought. He wondered how the Rain Sovereign would feel after hearing of the news of him defeating the lords of the eight palaces.

Ning Fan battled against the eight palaces to comprehend their rain steles without killing a single person. Everything he did was in accordance with the World Law of the Rain World.

However, he had revealed many of his trump cards during the battle and even defeated Yun Ling, an Absolute Void Stage expert, with his Void Inquiry Stage power...

Despite being just nine hundred years old, he actually had become so strong...

Judging from the Rain Sovereign’s tolerance, if he finds out that Ning Fan had such potential, it was unknown whether or not he would see him as a threat.

Well, of course, Ning Fan deeply believed that before he outlived his use, the Rain Sovereign would not take any actions against him.

But once the Rain Sovereign is done with him...

Ning Fan shook his head. Perhaps one day he would stand face to face against the Rain Sovereign and be the Rain Palace's nemesis...

Even so, that was not a big deal. Today, he had Min Luo and the little sable protecting Yue Country. Even if the Rain Sovereign goes to the country personally, he might not necessarily be able to retreat in one piece... Just a single clone of Min Luo was already at the Fifth Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm.

If Min Luo goes all-out, he could ignite his demon soul and enable his original body to leave the Dark Sparrow's Grave temporarily and wipe out the Rain World using his rogue demon strength.

If Rain Sovereign really tries to plot against the Yue Country, he would die pretty badly.

"My master has already come to the Central State. Based on what I've heard from my master, when the Rain Sovereign sees you this time, he will grant you some reward and let you go through the 'Heaven, Earth, Black and Yellow Tests' at the same time." Yu Chong Er continued.

"Tests?" Ning Fan sounded surprised.

"Mm. During the promotion of the Rain Palace's division palace lord of all the previous generations, they would be given a test by the Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm Experts. One has to go through at least one of the four tests before obtaining the qualification to be promoted as a palace lord. In the history of the Rain World, you are the only one who was directly promoted as a palace lord without taking the test. However, since you've come to the Central State this time, you naturally need to catch up on the four tests"

"I see."

Ning Fan nodded his head to express his understanding. When Yun Tianjue gave him the revered elder token in the past, he had also given him a test.

Since the promotion of a revered elder required a test, it was perfectly reasonable for one to be tested before being promoted as a palace lord.

Of the four tests, one would need to get through one of them. There was not much difficulty for Ning Fan.

Ning Fan was not worried that the Rain Sovereign was trying to set him up. Before the latter uses him to accomplish his objective, he would be extremely safe. For example, even if Ning Fan turns against all the princes of the Rain Palace, the Rain Sovereign would still be Ning Fan's backer...

"And the other reason why I came to find you is to give you a gift to express my gratitude to you for saving my life. You must not reject my gift, okay?"

Yu Chong Er lowered her head while her ears were burning hot. Only after rummaging in her storage pouch for nearly half a day did she make up her mind to take out a brocade box.

"T-This is your gift. Don't refuse to accept it!"

Ning Fan took the box from her and shook his head with a smile.

When did he ever turn down someone when they offer him something? He never refuses anyone, okay?

However, just as he touched the brocade box, his expression suddenly became serious.

Multiple seals were densely set up on the brocade box. They had never been opened before. Even so, Ning Fan could still sense a brutal and bloodthirsty qi of a ferocious beast from within the box...

"This is a Low Rank Profound Divinity Grade spiritual equipment. It's something that I requested from my master with great difficulty... If you don't want it, you aren't giving me face!"

Yu Chong Er raised her head with a look of hope on her face. She was very afraid that Ning Fan would reject her gift.

Strange. It's very strange... Wasn't she just trying to give him a thank-you gift? Why would she feel so nervous...?

Was she sick again...?

"Thank you. This spiritual equipment is what I needed. Thus, I'm going to thicken my face and accept this gift."

Ning Fan thanked Yu Chong Er with a faint smile. The latter, however, averted her eyes and was immediately at a loss for words.

"Y-Y-You... Stop looking at me. Look at this spiritual equipment. Do you like it?"

"Mm."

Ning Fan opened the brocade box.

When he just slightly raised the cover of the box that revealed a small gap, a violent snow-white beast silhouette turned into a fearsome white light ray and flew directly at Ning Fan's head!

That beast shadow actually wanted to kill Ning Fan!

"Interesting. This Profound Divinity Grade spiritual equipment is actually so vicious that it even dares to kill its master!"

Ning Fan took half a step backward and landed a finger at the snow-white beast shadow.

Immediately, the snow-white beast shadow let out a miserable shrill, as if it was in deep agony.

Chapter 552: Heaven Controlling City, The First Stage!

After it was hit by Ning Fan's finger, the snow-white beast shadow let out a miserable shrill and stopped charging at Ning Fan. It tried to escape by turning around and transforming into a ray of snow white light.

Without a doubt, it was impossible for Ning Fan to let it flee. He pointed out a finger and used the Heaven Sealing Technique to restrict the beast shadow's movement.

Then, with a flick of his sleeve, he pulled it into his hand and studied it carefully. It was the shadow of a white tiger that was only the size of a palm.

The white tiger shadow was not a living creature. Instead, it was something that the ferocious baleful qi within the spiritual equipment transformed into.

After it was caught by Ning Fan, that little white tiger was still baring its fangs while swinging its claws with a fearsome look on its face.

Ning Fan applied some magic power from the center of his palm to destroy the shadow of that white tiger. Then, a brilliant light flashed. An ancient dark silver vambrace appeared in his hand.

The length of that armor could envelope the front part of Ning Fan's arm just right. It felt cold and it seemed to contain a sharp killing qi.

There were the carvings of mountains and seas and patterns of mythical beasts on the armor. It was a well-made craft.

It had extreme toughness. The materials that were used to forge this armor were undoubtedly uncommon...

The armor not only had amazing defensive power. What impressed Ning Fan was the killing qi that it contained.

If he refines this vambrace, the power of his fists would probably experience an unthinkable improvement.

“My master said that this spiritual equipment is forged by a spiritual equipment master from the Heaven Immortal World. Its raw material is an ominous tooth that an immortal white tiger shed. White tigers are bloodthirsty creatures. Immortal white tigers, on the other hand, are even more vicious creatures that kill countless, accumulating thick and heavy baleful qi... Even my master also can't suppress the baleful qi of this spiritual equipment. However, I had a hunch that you should be able to suppress it... Because you're so competent...” Yu Chong Er said with reddened cheeks.

“You really think highly of me... A vambrace that is made out of a white tiger's tooth, huh... Thank you for giving me this gift. I like it a lot.”

Ning Fan put his finger at the vambrace, commanding it to turn into a ray of white light and fly back to the brocade box. Then, he kept the box in his storage pouch.

“It's good that you like it... I'll take my leave first. My master is going to scold me again as he couldn't find me for the past one month...”

Riding on her five-marked cloud, Yu Chong Er stuck out her tongue at Ning Fan and left reluctantly.

Logically, she had already finished repaying Ning Fan all the favor she owed him by giving him the Heaven Deceiving Cloak, Insect Sovereign's Blood and the White Tiger Vambrace...

However, why would she still feel slightly unwilling to leave Ning Fan, as if the fibers are still clinging together even after the lotus root has broken.

“Damn it... Yu Chong Er, you must be sick. That's why you aren't willing to leave the Scarlet Heaven Palace...” Yu Chong Er muttered to herself.

“Miss Yu, please stay for a moment.” Ning Fan suddenly called.

“I-Is there anything else...?” Yu Chong Er turned over shyly.

“These body refinement pills are pills of the devil race. They can raise the cultivation level of a Jade Life Body Refinement Realm cultivator. I concocted them in the past and the Rain Palace does not have any of it. If you don’t mind, please take these pills. I suppose they will be greatly beneficial to you in breaking through to the Second Level of the Jade Life Body Refinement Realm.”

Ning Fan smiled gently and took out an exquisite storage pouch. With a flick of his finger, he sent a pouch to Yu Chong Er.

Since she had given him a gift, he naturally needed to give her something in return. Even though these pills were not as precious as the Profound Divinity Grade spiritual equipment, they showed his appreciation to her.

“T-This...” As Yu Chong Er caught Ning Fan’s storage pouch, her face had already become as red as a tomato.

She never expected that Ning Fan would give her something in return and was not mentally prepared for this at all. Thus, she did not know how she should reply to Ning Fan.

Her heart was fluttering wildly. She kept the pouch and went away hurriedly like a hare.

This time, she was very certain that she really was sick...

She actually did not dare to speak a word to Ning Fan. It was too embarrassing...

...

Right after Yu Chong Er had left, Ning Fan received a golden message-transmitting flying sword. It was a message that the Rain Sovereign had personally sent to him.

“Ten days later, head to the Temple of Rain.”

The Temple of Rain was the main palace of the Rain Palace. It was located at the tenth realm of the Heavenly Cloud Country and the Rain Sovereign guarded it in person.

After hesitating for a while, he returned to the inner part of the cloud mountain for seclusion again.

Ten days later, he would be going to the Temple of Rain to see the Rain Sovereign.

Before that, he planned to refine the White Tiger Vambrace.

That piece of armor had immense baleful qi. Even some common Void Fragmentation Realm experts would not be able to restrain the baleful qi and refine the spiritual equipment.

With Ning Fan’s baleful qi and the aura force from his Fu Li Ancestral Blood, however, it was an easy task for him to subdue this spiritual equipment.

In terms of the effect of this spiritual equipment, its defense power was in fact secondary. Its main effect was improving the power of one’s body techniques.

In just three days, Ning Fan successfully refined the spiritual equipment into his right arm. For the remaining days, he sat below the rain stele to comprehend the rain intent.

On the seventh day, another message-transmitting flying sword flew into the Scarlet Heaven Realm from the Profound Heaven realm. It was a message from Yun Bushu.

There was only a sentence in that message.

“Hide your sovereign qi properly. Beware of Revered Sage.”

After receiving Yun Bushu's reminder, Ning Fan's expression turned grim and started to suspect that it was an exploratory message from Yun Bushu.

However, he shook his head after that and denied that idea as he thought that Yun Bushu might have really noticed that he possessed the sovereign qi.

He still recalled that after he condensed his sovereign qi, he was once tracked by a gigantic eye in the Profound Yin World.

Revered Sage was the Rain Sovereign's trusted subordinate and that large eye was his heavenly eye.

When Ning Fan condensed his sovereign qi in that year, the phenomenon that signified that birth of a sovereign being had shaken the entire Rain World. Countless people were searching for the second sovereign being in the Rain World... Even the Rain Sovereign was frantically looking for those who shared a resemblance with that person's back view and murdered every last one of them. He rather killed the wrong person than let his target run loose.

What made the Rain Sovereign fear Ning Fan today was just his innate talent in cultivation. To the mysterious person who condensed the sovereign qi, however, the Rain Sovereign had the absolute determination to wipe out his existence.

No one knew that Ning Fan was that person, including Revered Sage.

Ning Fan had been hiding his sovereign qi very deeply. Even though he had met several Void Fragmentation Realm experts such as Chu Chang An, Yun Tianjue, Yun Jinghong and Yun Daoku, none of them could notice that Ning Fan possessed the sovereign qi.

Yun Bushu was the only one who managed to see the sovereign qi in him and reminded him to hide it...

This Yun Bushu really has something on the ball.

“If Yun Bushu truly noticed that I possess the sovereign qi, the Rain Sovereign must also be able to notice it... I’ll be seeing the Rain Sovereign in another three days. I should completely conceal it just in case...”

Ning Fan stored his sovereign qi into his Yin Yang Locket. The locket was an immortal emperor’s treasure that could shield everything inside from other’s discovery. No matter how capable the Rain Sovereign is, it would be impossible for him to find out the sovereign qi.

He did not reply to Yun Bushu’s message. If he gives a response, he would be admitting the fact that he possessed the sovereign qi.

Deep inside, he believed that Yun Bushu had been through thick and thin with his father and he was someone trustworthy.

Inside his bones, however, he still kept some distances from him...

After all, completely trusting a person was not something that can be achieved overnight.

On the tenth day, a group of revered elders from the Temple of Rain came to lead Ning Fan to see the Rain Sovereign.

All of the revered elders emanated Divine Transformation Realm qi. However, their expressions looked sluggish and lifeless. When he studied them carefully, he found that each and every one of them was actually a puppet that was made out of a devil cultivator.

Ning Fan followed these puppets to the tenth realm of the Heavenly Cloud Country. Along the way, he was deep in thought.

The Rain Sovereign deliberately sent these puppets which were originally devil cultivators to receive Ning Fan. Was he trying to show Ning Fan his authority...?

Was the Rain Sovereign trying to tell him that if he goes against the Rain Palace, he would end up being turned into a puppet...?

“If one doesn’t let me down, I won’t let them down... This display of power is useless to me.”

The tenth realm of the Heavenly Cloud Country – Heaven Controlling Realm!

The Heavenly Controlling Realm was located at the center of the Heavenly Cloud Country with the other nine realms surrounding it in a circle.

Along the way, endless rays of travelling light were dashing toward the tenth realm. All of them were trying to watch the scene of bustle.

When Ning Fan was in his seclusion in the past half a year, the news of him defeating the eight palace lords and becoming the strongest lord of the nine palaces spread throughout the entire Rain World.

Ning Fan had now truly become a mighty figure in the Rai World. Among the cultivators below the Void Fragmentation Realm, there was barely anyone who dared to approach him and make him their enemy.

Even those Absolute Void Stage experts who had achieved the yuan magic power might also need to show some respect to him.

There were a few hundred cultivation cities at the center of the Heaven Controlling Realm. The one that was located at the middlemost was called Heaven Controlling City.

Heaven Controlling City was built on ninety thousand zhang* (3.33m per zhang) above the sea of clouds. One million li* (500m per li) around the place was guarded by the divine messengers of the Rain Palace.

Upon reaching this place, those Divine Transformation Realm puppets that guided him here had accomplished their mission and they all retreated in silence.

Ning Fan left them behind and flew ninety thousand zhang* (3.33m per zhang) above the sky by himself and descended outside the Heaven Controlling City.

The moment he arrived, a group of cultivators with sharp and fearsome aura force immediately stood before him, blocking his path. They were the guards of the city.

Even though the group only consisted of nine individuals, eight of them were at the Half-Step Void Refinement Realm while the leader of the group was a Void Glimpse Stage cultivator!

As soon as they saw Ning Fan's appearance, they instantly changed their behavior and said with a respectful tone.

"The Rain Sovereign has informed us that if the White-Robed Marquis arrives, he can enter the Heaven Controlling City to see the Rain Sovereign."

"I understand."

Ning Fan walked into the city all by himself. It was a huge city that had the shape of a turtle. There were not too many cultivators garrisoned within the city. Each of the guards that patrolled occasionally were at the Divine Transformation Realm.

After entering the city, Ning Fan could vaguely feel a massive demon qi from the cloud floor that he was stepping on.

There was the soul of a demon turtle which was at the First Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm residing in the entire Heaven Controlling City!

The demon turtle probably existed here as a guard for the Heaven Controlling City...

The Rain Sovereign really invested a lot in this place to actually get a Void Fragmentation Realm demon turtle to guard the city...

There was a gigantic door at the central region of the Heaven Controlling City that was carved with three words – Heaven Controlling Gate.

The guardian of the gate was an old man in brocade garments who possessed a cultivation base at the Absolute Void Stage. He sat on the cloud tree located beside the gate with his eyes closed. His expression looked extremely proud and arrogant.

Just as he sensed Ning Fan's arrival, he immediately stood up and said with a forced smile.

"I am Han Songzi, the lord of the Temple of Rain. Greetings to the White-Robed Marquis. Please wait for a moment. I'll now open the Heaven Controlling Gate... The Rain Sovereign and the Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm experts have already been waiting for you for quite some time."

"Do I still need to get through this huge gate in order to enter the Temple of Rain...?"

Ning Fan scanned the huge gate with his eyes. After taking a quick look at it, he noticed that it was an entrance to a small chiliocosm.

The defense of the ten realms in the Heavenly Cloud Country were impenetrable. The Heaven Controlling City was so heavily guarded. Even so, the Rain Sovereign still hid the Temple of Rain within a small chiliocosm. It was evident to show the cautious and oversensitive personality of the Rain Sovereign.

Upon hearing Ning Fan's question, Han Songzi just gave him a smile without giving him an answer. As he activated a golden token, the huge gate rumbled and opened.

It was a vast and boundless world of void on the other side of the gate.

A large majestic palace that shone in dazzling golden light was floating in the void space. It was none other than the Temple of Rain!

"White-Robed Marquis, please follow me."

Han Songzi took the lead and went inside the huge gate.

After hesitating for a while, Ning Fan's eyes glistened with determination and he also crossed the gate. Right after that, the huge gate closed.

With a pensive look, Ning Fan stared at the crack of the door that was gradually vanishing in the void space and secretly marked down its location.

If something goes wrong, he should be able to tear the door crack in the void space apart using his Wind Mist Finger and leave with ease.

Along the way, he had been thinking about every possible scenario that might happen when he meets the Rain Sovereign.

Even though he was certain that he was still useful to the Rain Sovereign and would not be in danger, nothing in the world was absolute and staying cautious would never go wrong.

If he really faces danger, he could still hide inside the Yuan Yao World and nobody would be able to capture him.

The void space in front of him was filled with a repelling force that made it difficult for cultivators to move across the space.

Han Songzi chuckled and took out the golden token. As he waved it in his hand, a golden bridge suddenly appeared in the void space which directly led to the main entrance of the Temple of Rain.

When they set foot on the golden bridge, there was no longer any resistance force that prevented them from advancing.

Without saying a single word, Ning Fan followed Han Songzi to cross the golden bridge and entered the temple.

Inside the main hall of the temple, an old man in silver dragon robes was sitting on the throne with a cold expression.

Below him, there were the Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm experts, a few princes, the lord and vice lord of the eight strongest palaces and the masters of all the prestigious and righteous sects in the Central State!

Those who did not have a significant identity would not have the chance to come to the Temple of Rain at all!

The moment Ning Fan entered the temple, countless traces of spirit sense immediately shifted toward him, probing him from top to bottom. They wanted to see how capable the White-Robed Marquis whose name shook the entire Rain World was.

Ning Fan smiled gently. He did not stop them nor reveal his aura force.

Other than discovering his cultivation base at the Void Inquiry Stage, everyone in the hall could not sense anything else. Each of them then showed a look of surprise.

“The White-Robed Marquis’ qi is very well-reserved! He actually can conceal it from our senses!”

Ning Fan’s eyes scanned across the masters of the prestigious sects in the Central State. When he noticed that there was not an Absolute Void Stage expert among them, he no longer paid attention to them.

Then, he indifferently shifted his gaze to the lords of the eight palaces. The way the eight of them looked at Ning Fan was mostly filled with respect and awe.

Ning Fan then averted his eyes and turned to look at the few Void Fragmentation Realm princes.

Yun Tianjue was absent among them.

As the seventh prince, Yun Jinghong, looked at Ning Fan, his eyes contained a hint of fear that came straight from the depth of his heart.

The sixth prince, Yun Youmu, on the other hand, was still keeping his eyes narrowed in slits while wearing an inscrutable smile.

When the fifth prince, Yun Zhongyan, saw Ning Fan arrive, he just let out a faint snort.

The second prince, Yun Xiaoxiang, however, frowned slightly and his eyes were as deep as the ocean. It was unknown what he was thinking.

Only the third prince, Yun Bushu, grinned at him and gave him a meaningful look. When he saw there was no longer a hint of sovereign qi in Ning Fan when he came, he felt less worried.

Secretly, he passed a message to Ning Fan via telepathy.

“Be careful of Revered Sage.”

“Thank you.”

Ning Fan replied to Yun Bushu and moved his eyes to the Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm experts.

Among the four of them the way Yun Daoku looked at him was filled with worries and fear.

The lord of the Dragon Determining Valley, Chu Chang An, had his brows tightly drawn together. His face was filled with doubts as he stared at Ning Fan. No one knew what he was pondering in his mind.

The Pill Sovereign who had returned from his travel was also here. He released a little of his medicine soul upon Ning Fan’s arrival. When he sensed his Mid Sixth Revolution medicine soul, he put on a satisfied smile.

The last person was Yu Chong Er’s master, the master of the Thousand Fantasies Sect –Yun Qingge.

This woman's magic power was at the First Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm. At the same time, she also possessed the First Heavenly Layer of the Nirvana Body Refinement Realm.

She wore a large cloak that tightly enveloped her body. The cloak was green and it had the pattern of cloud and mist.

After just taking a single glance at the cloak, Ning Fan was extremely sure that the cloak was a Profound Divinity Grade spiritual equipment that was similar to the Heaven Deceiving Cloak.

With the cloak enveloping her body, it was impossible for one to see what Yun Qingge's attire was.

Her hair was tied backward and fastened with a green jade hairpin. She was gorgeous and her presence was as light and ethereal as cloud and mist.

However, her eyes when she looked at Ning Fan contained an unusual hostility.

"Have I messed with this woman before...?" Ning Fan pondered inwardly.

However, even though he had reviewed all his past memories, he also did not remember anything that involved Yun Qingge.

The enmity she had for him seemed to be rather odd and baffling.

Ning Fan's eyes eventually fell upon the Rain Sovereign.

The Rain Sovereign wore a set of silver dragon robes that were embroidered with the pattern of clouds. His white hair was bound up on the top of his head and decorated with a crown that made him look rather majestic.

Before Ning Fan's arrival, the Rain Sovereign's face was as cold as ice. Now, however, his face was adorned with a smile and filled with gentleness as he looked at Ning Fan.

The way he looked at him was as benevolent as when he was looking at his own descendent.

A grim-looking old man in black robes was standing behind the Rain Sovereign.

His cultivation base was just at the Divine Transformation Realm. However, his presence exuded a strong power of heavenly secret. Obviously, he was extremely proficient in the Dao of Divination.

His left eye was gloomy and vicious like that of a serpent. His right eye, however, was blind and the eye socket was only left with a scary hollow.

He was none other than the person who once used the Heavenly Eye Technique to track Ning Fan down – Revered Sage...

“Hehe. So you are Ning Fan, huh? Excellent. Truly excellent. Despite being just at the age of 900 years old, you’ve already attained this level. In the future, you’ll certainly be able to break through to the Void Fragmentation Realm and become a pillar of my Rain Palace!”

The Rain Sovereign’s smile looked so sincere that there was nothing one could pick at.

Even so, Ning Fan remained unmoved. Following Han Songzi’s actions, he cupped his fists and politely said, “Scarlet Heaven Palace Lord, Ning Fan, greets the Rain Sovereign!”

“Hehe. There’s no need for such formalities. To cultivators like us, these acts of courtesy are meaningless...”

The Rain Sovereign suddenly changed the topic and asked.

“According to what I know, you’re born in a low-grade cultivation country called Yue Country. May I know who your master is?”

“Black Devil!”

Ning Fan's eyes turned solemn and indifferently uttered two words.

All of a sudden, only the sounds of surprise gasps could be heard within the entire hall.

"I originally didn't believe Revered Snow's report... It turns out that this kid really is that person's disciple!!!"

"Even though that person was grievously injured and came to the Lower Realm to live in seclusion, he is still the lord of the Black Devil no matter what. In the Upper Realm, he is also one of the powerful figures... If the White-Robed Marquis really is that man's disciple, who would be daring enough to mess with him...?"

"Black Devil... Black Devil... *Sigh* ... It's beyond our power to mess with him..."

Ning Fan observed the expressions on everyone's faces within the hall and let out a gentle sigh.

It was very difficult to hide the fact that he was Old Devil's disciple. Many cultivators in Yue Country knew about it. However, only a handful of people knew about Old Devil's background.

To the Rain Sovereign, finding out Ning Fan's identity and background was not a difficult task.

Thus, it would be pointless for Ning Fan to lie. Besides, he also did not have any reason to lie.

Be it to the cultivators in the Central State or the Rain Sovereign, this identity had an extremely great intimidating effect...

No matter how much the Rain Sovereign hated Ning Fan, he would certainly fear for him after knowing his identity.

Even when the Rain Sovereign plans to get rid of Ning Fan in the future, he also certainly would not dare to let anyone know it. Thus, he would most probably assassinate him in the dark...

The Rain Sovereign clenched his fists tightly. His heart was extremely restless.

During the ten years when Ning Fan went into seclusion to achieve the breakthrough to the Void Inquiry Stage, the Rain Sovereign had already sent someone to Yue Country to dig up information about Ning Fan's background.

The result of their discovery made the Rain Sovereign dare not to disregard it.

Ning Fan was Old Devil Han's disciple. Moreover, he was a disciple that Old Devil Han regarded like his own son!

With this identity, even the Rain Sovereign also would not dare to take Ning Fan lightly...

After the Rain Sovereign had ended his seclusion, Yun Xiaoxiang reported to him about the incident of Ning Fan defeating the lords of the eight palaces. The Rain Sovereign just nodded his head with a cold expression to express his acknowledgement of the incident.

Even though he was not a magnanimous man, he was still a person who knew how to differentiate what was best for him.

Even though Old Devil was severely injured, he was not someone the Rain Sovereign could mess with even if his identity as the lord of the Black Devil was just nominal.

"Unless I have proof that this kid will be the person who prevents me from becoming an immortal, I can't take action against him rashly..."

This was the Rain Sovereign's thought at this moment!

Now, it all depends on Revered Sage's investigation... If Revered Sage discovers the slightest trace of sovereign qi in Ning Fan's body...

The Rain Sovereign's expression turned frosty. In that case, no matter how great or powerful Ning Fan's background was, he would also get rid of him secretly!

No one could stop him from becoming an immortal!

The Rain Sovereign waved his hands to stop the commotion in the hall. Then, he said to Ning Fan with a courteous smile.

"I was just asking casually and I harbor no other intention. Your master has a unique identity. Our earlier conversation will become a confidential information of our Rain Palace. Rest assured White-Robed Marquis, it won't be leaked."

"The reason why I summoned you today is naturally because I want to request your help on something. I plan to put your Indestructible Fire Body to use. However, before that, I want you to pass four tests. This is the tradition of my Rain Palace. The Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm experts will host the test for you personally. Are you ready for them?"

After determining Ning Fan's master, the Rain Sovereign began to address him using his honorific title. Clearly, he dreaded Old Devil a lot.

"Mm. I'm ready." Ning Fan replied indifferently. He had no worries about the Heaven, Earth, Black and Yellow Tests.

When he had declared his identity, the enmity that the Rain Sovereign had for him had significantly reduced.

The tests were just a dispensable formal procedure.

However, the Rain Sovereign seemed to attach great importance to the tests this time. Could it be that there is another objective behind the four tests?

Ning Fan's eyes drifted to Revered Sage behind the Rain Sovereign. Chills filled his heart when he noticed the latter secretly holding a square compass underneath his sleeves.

Ning Fan had already learned about the tests beforehand. The Heaven, Earth, Black and Yellow Tests would be held in four different heavenly dwelling spaces. People in the outside world would not know the exact process of the tests.

As for the compass in Revered Sage's hands, it was labelled with four words – Heaven, Earth, Black, Yellow. It seemed like that compass could monitor the entire process of the tests...

When Ning Fan thought of the several reminders which Yun Bushu gave him, he suddenly understood something.

The Rain Sovereign's true intention was not to let Ning Fan go through the test but allow Revered Sage to find out whether there was sovereign qi in his body!

There must be a lot of danger in those four tests to force him to use all his means, including his sovereign qi...

Unfortunately, I've already concealed my sovereign qi. Your effort is bound to be fruitless!"

Ning Fan took a step forward. Meanwhile, Chu Chang An also moved one step forward.

"The first test is the Heaven Stage and I will host it personally!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Chu Chang An's Void Fragmentation Realm aura force spread across the hall. When he lifted his finger and pointed at the area in front of him, the space before him dispersed, revealing a portal.

"The Instant Creation of Heavenly Dwelling Space!" The eyes of countless Void Refinement Realm experts in the hall were filled with passion. It was a rare opportunity for them to personally witness a Void Fragmentation Realm old monster displaying this technique.

"White-Robed Marquis, please follow me to enter this Heavenly Dwelling Space and take your first test!"

Chapter 553: Exchange for The Blood Sword

Ning Fan followed Chu Chang An to enter the portal. It was a world of clouds on the other side of the portal. There was nothing else in that world except for the misty clouds that stretched boundlessly to the distance.

Standing in the world of clouds, Ning Fan was deep in thoughts.

All the clouds within this heavenly dwelling space was a type of unique cloud, called 'shen1 cloud'. It could turn into any kind of illusory realm as well as different landscapes of battlefield.

The test of the Heaven's Stage had yet to begin. If it has, Chu Chang An would control those shen clouds and command them to transform into the required illusory realms and arenas for the test.

Chu Chang An who wore a set of hemp robes and had fiery-red hair was exuding fire qi.

His eyes flashed with hesitation as he was standing on the sea of clouds. A few times, he was about to speak to Ning Fan but then decided to swallow back his words. He seemed to have something to tell Ning Fan and that was why he did not start the test of the Heaven's Stage after so long.

Ning Fan and Chu Chang An stood facing each other one thousand zhang* (3.33m per zhang) away, maintaining the most fundamental vigilance.

"Does Elder Chu have something to tell me?" Ning Fan asked.

"Hehe. I indeed have something to talk to you... I want to make a deal with you..." Chu Chang An's eyes shone with determination and spoke his mind.

"A deal?"

Ning Fan was stunned at first. Then, countless thoughts ran across his mind. After pondering for a while, he could already roughly guess what the deal Chu Chang An was talking about.

Chu Chang An was a demon cultivator of the Blood Dragon Race. Back in the Dragon Determining Valley, he sensed a trace of blood dragon qi from Ning Fan and figured that the latter might possess some kind of supreme treasure of the Blood Dragon Race.

Because Ning Fan was under Yun Tianjue's protection that day, he did not investigate that matter further in the end.

Today, Chu Chang An requested to make a deal with Ning Fan. Without a doubt, he had set his eyes upon the Blood Dragon Demon Sword.

The Blood Dragon Demon Sword was forged using the bones of a blood dragon at the heavenly demon¹ level. To Ning Fan, it was not of great use and was something dispensable.

To Chu Chang An, on the other hand, it was an extremely precious treasure. If he could devour the immortal blood dragon's bones in the sword, his cultivation base would certainly be enhanced greatly.

Ning Fan hesitated for a while. It was not impossible for him to give that sword to Chu Chang An since he sincerely wanted it. All the latter had to do was to give him something of the same worth in exchange.

If all the seals of the Blood Dragon Demon Sword are lifted, it should reach the power of an immortal sword. Unfortunately, even if Ning Fan breaks through to the First Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm, his magic power also would not be sufficient for him to eliminate all the seals and fully control an immortal sword.

To him who had a great deal of abilities and techniques, the blood sword was just like chicken ribs. If Chu Chang An could take out something that interests him, he certainly would be more than happy to exchange the sword for it.

However, if Chu Chang An wants to seize the blood sword by force... Hehe. Ning Fan was never a person who would put himself in a disadvantageous position!

Ning Fan gave Chu Chang An a meaningful smile with a smirk and said, "What Elder Chu wants to make the deal?"

What Ning Fan actually meant by asking the question was to imply that he indeed possessed a treasure of the Blood Dragon Race.

Chu Chang An understood it tacitly and his eyes began burning with excitement. He wished that he could immediately snatch Ning Fan's storage pouch and see what blood dragon treasure exactly was in it.

However, as soon as he met Ning Fan's unfathomable eyes, he instantly calmed himself down and dismissed that thought.

If Ning Fan was a common Void Refinement Realm cultivator, Chu Chang An would definitely dare to snatch the treasure from him.

However, Ning Fan was not an ordinary person. He was not only a part of the Black Devil Sect, but also a Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master who was someone Chu Chang An had to treat like his equal...

Chu Chang An sighed deeply. He would not offend Yun Tianjue just because of a treasure, much less the Black Devil Sect.

Since he could not take it by force, then he could only make a fair trade with him. After all, he has something that Ning Fan should need.

"Elder Chu, do you want to seize my treasure?" Ning Fan said with a forced smile.

"Hehe. My young friend, you must be joking. I've told you that this is a deal that both of us will make willingly. Thus, I will certainly use something that has an equal worth to exchange for your treasure."

Elder Chu smiled and raised his head to look at the sea of clouds above the sky. Then, he warned with a meaningful tone. "Even though the four stages of tests are done within heavenly dwelling spaces, no one knows if there is no ear behind the walls. It's better that we proceed our deal in private."

As soon as he finished speaking, Elder Chu took out a blood-red handkerchief and tossed it into the sky.

The handkerchief grew in the air. Within just a few breaths, it became boundlessly huge, shielding the entire sky.

In the outside world, Revered Sage's eyes immediately turned grim as he could no longer sense anything within the heavenly dwelling space of the Heaven's Stage.

"What happened?!" The Rain Sovereign asked via telepathy after noticing Revered Sage's expression.

"Chu Chang An has cut off my senses!" Revered Sage replied with gritted teeth.

"Chu Chang An, huh... The Rain Sovereign's eyes flashed with a cold glint.

Inside the heavenly dwelling space, Chu Chang An started rubbing his hands with excitement after concealing the both of them from Revered Sage's senses and said to Ning Fan with an apologetic smile. "

"Hehe. This blood-red handkerchief can shield one from Heaven's secret. Do you know that this Heaven Stage is being spied upon by someone using a secret technique? The Rain Sovereign seems to have suspicions on you... You have to be extra cautious in the upcoming four stages."

Chu Chang An seemed like he wanted to express goodwill to Ning fan by shielding the two of them from Revered Sage's senses.

"Elder Chu, thank you for your reminder. However, I am absolutely certain that I don't have any unpresentable secrets. It's fine if someone wants to pry into me. If they can't find the result they desire, they will probably dismiss their enmity against me. If I hide myself from their senses, I'm afraid it will make things worse instead and draw even more doubts and suspicions on me.

"Hehe. This young friend is very confident. Since you aren't afraid of being spied on, my action is superfluous. After we finish the trade, I'll take off the blood-red handkerchief. For now, however, as I still need to make a deal with you, it's still better to prevent anyone from spying on us."

Chu Chang An took a deep breath. He knew that they were going to talk about the serious matter next.

“I’ve sensed a trace of blood dragon qi from you... If I am not wrong, it’s the qi of blood dragon bones. Moreover, the level of the blood dragon bones isn’t low. Apparently, it’s... the bones of an immortal blood dragon! I wish to trade for the bones with you!”

Chu Chang An looked as if he was seeking confirmation from Ning Fan. He wanted to see whether his guess was correct and whether that blood dragon bone was at the heavenly demon grade from Ning Fan’s facial expression.

However, Ning Fan was constantly maintaining his faint smile while his eyes were deep, making Chu Chang An unable to notice any emotion in him. The failure of obtaining an answer for his guesses filled him with disappointment.

He shook his head and asked with a bitter smile.

“This young friend, please tell me if my guesses are correct?”

Chi

Only the sound of a clear and crisp sword shrill that answered Chu Chang An’s question.

With a flick of his sleeve, Ning Fan was already holding a long sword that had blood light revolving around it in his hand.

It was a long sword that was clear and transparent like a ruby. A few seals were placed on the sword to restrict its power.

Even so, Chu Chang An could still sense a rush of excitement coming from his bloodlines!

“Immortal blood dragon bones! It can't be wrong. This sword is definitely forged using the bones of an immortal blood dragon! Young kid, give me that sword!!!”

Despite the state of mind that Chu Chang An had trained for countless years, he was also taken over by greed the moment he saw the blood sword which urged him to seize the sword from Ning Fan and make it his own.

However, when he saw Ning Fan's calm and composed eyes, he immediately suppressed his miscellaneous thoughts and let out a few coughs. Then, with an awkward smile, he said.

“I'm sorry. I've forgotten my manners.”

“It's fine. After all, it's natural for a gentleman to love wealth and treasures. If he obtains it using the right way, there is naturally nothing wrong with it. In fact, I have the willingness to trade this sword with Elder Chu. However, I just wonder what item you can give me in exchange!”

Ning Fan held the blood sword with its tip pointing downward and stood with a faint smile. He remained as calm and collected as usual.

With his current capabilities, it was more than enough for him to keep himself safe. Thus, he was not afraid of Chu Chang An.

All of a sudden, Ning Fan's calm and leisurely demeanor stunned Chu Chang An. It reminded him of his previous master.

In that year, he was still just a blood dragon which had a low and insignificant cultivation base.

In that year, his master was the Demon Cloud Rain Sovereign whose name shook the entire Rain World. When he was facing tens of millions of enemies during the war of the Nine Worlds, he was also as calm as Ning Fan.

That calmness in him was an attitude, an attitude of being undisturbed in the hour of peril and it had nothing to do with one's cultivation base.

Chu Chang An got rid of all his other thoughts. Now, he had more respect for Ning Fan. Inwardly, he thought: perhaps within the next few thousand years, this kid will also become a strong being that will be regarded as someone as strong as the Rain Sovereign...

“Since I’ve ascertained the grade of the blood dragon bones, I’m willing to use three items to exchange for it. This is the first item!”

When Chu Chang An flicked his finger, a blood-red immediately flew toward Ning Fan.

Ning Fan reached out to grab the storage pouch. As he scanned it using his spirit sense, he discovered that there was ten billion immortal jade.

“Not enough!” Ning Fan said indifferently with a neutral expression.

Chu Chang An secretly praised Ning Fan within his mind. If ordinary Void Refinement Realm cultivators see such an amount of immortal jade, they more or less would be dumbstruck. For Ning Fan, however, he did not even flinch at all. If it wasn’t because he was adept in scheming, it would then be because he was already used to big scenes and would not be shocked by such an amount of immortal jade.

“This young friend, be patient. There is still the second item!”

Chu Chang An sent another storage pouch to Ning Fan. He grabbed and checked it. The items within the pouch were actually ten bottles of Imaginary Sea Pill.

One bottle contained ten pills and there were one hundred pills in that pouch.

Imaginary Sea Pill was a Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill. A single pill could give a Void Inquiry Stage expert five thousand units of magic power... Those pills were extremely precious.

If Ning Fan takes every last one of the Imaginary Sea Pills in the ten bottles, his magic power would shoot up by five hundred thousand units!

Even with Ning Fan's shrewdness, his eyelids could not help but twitch slightly. However, he dismissed that astonishment in his face at the next moment and said with a flat tone.

"Not enough!"

Chu Chang An chuckled dryly. He knew that Ning Fan was not someone who could be satisfied easily.

Luckily, he still had the third item to give him. And Chu Chang An was very confident that the final item could convince Ning Fan.

"Fine... Originally, I was reluctant to take this item out because it's worth is slightly above that of the heavenly blood dragon bones... However, it is useless to me. Instead of letting it stay idly in the storehouse, it's better to use it to make a fair trade with you..."

Chu Chang An sighed and sent out a third storage pouch to Ning fan.

As soon as Ning Fan grabbed the storage pouch, he could already sense a massive amount of lightning power from it even before opening it to check what was inside. Furthermore, he even felt that the storage pouch was pounding like a living heart...

When he opened the pouch and took a single glance at the item inside, he immediately took a deep breath and said, "This is enough..."

Ning Fan kept all of the three pouches and sent the blood sword to Chu Chang An with a flick. Inwardly, he was still finding it difficult to believe that Chu Chang An actually could get this item to trade with him.

Using it to exchange for the blood sword was more than enough!

Chu Chang An held the Blood Dragon Demon Sword. His eyes were also burning with zeal.

With a gulp, he stroked the body of the blood sword with his trembling hands.

His cultivation base was now at the Second Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm. However, with this sword in his possession, he had high chances in attaining the Third Heavenly Layer in his current lifetime!

It was really a satisfying trade for both sides with each of them getting what they needed!

“The trade is done. Elder Chu, let’s begin the test. However, before that, please take off the concealment of this blood-red handkerchief. I really want to let the spies to see clearly that I am not the enemy they are looking for.” Ning Fan said with a meaningful tone.

“Alright. I’ll now take off the handkerchief and initiate the test of the Heaven Stage for you!” Chu Chang An was currently beaming from ear to ear after obtaining the item that he had been longing for day and night.

He took back the blood-red handkerchief with a wave of his hand and took out a golden token. Then, he muttered a chant at it.

In the next moment, the sea of shen clouds immediately roiled, starting to transform into various kinds of illusions.

As for Chu Chang An’s body, he was gradually vanishing amidst the sea of clouds and became no longer visible.

Only his voice was still reverberated in the sea of clouds.

“The first stage of the Four Stages of Heaven and Earth is the Heaven Stage. It will test a cultivator’s Dao Comprehension regarding the void. If one passes this stage, not only will they be rewarded with a lot of merit points but also have the opportunity to obtain a reward for passing the stage...”

Standing among the layers of illusions, Ning Fan patted his storage pouch and took out the palace lord token of the Scarlet Heaven Palace.

Several cloud patterns were drawn on the front part of the token and there were some words on the upper part which recorded the Scarlet Heaven Palace Lord's merit points.

The former Scarlet Heaven Palace Lord, Mo Xiu, died in Ning Fan's hands. When he was still alive, he had accumulated 120 million points. Now, all of them belong to Ning Fan.

The points could be used to exchange for treasures at the main palace of the Rain Palace and they were probably equivalent to 120 million immortal jade...

"I wonder how many merit points and what reward I will get if I pass this Heaven Stage..."

"What the first stage, Heaven Stage, tests is... one's comprehension of the void!"

As Ning Fan was pondering, the illusory realm around him slowly turned real and the noise of a bustling city went into his ears.

He was standing in a small city surrounded by an ocean of bamboo. Everywhere in the city was filled with the aroma of liquor.

The men in the city wore high hats and broad girdles. Their attire was just like that of the ancient scholars. Each of them gave off fumes of wine. In a drunken state, they staggered on the streets aimlessly.

As for the ladies in the city, they all were dressed up gorgeously with heavy makeup. The smell of the cosmetic powder they wore was slightly repulsive.

The air was permeated with a thick liquor smell. The longer Ning Fan stayed at this place, the more liquor smell he would inhale. The smell would then slowly make his consciousness slip away.

Fortunately, he had already understood the true meaning of liquor. Even if one's body is heavily intoxicated, as long as their hearts are not drunk, they will never be intoxicated.

As he released his magic power to protect his heart, his eyes gradually turned bright and clear.

He then raised his head to gaze into the sky, looking as if he was deep in thought. The sun, the moon and the stars were coexisting in the sky, making it difficult for one to discern whether it was day or night... Thus, it looked quite bizarre...

Ning Fan walked across the streets in the bamboo city. All the men and women he saw along his way were in a drunken stupor.

Accompanied by the music produced by reed-pipe wind instruments, he walked past each of the liquor stores, house of courtesans and the riverbanks that were full of gaily-painted pleasure boats.

Everyone was indulging in pleasure and none was in a conscious state.

“What is the meaning of this stage?”

While slowly walking alone, Ning Fan was deep in thought. All of a sudden, he stopped by a liquor store outside the bamboo forest.

All the customers in the store were in a drunken state. Even the shopkeeper was intoxicated. Only a young man in black robes was drinking liquor all alone with a cold expression. He did not show any sign of being drunk.

He was not particularly handsome. His appearance was rather common. He wore a faint silver earring on his right ear. His presence gave off an inexplicable disposition that was as unfathomable as flowing clouds.

This man did not reveal the slightest hint of magic power qi. He seemed like a mortal. However, when Ning Fan approached the liquor store, he gently raised his head and glanced at Ning Fan casually. With just a single look, he seemed to have seen through all his secrets!

“Another person who has come to face the test, huh...”

The man in black robes held up his liquor jug and took a swig of it. Then, he muttered to himself without looking at Ning Fan.

“The world is an inn of all creatures while time is a passing traveler of endless generations. The floating life is like a dream and how brief the enjoyment is? Indeed, it was with good reason that the ancients made nocturnal excursions by holding candle lights. It should be indeed more so with us now that the sunny spring invites me with vapory scenes while the great earth provides me with such a beautiful picture. Here we gather in the beautiful garden of peach and plum and enjoy fraternal love. All my younger brothers are men of refinement and elegance like Hui Lian¹. But when I recite poems, I myself feel ashamed to be compared with Kang Le². Before silent appreciation comes to an end, our lofty chat turns to pure talk. The banquet is served amid flowers and the flight of the winged goblet makes us drunk under the moon. Without fine poems, how can our refined taste be satisfied? If anyone fails to produce a poem, let him be punished by making him drink several cups of wine as forfeit...”

Ning Fan’s eyes scanned past the man in black robes and only felt that he was mysterious and unfathomable.

Perhaps this man is the key to passing the first stage...

When Ning Fan was thinking, that man in black robes suddenly raised his head and stared at Ning Fan with a cold smirk.

“What is void?!”

Out of the blue, a wave of overwhelming rain force surrounded the entire illusory realm! Heavy rain began pouring down outside the liquor store!

The rain force also pressed against Ning Fan’s body. Ning Fan was never afraid of any cultivator’s aura force. However, when he was suppressed by this man’s aura force, he actually felt like he was as insignificant as an ant that was pressing down by a mountain!

“Who is this man?!” Ning Fan was surprised inwardly.

...

In the Temple of Rain, Revered Sage's expression gradually recovered and he passed a message to Rain Sovereign using telepathy.

"That Chu Chang is still sensible as he has already taken off the blood-red handkerchief. Now, I can continue observing the Heaven Stage."

"Humph! Consider him still having some sense!" The Rain Sovereign was sneering inwardly but his expression did not reveal the slightest trace of his emotion.

Within the temple, many old monsters were whispering among themselves.

"The first stage is Heaven Stage and it tests a cultivator on their comprehension on the void... In order to pass the stage, one will at least need to have the Void Pierce Stage comprehension... White-Robed Marquis' cultivation base is just at the Void Inquiry Stage. I'm afraid he won't be able to find the 'void exit' and it'll be difficult for him to get through this stage."

"However, even if he fails this stage, the benefits he will obtain aren't small as well. There is the shadow of that man staying in this stage... If he can find him and have a conversation with him, it'll also be considered as a great opportunity..."

"Stop joking. Even when Void Pierce Stage old monsters enter the illusory realm, most of them will be affected by the liquor qi which cause them to lose their consciousness and eventually fail. There might be some old monsters at the Void Pierce Stage and Absolute Void Stage getting through this stage successfully. However, all of them barely managed to discover the void exit in that illusory realm right before they were completely intoxicated and escaped that place... Who will have time to look for that person?"

"Besides, so what if White-Robed Marquis is able to locate that person? Ordinary people can't endure that person's rain intent at all! An Absolute Void Stage expert who had converted his unital magic power to yuan once wanted to try out this stage. After expending great effort to look for that person in the illusory realm, he finally found him. However, he was directly sent out of the illusory realm by that person's rain intent and failed the test..."

"*Sigh* I wonder if White-Robed Marquis is able to get through this stage with success..."

Chapter 554: Fifth Grade Rain Intent

With just a single look from the black-robed young man, the rain intent rushed toward him endlessly, carrying an overwhelming aura force that nearly pressed Ning Fan to the ground.

Ning Fan's bones gave out cracking noises. With gritted teeth, he refused to yield even though his internal organs were hurt by the aura force.

Besides, he did not give any reply to the black-robed young man's question.

The black-robed young man looked slightly stunned. He put down the jug of liquor in his hand and dismissed his aura force. Then, he studied Ning Fan once again.

After quite some time, he uttered two words, "Not bad!"

Even though he had already dismissed his aura force, the tempestuous rain was still falling down heavily without stopping.

Ning Fan secretly activated the power of his natal black stars and his internal injuries were immediately healed. Staying calm and collected, he descended on the seat opposite to the young man and asked with an indifferent tone.

"Who are you?"

"I am whoever you think I am... Life is like rain. Passers-by are like clouds. The path of cultivation is like the void but it feels real when one is immersed in it..."

The young man in black robes resumed drinking on his own without looking at Ning Fan anymore.

The smell of liquor around gradually became thicker while the rain also began to grow fiercer.

The black-robed young man put down the half-empty liquor jug and flicked his sleeve in the air. All of a sudden, the rain droplets in the sky flew into his wine jug as if they were intelligent.

At the next moment, the rain in heaven and earth stopped. The young man had kept every last droplet of rain away. As for the liquor jug in front of him, the alcohol did not seem to have increased as it was still half-empty...

“What I’m drinking isn’t wine but rain.” The young man muttered to himself and raised his head again. Then, he asked Ning Fan a question once more.

“What is the void?!”

Ning Fan did not tell him the answer he realized in the past. He also did not try to answer the young man’s question in a rush. In fact, he did not care about him anymore.

Something seemed to dawn on him but there seemed to be a veil that prevented him from seeing it clearly.

His comprehension of the ‘void’ had already reached the Void Inquiry Stage and he was just half a step away from attaining the Void Pierce Stage.

At the Void Inquiry Stage, one sees the void as not the void.

At the Void Pierce Stage, however, one would still see the void as the void.

Ning Fan suddenly raised his hand and pointed at the sky outside the liquor shop just like the young man in black robes. Instantly, rain started to fall around the shop.

“Eighth Grade Rain Intent, huh...?” The young man in black robes continued to drink on his own composedly.

Ning Fan did not continue the conversation with that young man. As he waved with his open palm, rainwater condensed into an empty crystal clear wine jug.

Then, when he pointed at the sky, the fine rain droplets in the entire sky fell into his wine jug. The rain stopped once again.

Ning Fan remained silent without uttering a single word. He held his wine jug high and started drinking opposite to the young man in black robes.

The black-robed young man's eyes flashed with a hint of amazement. A brief moment later, he smiled approvingly and said, "Not bad!"

It was his second time complimenting Ning Fan. The first time he complimented him was because of his firm and unyielding spirit. The second time he praised him was because of his aptitude.

"However, I wonder how many days you can sit here calmly and how much rain you can drink."

Ning Fan's heart was as tranquil as still water. Holding his wine jug, he drank the rainwater on his own.

The rainwater was bland and tasteless. However, it contained an endless amount of rain intent.

One day, two days, three days...

One year, two years, three years...

Ning Fan still remained drinking by himself, just like that young man in black robes.

Meanwhile, as each year passed by, Ning Fan's rain intent would increase slightly.

Every year passed by, his complexion would age a little while his life force would drain away rapidly.

...

A single year in the illusory realm was equivalent to a single day in the outside world.

Inside the illusory realm, Ning Fan had remained on his seat for sixty years. In the outside year, however, only sixty days had gone by.

In the Temple of Rain, every Void Refinement Realm expert was in deep astonishment.

The liquor qi in the illusory realm of the Heaven Stage was extremely thick. Even Void Pierce Stage experts would also be unable to stay inside the illusory realm for more than one day.

Even old monsters at the Absolute Void Stage could usually linger inside that realm for around three days at the very most...

“White-Robed marquis has actually stayed inside the illusory realm for sixty days. This is too unbelievable!”

“Ever since the creation of the Rain World, there has never been a Void Refinement Realm expert who could stay inside the Heaven Stage for sixty days!”

Revered Sage’s expression turned grim. All this time, he had been waiting for Ning Fan to use his sovereign qi to protect himself from the liquor qi.

However, from the beginning up until now, Ning Fan did not use the slightest trace of sovereign qi. It left him with no idea of what to do next.

“How’s the situation?” The Rain Sovereign asked Revered Sage using telepathy.

“There isn’t any abnormal phenomenon inside the Heaven Stage. But...” Revered Sage hesitated.

“But what?” The Rain Sovereign’s eyelid twitched.

“But this subordinate can’t see through him. I don’t understand what exactly he is doing within the Heaven Stage.”

No one in the outside world could comprehend what Ning Fan was actually doing.

Those who could understand it were only that young man in black robes and Ning Fan himself.

He had sat in the liquor store for sixty consecutive years.

In the thirteenth year, the power of his Eighth Grade Rain Intent had reached the Seventh Grade but his complexion became paler and paler.

On the forty-first year, his Seventh Grade Rain Intent advanced to the Sixth Grade but his qi became fainter and weaker.

In the sixtieth year, his Sixth Grade Rain Intent was on the verge of advancing to the Fifth Grade. However, there seemed to be a barrier that prevented that breakthrough.

At this moment, Ning Fan’s qi was already like a gossamer. His breathing was so weak as if he was going to die any minute.

“You’ve reached your limit...” The young man in black robes put down the jug of wine in his hand and said with pity in his voice.

“With your current cultivation base, it already amazed me that you could stay within this realm for sixty years. You can now leave.”

As soon as he finished speaking, the young man lifted his finger and pointed at the place behind Ning Fan. Immediately, a light rain portal appeared.

Perhaps that was the exit of the illusory realm...

However, Ning Fan acted like he had not heard what the young man said. He seemed like he had forgotten everything in this world and did not notice the rain portal behind him.

In his heart, there was just that tiny wine jug and it contained all the rain within this world.

The sixty-first year, sixty-second year, sixty-third year... Ning Fan was still drinking by himself in the liquor store.

The illusory realm around him gradually grew fainter and slowly evaporated like smoke. All the intoxicated scholars and beautiful women also gradually faded away from the illusory realm.

The ocean of bamboo, the rivers, the gaily-painted boats, the sound of the bamboo flutes... Everything disappeared...

In the end, only Ning Fan was left in the world, holding the wine jug in his hand while drinking it by himself.

Only the young man in black robes remained in front of him. For the third time, he complimented.

“Not bad!”

It was already the one hundredth year in the illusory realm!

In this year, Ning Fan's rain intent realm was only a hair's breadth away from breaking through to the Fifth Grade!

In this year, Ning Fan made the entire Heaven Stage collapse, except for the black-robed young man in front of him!

The reason he drank the rainwater was just to imitate the black-robed young man and enhance his rain intent.

The reason he kept quiet throughout all the years was to understand the essence of the Void Pierce Stage.

At the Void Pierce Stage, the void one sees is still the void... That is an insight that one will obtain after entirely seeing through the secrets of the void.

He did not continue the conversation with the black-robed young man just because everything in his eyes was just an illusion while he was the only one that truly existed.

The deeper his Dao comprehension, the fainter the illusory state around him. After one hundred years of obtaining the Dao comprehension, he eventually made the entire illusory state vanish like smoke!

The exit of the illusory state was not the door of overcoming the void...

What Ning Fan wanted to understand was making the illusory state into void.

If the illusory state disappears, he would then have never entered an illusory state. Since he had never been to an illusory state, why should he try to get out from one?

That was why he ignored that black-robed young man when the latter pointed that exit to him. That exit was not the correct path...

“Marvelous! After you, the Heaven Stage will no longer exist in the Rain World. This stage is already destroyed! Haha. It’s beyond my expectation that there is someone like you in the later generations. The young generation... sure is redoubtable!”

“I came from rain and thus I shall go along with the rain. Now, I will help you achieve the Fifth Grade rain intent and grant you another drop of rain!”

Peng

While the black-robed young man was laughing loudly, his body suddenly dispersed, turning into silver rain droplets which entered Ning Fan's body.

Suddenly, the Heaven Stage collapsed entirely!

Suddenly, the heavenly dwelling space crumbled and both Ning Fan and Chu Chang An appeared within the Temple of Rain simultaneously!

Suddenly, a wave of aura force belonging to the Fifth Grade rain intent rose around Ning Fan's body and spread across the entire temple!

"The Heaven Stage has collapsed!? What exactly did White-Robed Marquis do inside there that actually destroyed the entire Heaven Stage!"

"The four stages of Heaven and Earth were left behind by the Rain Ancestor. Before his death, he has once said that only the one who truly sees through the secrets of the four stages will cause the destruction of the stages ... Could it be that White-Robed Marquis has discovered the correct method to clear the Heaven Stage?"

"Fifth Grade rain intent! White-Robed Marquis' rain intent has achieved the Fifth Grade. This is truly unthinkable! Even the Rain Sovereign's rain intent is just at the Fourth Grade... If White-Robed Marquis' comprehension in his rain intent improves slightly more, won't he be at the same level as the Rain Sovereign?!"

"What about the Rain Ancestor? Did White-Robed Marquis manage to find the Rain Ancestor's lingering presence in the illusory state?!"

Everyone in the temple was astonished. Even the Rain Sovereign was deeply flabbergasted.

Revered Sage's face was overwhelmed with surprise. He was the only person who witnessed how Ning Fan broke the illusory state throughout the entire time!

He did not understand at all what Ning Fan did back in the illusory realm. He could not figure it out. He could not comprehend it...

The thing that he could not understand the most was that the Rain Sovereign's lingering presence would actually decide to destroy himself to help Ning Fan break through the bottleneck of his rain intent...

"So that man turns out to be the Rain Ancestor... Thank you..."

Ning Fan muttered to himself. Even though he never paid attention to the Rain Ancestor throughout the one hundred years, it was all thanks to his help that his rain intent could advance to the Fifth Grade.

By clearing the Heaven Stage, his rain intent which was originally at the Eighth Grade was raised to the Fifth Grade in one go.

Based on his estimation, if he could improve his rain intent to the First Grade, he could then display the Rain Ancestor's technique – Heaven Prying Rain!

"Hehe. Congratulations to White-Robed Marquis on your success in clearing the Heaven Stage!"

"White-Robed Marquis has great capabilities and deep Dao comprehensions. All of us are ashamed for being not as good as you!"

Compliments filled the surroundings. Ning Fan just nodded his head gently, showing no interest in responding to them.

He patted his storage pouch and took out his Scarlet Heaven Palace Lord Token.

The palace lord token shone brilliantly and the merit points that were displayed on the token was literally increased by ten billion points!

“Ten billion merit points! White-Robed Marquis is actually awarded ten billion merit points after clearing the Heaven Stage!”

“Among all cultivators below the Void Fragmentation Realm in the Rain Palace, no one has more merit points than White-Robed Marquis...”

“Look! What is that white light?!”

“It’s the reward of clearing the Heaven Stage!”

“T-That is... impossible!”

A mass of silver light appeared in front of Ning Fan and started radiating brightly. In the next moment, a rain droplet emerged from the light mass.

It was just a single drop of rain, but it contained a terrifying amount of bloodline power. It was emanating with an ancient and boundless aura force which caused everyone’s blood to boil with zeal!

Even the Rain Sovereign also could not retain his composure upon seeing the drop of rain!

“It’s the Rain Ancestor’s natal blood rain! Why...? Why could this kid who is a lowly devil cultivator obtain such a gift... I don’t understand!”

Within seconds, that drop of rain entered Ning Fan’s body, dissolving into his bloodline.

Ning Fan examined his body internally and his eyes suddenly widened with shock.

It was a drop of rain, a drop of the Rain Ancestor’s natal blood rain!

If Ning Fan could improve his rain intent realm to a satisfactory level in the future, he could gradually assimilate this drop of rain and eventually turn it into a drop of ancestral divine blood!

At that time, Ning Fan's divine bloodline would attain the highest level in one go and become the Ancestral Divine Blood!

Of course, if Ning Fan's rain intent was not strong enough, he would not be able to refine this rain drop. Without being able to assimilate the raindrop, he would not be able to receive any benefit from it...

"This kid has the Rain Ancestor's natal blood rain. Others can't seize it from him by force... If he manages to assimilate this gift in the future, he will then possess the Ancestral Divine Blood..."

"How can a devil cultivator possess the Ancestral Divine Blood...? How can this be possible?!"

The Rain Sovereign could not conceal his jealousy for Ning Fan. His divine bloodline was just at the level of the True Divine Blood. It was not even at the level of the Royal Divine Blood...

However, there was nothing he could do no matter how much he envied Ning Fan. It was impossible to seize the Rain Ancestor's gift from him because it was an opportunity that belonged to Ning Fan, not him...

Due to his concern over the Black Devil Sect that was Ning Fan's backer, the Rain Sovereign made a dry cough to cease the discussions in the temple and forced a smile before talking to Ning Fan.

"Hehe. The time White-Robed Marquis has spent on clearing the first stage is quite long. Even though a hundred days is just a session of meditation to cultivators like us, it's better that you can start the second test as early as possible!"

Just as the Rain Sovereign finished speaking, Yun Daoku who was standing among the Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm experts, moved out from the line. He was going to preside over the Earth Stage for Ning Fan.

“According to rumors, White-Robed Marquis killed King Chi Yao whom Spiritual Master Daoku has personally supported and trained... Is Spiritual Master Daoku going to make things difficult for White-Robed Marquis?”

“Spiritual Master Daoku is someone who will seek revenge even for the smallest grievance. Without a doubt, he is going to pay White-Robed Marquis back during the Earth Stage...”

Some old monsters in the temple were taking their guesses secretly while animatedly discussing among themselves.

As he became the topic of discussions of the crowd, he snorted coldly with displeasure and released his Void Fragmentation Realm aura force. Immediately, all the Void Refinement Realm old monsters in the temple went quiet without having the guts to continue their discussions.

Yun Daoku’s expression looked extremely cold and vicious. His eyes were so intimidating as if it could devour someone. None of the Void Refinement Refinement cultivators there were bold enough to mess with him.

When his cold piercing eyes shifted toward Ning Fan, he saw Ning Fan smiling meaningfully at him.

All of a sudden, the grim expression on his face receded and he actually put on a forced smile. As he waved his hand, a portal to a heavenly dwelling space appeared. Then, he smiled apologetically at Ning Fan and said, “*Chuckle*... Since our lasting meeting in the Endless Sea, White-Robed Marquis’ demeanor is still as elegant as before. Erm... I’ll be presiding over the Earth Stage and it tests cultivators about the firmness of their Dao Heart. And... I hope White-Robed Marquis can cooperate with me in the test and refrain from using powerful abilities randomly. It’ll be too dangerous...”

Countless old monsters who had a fair understanding of Yun Daoku’s personality were so shocked that their jaws nearly dropped.

Yun Daoku, who was arrogant and self-important, would be so polite to Ning Fan. Didn’t he have personal grudges against Ning Fan?

Besides, Yun Daoku even asked Ning Fan not to use his powerful abilities due to safety reasons... Was he afraid of Ning Fan? Why?

Why would a Void Fragmentation Realm old monster be afraid of a Void Inquiry Stage junior?

These old monsters would never understand how much Yun Daoku was afraid of Ning Fan after getting burned by the latter's Void Ignition Technique.

Only those who had experienced it would comprehend that kind of fear.

Ning Fan nodded his head and followed Yun Daoku into the light portal to enter the heavenly dwelling space where the Earth Stage would be held.

Apparently, Yun Daoku had learned to behave himself and would not trip him up in this test.

Yun Daoku was different from Chu Chang An. He had nothing to say to Ning Fan. Moreover, he did not dare to be alone with Ning Fan for too long.

As soon as they had entered the heavenly dwelling space, Yun Daoku was smiling wryly while summoning shen clouds as quick as he could to produce the second illusory realm.

The scenery before his eyes changed rapidly. After a flash, Ning Fan appeared at the foot of a gigantic mountain.

It was unknown how tall the mountain was as its peak was unseeable.

There was only one path that led to the summit of the mountain, and it was paved with jade stairs.

There was also restriction for flight in the entire illusory stage. Ning Fan might be strong enough to destroy the flight restriction but once he destroys it, he would fail his second test.

The essence of this stage was that one needed to ascend the summit of the mountain at all costs.

No matter how dangerous the path would be, how difficult it would be to climb the mountain or how many temptations along the journey, one must not back away or bypass them by flying.

Even if the gigantic mountain has no summit, even if the mountain path has no end, one must not stop...

Only those who had such determination could clear this stage with their firm Dao Hearts!

If one's Dao Heart is not determined, how would they be able to pursue the Great Dao that is as ethereal as smoke?

"This is the 'Dao Mountain' that the Rain Ancestor personally built. Those jade stairs are called 'Dao Stairs'. Every step you make, you will age a little. There are a lot of dangers in your journey. You must be cautious, White-Robed Marquis."

Unexpectedly, Yun Daoku warned Ning Fan via telepathy. Was he trying to alleviate their relationship?

One corner of Ning Fan's mouth curved upward and he climbed the first step of the Dao Stairs. Instantly, his life force was drained away a little.

One day of his life was gone!

Chapter 555: The Frozen Rogue Immortal Grade Dao Fruit

"If I make a single step on the Dao Stairs, I'll lose a day of life, huh..."

Ning Fan was first at first. After that, his face was filled with hesitation. When his eyes scanned across the area, he discovered an ancient silver stone stele at the foot of the mountain. The stele was carved with five letters which were in Divine Seal Writing.

“Each step costs a day!”

Indeed. Just as what he expected, every step of the Dao Stairs would require one day of life.

“Could it be a test about the Heart of Dao...?”

Ning Fan’s eyes turned gloomy and took the second step on the stairs.

After he ascended to the second step of the stairs, his lifespan was shortened by one day again.

He was not frightened by the Dao Stairs that would shorten one’s lifespan. Instead, he stopped ascending the stairs and started pondering.

As he still had twenty thousand years of life, a few days of life were not worth mentioning.

That being so, he continued ascending the stairs. Every step he took would drain away one day of his life.

When he stood at the 365th step of the stairs, he had lost one year of life in total.

When he climbed to the 730th step of the stairs, he had lost two years of life in total.

The higher he ascended, the deeper his eyes looked.

When he arrived at the 3650th step of the stairs, his lifespan was already shortened by ten years.

At the mountain slope beside the Dao Stairs he was standing, there was a second ancient stele that was also carved with five letters.

“Each step costs a year!”

Ning Fan frowned.

Is it possible that every step from now on will no longer reduce my life by one day but by one year instead...?

If every step ahead would shorten one's lifespan by a year, even Ning Fan would need to think twice before acting

After hesitating for a while, he took a step forward and ascended the 3651th step.

Instantly, one year of his life was drained away!

Ning Fan ignored the amount of life he had lost and took two hundred steps consecutively. When he stood at the 3850th step, his life was reduced by two hundred years.

Then, he saw the third stele standing at the slope beside the staircase. It was also carved with five letters.

"Each step costs ten years!"

Ning Fan wondered inwardly.

Could it be that I have to give up ten years of life for every step I take from now on?

He gazed forward following the trail of the staircase and saw that he would encounter the fourth stele after making two hundred steps. With his vision, he could vaguely see that the stele was also carved with five letters – each step costs one hundred years!

For every two hundred steps ahead, there would still be the fifth stele, the sixth stele, the seventh stele, the eighth stele and so on... However, he was unable to clearly see the details on the steles.

Ning Fan closed his eyes and doubts started to creep into his mind.

Ascending the Dao Stairs of this Earth Stage will actually shorten one's lifespan. Moreover, the higher I go, the more lifespan I will lose. It's obviously unwise to continue climbing up the stairs.

Even if Ning Fan possessed twenty thousand years of life, if a single step cost one hundred years or even one thousand years of life, he would die of old age at this stage...

Should I give up? Since this stage reduces one's lifespan, why not give up this stage...

However, why would one lose their lifespan by climbing the Dao Stairs...? What exactly is the meaning behind the Rain Ancestor's intention of setting up this stage...?

Ning Fan closed his eyes and dismissed all the miscellaneous thoughts, emptying his mind. His ears could only hear the wind brushing against his face.

His mind became quieter. Gradually, he could not even hear the wind.

Slowly, he sensed a mysterious and enchanting power that was hidden beneath the Dao Mountain.

The power was extremely abstruse and it seemed to possess the Dao Power that could control life and death...

"Life and death..."

Ning Fan raised his head and stared at the endless Dao Stairs and his eyes became deep, as if he could see through everything.

At the first half of the Dao Stairs, every jade stair was surrounded with death qi which could seize one's life force.

However, starting from the fifth stele, the jade stairs were filled with life qi which could replenish one's life force.

The reason why the Rain Ancestor set up this stage was naturally not to seize the lifespan of the descendants.

Every step in the first four steles might take away one's lifespan but every step in the final four steles would return their lifespan.

From life to death and from death to life... By going through this process, a cultivator would be able to comprehend life and death.

This was an opportunity, an opportunity to comprehend life and death, the essence to ascend the heavens and become an immortal!

If one does not have a firm Dao Heart, they would probably give up this stage outright upon discovering that they would lose their lifespan for every step they climb.

Only those who had firm Dao Heart would persist in climbing the stairs. And when they reach the fifth stele, they would regain their lifespan and obtain an opportunity to comprehend life and death.

"One will age gradually for every step that is made in the first four steles. Each step will draw them closer to their doom... In this phase, there is the Great Dao of Death."

Ning Fan moved his fingers to perform hand seals, displaying the Immemorial Fishing Lines.

Strands of black fishing lines revolved around his fingers. At the same time, his eyes also turned pure black eerily. His presence was filled with death qi.

One step, two steps, three steps... Ning Fan continued climbing to the top of the mountain step by step. For every step he made, his lifespan would be reduced by ten years.

However, he did not stop his pace, as if he felt nothing about the loss in his lifespan. After making two hundred steps, he arrived at the fourth stele but he had already lost two thousand years of life.

Starting from his current position, every step of stairs would cost him one hundred years of life.

Ning Fan did not have any hesitation and he began climbing the stairs one after another, moving toward the fifth stele.

One step cost him one hundred years of life. Ten steps cost him one thousand years of life. One hundred steps cost him ten thousand years of life...

There were 200 steps of Dao Stairs between the fourth stele and the fifth stele. In other words, one would need to lose twenty thousand years of life.

Usually, everyone who had arrived at this point would probably back off in fear. In Ning Fan's mind, however, there was no doubt or fear at all!

One step, two steps, three steps... Ning Fan's lifespan was draining away for every step he made and his appearance started to age.

When a cultivator's lifespan was about to finish, they would gradually show their age.

As Ning Fan's life force was draining away rapidly, the death qi around him became thicker and thicker.

From being a young man, his appearance gradually became like a middle-aged man. Then, he continued to age and became an old man who was at his final years of life.

His black hair turned gray. Age spots and wrinkles surfaced on his face while his body started to hunch over, forming a hunchback. Only his eyes, however, were pure black all the time. They looked frighteningly calm.

His flesh also started to wilt while his Sea of Consciousness dried up. His body felt like it was going to be reduced to ashes...

Only his Dao Heart, however, was as solid as a rock. It was not wavered by anything at all!

After making two hundred steps, Ning Fan reached the fifth stele. The current him was already on the brink of death.

His eyes, however, looked deeper than before. At this very moment when he was about to die, his feeling about death was particularly profound!

“This is death!”

Ning Fan examined his dantian inwardly. In his dantian, a strand of pure black death qi was gradually forming!

Qi of Death! It was the power that countless rogue immortals had spent their entire lives cultivating and comprehending! If one wishes to become an immortal, they must first experience life and death!

It was not true that one could gain immortality by becoming an immortal. In fact, only those who live a long life without dying deserve to be called as immortals!

There was only a strand of Qi of Death in Ning Fan’s body. However, it was like a seed that planted the Dao Comprehension of Death in Ning Fan’s heart.

If Ning Fan’s Dao Comprehension of Death increases in the future, this seed would eventually germinate and grow and become his aid in becoming an immortal!

“It isn’t a bad deal by exchanging twenty thousand years of life for this comprehension. However, I still have to get back the lifespan that I’ve lost from this Dao Mountain!”

Ning Fan's appearance was old and his voice was croaky but his eyes, however, were firm and stubborn. He scanned across the fifth stele. The stele was carved with five words in the Divine Seal Writing.

“One step returns one day”!

Starting from the fifth stele, the Dao Mountain would return the life that a cultivator had lost from the beginning for every step they make!

Ning Fan dismissed the death qi around him and performed a series of hand seals to display the Fishing Net of Creation.

This technique contained the Dao Power of Life. The moment he used this technique, his eyes instantly turned pure white and his presence was filled with a dense power of life force.

One step, two steps, three steps...

Ning Fan climbed all the way up, passing by the sixth, seventh and eighth stele.

One step one day, one step one years, one step ten years, one step one hundred years... The life he had lost in the previous journey was slowly returning to him.

His appearance gradually turned younger. His complexion slowly regained its vitality. His eyes were becoming deeper, just like the ocean.

Meanwhile, a strand of pure white life qi was forming in his dantian!

The moment the white qi was formed, the black and white qi in his dantian intertwined with each other, forming into a ring that was half-black and half-white. It then hovered above his primordial spirit.

His primordial spirit in the dantian opened his eyes and reached out his two tiny hands to grab the two strands of qi and swallow them into his abdomen.

Immediately, that miniature primordial spirit put on a smile of satisfaction.

“Excellent!”

At this moment, Ning Fan’s aura force rose. The black and white qi flashed in his eyes!

Standing on the eight thousand and five hundredth step of the Dao Stairs, Ning Fan’s lips curved upward into a smile.

After the formation of the Life and Death Q in his body, he did not get a brand-new ability. His magic power also was not improved. His Dao Heart, on the other hand, was unprecedentedly clear while his Dao Comprehension became more profound.

“The Rain Ancestor’s intention of leaving the Dao Stairs behind for the descendants of the Rain World to comprehend life and death was great. However, I just wonder what else is at the higher part of the mountain...”

Ning Fan glanced sideways to look at the ninth stele on the mountainside. It was also carved with five letters.

“Kill a person in ten steps”!

Deep in thought, he climbed ten steps slowly. Upon reaching the tenth step a golden light flashed before him and the silhouette of a burly man in golden armors appeared.

The burly man in golden armour had a Void Glimpse Stage cultivation base. It was produced by a trace of sovereign qi left behind by the Rain Ancestor.

Moreover, this burly man existed due to the cloud mountain and was formed due to the sovereign qi. Thus, he would not disperse easily unless he is attacked by a sovereign qi attack.

The burly man had a blank expression. The moment he emerged, he instantly roared at Ning Fan coldly.

“Get off the Dao Mountain!”

Ning Fan narrowed his eyes. Since he possessed sovereign qi, he naturally had ways to kill that shadow in golden armor.

However, if he were to do that, he would be exposing his sovereign qi...

Perhaps Revered Sage was carefully observing the illusory realm right now, hoping to see the scene where Ning Fan eliminates the shadow using his sovereign qi.

Ning Fan shook his head.

If I wish to kill this golden-armored shadow, the only method probably is by using my sovereign qi.

However, the core test of this stage is one's Dao Heart. It isn't a test for one's abilities. Therefore, I might not necessarily need to kill this golden-armored shadow in order to clear this stage.

Ning Fan no longer paid any attention to that shadow. He continued moving forward directly and climbed the next jade stairs, trying to go past the golden-armored shadow.

The golden-armored shadow was infuriated. He turned around and hurled a punch at Ning Fan, aiming at his back.

Ning Fan directly summoned the Primordial Lightning Armor. He did not care about the fists from the golden-armored shadow at all.

As that punch was just equivalent to a Void Glimpse Stage attack, it could not break the defense of his Primordial Lightning Armor.

Ning Fan climbed up the stairs calmly. For every ten steps he made, a Void Glimpse Stage shadow in golden armors would appear but none of them could hurt him.

Ning Fan ignored every one of them. Gradually, it was unknown when all the shadows had disappeared...

What replaced them was all kinds of temptations. Shadows of heavenly ingredients and earthly treasures and figures of exquisite and alluring women would occasionally appear along the Dao Stairs.

Ning Fan walked all the way up the stairs. His Dao Heart was as firm as rocks. He did not spare a glance for those shadows.

As for this Dao Mountain, it did not seem to have a peak at all. No matter how long Ning Fan had walked, he also could not reach its end.

So this is Dao Mountain. The Dao has no boundaries while the mountain has no summit. The path of cultivation itself is endless in the first place.

It's also difficult to say who is the strongest being on the cultivation path.

In the mortal realm, Vein Opening Realm cultivators are unrivalled celestial beings.

In low-grade cultivation countries, Gold Core Realm experts are regarded as old ancestors of a country.

In the Rain World, Void Fragmentation Realm experts are the sovereigns of the world.

In the Four Heavens, perhaps immortal emperors are the rulers.

However, immortal emperors aren't the strongest...

There is no peak in the path of cultivation. However, if one looks back at the path, which cultivation realm isn't a peak?

Today's beginning is yesterday's peak. Today's peak is the next year's starting point...

Ning Fan no longer raised his head and cast his eyes toward the top of the mountain. Instead, he lowered his head and stared at the path beneath his feet.

Slowly, the Dao Mountain no longer existed in front of his eyes. The Dao Stairs beneath his feet also disappeared.

After walking for an unknown amount of time, he suddenly stopped and raised his hand to pat his chest. With a faint smile, he muttered, "Dao Heart. Dao is in the heart... The Dao Mountain itself does not have an end as the end isn't at the mountain peak but in one's heart!"

"If I make this place as the mountain peak, then here will be the mountain's summit!"

Chi

Ning Fan touched his glabella and starlight glinted. The Separation Slayer Sword appeared in his hand. Without hesitation, he raised that sword and slashed the Dao Mountain.

"He is... cutting the Dao!" Luo You suddenly cried out, as if she had just witnessed something astonishing.

Ning Fan had already discovered the true method of clearing this stage and that was to cut off the Dao Mountain. Then, wasn't the place where he was standing become the end of the mountain?

It was the correct way of clearing this stage. Moreover, it was an extremely important step for a true immortal to become an immortal emperor after cultivating for ages!

An immortal is someone who stands on top of the mountain while an immortal emperor must be someone who stands at the peak of the mountain.

Since there is no end in a cultivation path and no peak on the Dao Mountain, one has to cut the Dao in order to stand on the peak of the mountain! Only when one severs the unnecessary and unreachable Dao and keeps the Dao beneath their feet can they become an immortal emperor!

Luo You was in disbelief that Ning Fan actually severed the Dao with a slash...

No one had ever told Ning Fan that one would need to cut the Dao in order to become an immortal emperor. He managed to figure it out based on his own power of understanding. It was truly frightening...

Obviously, only an immortal emperor was capable of severing the Dao. The current Ning Fan was still unable to cut off the Dao Mountain.

Even though his sword attack was strong and powerful, when it landed on the Dao Mountain, it only caused the mountain to tremble slightly. After that, everything returned to normal.

Furthermore, his attack barely left any mark on the Dao Mountain...

"It's so unfortunate. Although I have found the true method of clearing this stage, my current level is still far from enough to execute it..."

"The Rain Ancestor travelled across the Four Heavens and Nine Worlds unhindered. His capabilities could even impress immortal emperors. He left behind the Four Stages of Heaven and Earth. This Earth Stage perhaps was meant for the descendants of the Rain World to sever the Dao and become an immortal emperor..."

"Unfortunately, how would the Rain Ancestor be able to imagine that the Rain World would fall into today's situation after his passing. In the Rain World, there isn't an immortal. Besides, there are just a handful of Void Fragmentation Realm experts... I'm afraid no one in this world will be capable of severing this Dao Mountain."

As soon as Ning Fan finished speaking, rays of dazzling light suddenly emerged behind him and sent him out of the illusory realm.

Even though he failed to sever the Dao Mountain and destroy the Earth Stage, he managed to discover the correct method of clearing this stage. Thus, he could also be deemed to have passed the stage.

In a flash, Ning Fan and Yun Daoku appeared in the Temple of Rain simultaneously.

All of a sudden, the entire temple was filled with cries of surprise.

“Oh my god! White-Robed Marquis actually managed to pass the Earth Stage! It’s extremely rare to have someone who managed to pass the Earth Stage successfully!”

“Indeed. The last time someone managed to get through this stage seems to be several hundred thousand years ago!”

“It’s already a rare occasion for common Void Refinement Realm cultivators to get through a single stage of the Four Stages of Heaven and Earth. White-Robed Marquis, on the other hand, has already passed two stages! According to rumors, he is also a Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master. It probably also isn’t difficult for him to pass the third stage... It’s indeed scary that the White-Robed Marquis can get through at least three stages today!”

“I wonder what prize the White-Robed Marquis will get after passing the Earth Stage!”

The Rain Sovereign’s brows were drawn together. Through telepathy, he asked Revered Sage who was standing beside him.

“Did he reveal any sovereign qi when he encountered the golden-armored shadows in the Earth Stage?”

“No...” Revered Sage answered truthfully.

“Is that so... The third stage can’t test anything about sovereign qi. It all rests on the fourth stage.”

Ning Fan took out his palace lord token. After passing the stage this time, his merit points increased by one billion points again.

Countless silver light dots flickered in front of him suddenly. Those light dots then condensed into a treasure box made out of silver. The item that was stored inside the box seemed to be the prize of passing the Earth Stage.

Before the treasure box was opened, a massive wave of vigorous magic power flowed out from within, causing all old monsters in the temple to catch their breaths in anticipation.

Even the Rain Sovereign's countenance changed with surprise taking over his grim expression. It even made him cast the matter about sovereign qi to the back of his mind!

"This is...! This is...!" Countless old monsters started to breathe more heavily and quickly.

Ning Fan also was slightly shocked. He did not expect that the prize of getting through the Earth Stage would be such an excellent item.

It was a great item and he liked it very much. However, since he obtained the item in public, it was unknown if it would incite others to seize it from him...

Everyone in the temple could already guess what was inside the box. Ning Fan also did not try to hide it. With a gentle sigh, he opened the treasure box.

The moment the lid of the box was opened, cold white mist immediately wafted out from within.

The item that was stored inside the box was a Dao fruit!

It was a Dao fruit at the level of rogue immortal that was frozen by a seventh grade cold qi!

The magic power that this Dao fruit contains was at least two million units!

It was an extremely tempting item even to old monsters at the level of the Rain Sovereign!

“White-Robed Marquis, if I may be so bold, will you be willing to exchange for some other things with me using this Dao fruit...!?” A few Void Pierce Stage old monsters were already unable to suppress their desire and expressed their intention to trade for that Dao fruit.

“I’m willing to use a seventh-grade immortal void flame to exchange for this Dao fruit!” Even Yun Zhongyan, who was a prince of the Rain Palace, had made an offer.

“...” Although the Rain Sovereign stayed silent, his eyes were also staring at the Dao fruit with desire.

Who would not want something that could allow them to obtain an additional two million units of magic power...?!

“I’m sorry everyone. I’m not going to trade this Dao fruit for anything!”

Ning Fan kept the treasure box containing the Dao fruit and scanned across the temple with a gloomy look on his face. He stared at every prince, every Void Fragmentation Realm expert and the Rain Sovereign.

Since the item was already exposed in the public, there was no way he could avoid trouble. It can’t be helped that some greedy individuals would set their eyes upon the Dao fruit due to its benefits.

Ning Fan believed that with the Black Devil Sect being his backer, people with significant identities like the Rain Sovereign would not go so far to turn against him for a Dao fruit.

However, it was hard to ensure that no ruffian would try plotting against the Dao fruit after this...

The expressions on all the old monsters in the temple were different from each other. No one could tell if someone was already scheming to seize the Dao fruit.

Only the few individuals who had a good relationship with Ning Fan did not have any intention to possess that Dao fruit even though they envied him.

The Pill Sovereign walked out from his place with a cold expression while stroking his beard and sweeping across the hall with his piercing eyes.

“Heavenly ingredients and earthly treasures belong to those who are predestined to get them! This Dao fruit belongs to Ning Fan. Since he isn’t willing to trade it, it’s better that everyone stops thinking about it. Cultivation level might be important, but it isn’t as important as your life. Please think properly before acting!”

The Pill Sovereign’s voice was extremely faint but it sounded threatening. His intention of protecting Ning Fan was apparent.

When everyone saw that Ning Fan had the Pill Sovereign’s protection and thought of his background, they had no choice but to dismiss the greedy thought in their minds.

The Rain Sovereign did not utter a single word throughout the session. Only after the Pill Sovereign had come out to say something did he speak with a smile.

“White-Robed Marquis is the palace lord of one of my Rain Palace’s divisions. Since he is unwilling to trade the Dao fruit, no one can coerce him to do so. If anyone tries to plot against him, it’ll be similar to making my Rain Palace your enemy. I’ll never let you go!”

Similarly, the Rain Sovereign’s tone sounded menacing.

The rogue immortal Dao fruit might be precious, it was far from enough to let the Rain Sovereign become an immortal.

Besides, Ning Fan still had great value to him. His Indestructible Fire Body was his hope in becoming an immortal... Therefore, he would not turn against Ning Fan for a Dao fruit!

Ning Fan cupped his fists to the Pill Sovereign and the Rain Sovereign to thank them for helping him out.

To the Rain Sovereign, it was just an act of courtesy. To the pill sovereign, however, it was sincere gratitude from the depths of his heart because the Pill Sovereign was also sincerely trying to protect him.

“I’ll be hosting the third stage. Are you ready?” The Pill Sovereign said with a smile and waved his hand, hinting that Ning Fan did not have to appreciate him.

“Yes. I’m ready!” Ning Fan replied confidently.

“The third stage tests one’s pill formations technique and miscellaneous skills. The one who passes a single stage out of the Four Stages of Heaven and Earth will be qualified to become palace lord of a division. If one’s Dao Comprehension, Dao Heart and abilities are all below the satisfactory grade but they excel at the pill formations technique, they can also become a palace lord. It has been many years since our last meeting in the Endless Sea. Today, I’ll test your pill techniques! You can also treat it as the second time I give you guidance.”

The Pill Sovereign smiled faintly. His eyes looked benevolent. He seemed to have made a secret decision.

Let me give Ning Fan a great gift in this third stage.

Just like how my master treated me countless years ago...

Chapter 556: You Are A Good Kid...

The third stage – Black Stage!

Ning Fan followed the Pill Sovereign into the heavenly dwelling space where the third test would be held. As the Pill Sovereign waved his hand, the shen clouds turned illusory, transforming into an illusory world of fire.

Cracks were everywhere on the land with lava flowing below them.

Ten suns were hanging in the vault of heaven. Even Void Refinement Realm experts would have difficulties enduring the heat in this place.

“This is the illusory realm specially for testing one’s pill refinement techniques. One can save up a lot of time by refining pills here. According to the standard of this stage, as long as you can concoct a Fifth Revolution Pill, you will be considered passed... To you, this stage is pretty simple. However, I wish to find out exactly what level in the pill refinement realm you have currently achieved. Thus, I hope you can show me your best in this stage.”

The Pill Sovereign looked at Ning Fan with a smile. His turbid eyes were filled with hope and excitement.

He had been finicky in his life. His overly high standard dissuaded him from accepting any disciples. However, his meeting with Ning Fan had sparked the idea of accepting the latter as his disciple.

Unfortunately, Ning Fan already had Old Devil as his master and the Pill Sovereign could only give up his thought of making him his disciple.

Ning Fan bowed respectfully to the Pill Sovereign. Then, he used the power of his intent realm to form a large black pill cauldron.

He extended his palm and clawed in every direction. The lava beneath the vast land immediately roiled, burning with even fiercer flames.

The heat from the lava and earth fire gradually warmed up the pill cauldron. When Ning Fan pointed at the ground in front of him with a finger, a jade table appeared with various fifty thousand years old spiritual herbs on top of it.

The Pill Sovereign’s eyes scanned past those spiritual herbs and said while nodding his head in approval.

“These are the ingredients for concocting a Void inquiry Pill. A Void Inquiry Pill is a Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill. It isn’t easy to make. Except for me and you, I believe that there isn’t a third person in the Rain World who can concoct this pill... Begin your concoction. Show me and the cultivators of the Rain World your current pill refinement techniques! By letting the Rain Sovereign know your excellent pill refinement skills, he won’t turn against you recklessly!”

The Pill Sovereign waved his long sleeve and the illusory realm suddenly trembled. A gigantic bronze mirror that was hanging upside down appeared above the sky.

At the same time, the fire light in the Temple of Rain flashed and a one hundred zhang* (3.33m per zhang) tall bronze mirror emerged.

The reflection in the bronze mirror was the exact same scene where Ning Fan was concocting pills in the illusory state.

The reason why the Pill Sovereign did so was because he wanted to show Ning Fan's Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Realm to everyone in the world!

Including Ning Fan, there were now eight Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Masters in the Rain World. If Ning Fan could concoct a Void Inquiry Pill, his pill refinement skills would at least be in the top five!

The Pill Sovereign had already noticed that the Rain Sovereign ordered Revered Sage to spy on Ning Fan.

He did not know why the Rain Sovereign was targeting Ning Fan. From his perspective, if the Rain Sovereign finds out that Ning Fan was a talented pill refinement master, he probably would need his help in concocting pills and dismiss his enmity against him.

Ning Fan raised his head and gazed into the sky. He gently sighed when he saw the large bronze mirror in the vault of heavens.

He could tell that the Pill Sovereign summoned it with the best of intentions. Therefore, he cupped his fists and expressed his gratitude to him. The Pill Sovereign, however, smiled at him and waved his hand, telling him that he did not need to treat him like an outsider.

In the Temple of Rain, every old monster shifted their eyes to the bronze mirror. They were quite interested in Ning Fan's pill refinement skills.

When some old monsters saw the jade table and noticed that the ingredients which Ning Fan was planning to use were all fifty thousand years old spiritual herbs, their eyes widened with surprise.

“Fifty thousand years old spiritual herbs! According to hearsay, White-Robed Marquis is the eighth Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master of the Rain World. Today, he indeed is going to concoct a Sixth Revolution Pill!”

“*Tsk Tsk Tsk* Even though he is just nine hundred years old, he is already a Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master. His innate talent in pill refinement is truly rare in this world. Perhaps he will be the next Pill Sovereign in our Rain World!”

The cultivation of most of the old monsters in the temple were at the Void Refinement Realm. Therefore, it was impossible for them to treat a Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master with contempt.

Only a green-robed elderly man who had a haughty expression shook his head with disapproval and said, “The next Pill Sovereign? Hehe. Although it’s a fact that the White-Robed Marquis has great capabilities, he might not necessarily be able to travel far on the Dao of Alchemy. His innate talent is quite excellent for being able to attain the Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Realm at such a young age. However, he has committed too many killings which made his devil heart difficult to be erased. I’m afraid he has no chance in breaking through to the Mid Grade Sixth Revolution in his entire life!”

As soon as the old man’s voice fell, everyone turned toward him and discovered that he was the sect master of the Five Elements Sect – Qing Yuanzi.

Qing Yuanzi was a Low Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master. He was always the center of attention and took pride in his extraordinary life.

Recently, he had even touched the bottleneck of the Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Realm and claimed that he could achieve the improvement in his pill refinement realm within one hundred years.

He said firmly that it would be impossible for Ning Fan to attain the Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Realm in his entire life. When he said that, many old monsters also felt the same way and nodded their heads gently.

The Dao of Alchemy emphasized one's temperament the most. Ning Fan was a devil cultivator who had committed countless slaughters. Thus, it was reasonable to say that he would have difficulties in achieving success in the Dao of Alchemy.

At the same time, some old monsters were staring at Qing Yuanzi in a weird way as they thought of something else.

Qing Yuanzi might have a bad temperament, but he was no fool. Despite knowing very well that Ning Fan was not someone he should mess with, he still said badly about him at this moment to tatter his reputation. Was it because someone directed him to do so in the dark...?

The Five Elements Sect had a close relationship with the fifth prince, Yun Zhongyan... Could it be that it was Yun Zhongyan's intention to let Qing Yuanzi say those words?

Some old monsters glanced at Yun Zhongyan secretly and saw that his eyes were filled with a hint of pleasure. Besides, he even gave Qing Yuanzi a look of approval...

Without a doubt, Qing Yuanzi was very likely to have received Yun Zhongyan's order to say something bad about Ning Fan.

Qing Yuanzi felt a rush of joy after ridiculing Ning Fa.

However, just as he finished speaking, an old monster in the crowd exclaimed in surprise.

"T-These are... These are the ingredients to make a Void Inquiry Pill! Is the White-Robed Marquis trying to concoct a Void Inquiry Pill?!"

The person who cried in surprise was an old man in white robes. He was standing beneath the bronze mirror, looking carefully at the spiritual herbs on the jade table in the mirror.

This man was the lord of the Flowing Cloud Valley. He was a hair's breadth away from attaining the Absolute Void Stage.

The Flowing Cloud Valley was one of the thirteen sects in the Central State. As the lord of the Flowing Cloud Valley, the words he said naturally carried some weight.

He was holding a scroll of pill recipe in his hands while carefully inspecting each of the spiritual herbs on the jade table. The result made him believe even more firmly that the pill that Ning Fan was going to concoct was a Void Inquiry Pill!

“The White-Robed Marquis is actually preparing to make a Void Inquiry Pill!? Could it be that he has already achieved the Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Realm?”

“Didn’t Fellow Daoist Qing Yun say that White-Robed Marquis won’t have the opportunity to attain the Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Realm?”

Some old monsters cast a strange look at Qing Yuanzi. Immediately, his old face turned red. He snorted coldly and said, “Even though the medicinal ingredients he is planning to use are meant for concocting a Void Inquiry Pill, it might not necessarily mean that he is a Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Master. He certainly won’t be able to concoct the pill!”

Just as Qing Yuanzi finished speaking, a few other old monsters said in astonishment.

“T-This... What grade is that flame?!”

“A Fifth Grade Earth Vein Demonic Flame? A Sixth Grade Mortal Void Flame? No. It isn’t... It is a Seventh Grade Immortal Void Flame!”

“The White-Robed Marquis’ pill refinement flame is actually an immortal void flame?! What is that name? It actually is stronger than common immortal void flames. Why haven’t I heard of this kind of black flame before...?”

Qing Yuanzi glanced sideways at the people who spoke. This time, it was the Minute Dust Three Elders from the Minute Dust Sect.

The reason why they were shocked was because Ning Fan had already summoned his black flame and started refining pill in the bronze mirror!

The black flame was the combination of twenty-four types of Heavenly Cold Qi and Earth Flames which made its grade comparable to that of a High Rank Seventh Grade Immortal Void Flame!

“Why is his spiritual flame so powerful...?” Qing Yuanzi was so shocked that he was at a loss for words.

In the illusory realm, Ning Fan had no idea about the dispute that was happening in the outside world. He only started to refine the pill with a calm mind.

He summoned his intent realm cauldron and released his black flame. Then, he tossed each of the spiritual herbs into the cauldron to refine them. During the process, he unleashed a strong medicine soul power!

The moment he released his medicine soul power, a mysterious black light glowed around his body, giving him an unworldly aura.

In the next moment, countless black butterflies appeared, filling up the entire illusory realm. Those butterflies were produced by his medicine soul!

Despite being on the other side of the bronze mirror, Qing Yuanzi also could deeply feel the intensity of that medicine soul.

Qing Yuanzi’s smile froze. He stood there startled.

He stared at Ning Fan who was inside the bronze mirror in disbelief. Even his voice started to tremble.

“It’s the M-Mid Grade Sixth Revolution medicine soul!”

Moments ago, he firmly said that Ning Fan would not be able to attain the Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Realm. However, the fact was Ning Fan was already a Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Master now!

“Fellow Daoist Qing Yuanzi’s foresight seems a little unconvincing.” Some old monsters looked at him with a meaningful smile on their faces.

Immediately, he only felt that he had lost face and was deeply embarrassed.

Facts proved that Ning Fan’s temperament was completely suitable to cultivate the Dao of Alchemy while Qing Yuanzi was apparently the one who did not have a suitable state of mind for the Dao of Alchemy...

A Void Inquiry Pill was not easy to concoct. An ordinary Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master would need to spend at least one year to make a single Void Inquiry Pill.

The quality of Ning Fan’s flame was obviously better than a lot of people. At the same time, his medicinal cauldron was produced using an intent realm at the Second Step which allowed him to surpass ordinary old monsters in terms of the speed in pill concoction.

However, despite having all the advantages, the entire process still took him half a month.

It was not his first time concocting a Void Inquiry Pill. Therefore, he was already very used to the making of a Void Inquiry Pill.

Half a month later, Ning Fan patted the lid of the cauldron and took out a Void Inquiry Pill that he had successfully concocted.

At this moment, the expressions of all the old monsters in the temple changed!

It was now evident that Ning Fan not only had attained the Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Realm but also the middle grade of that level!

His pill refinement techniques had already reached such a terrifying level despite his young age. If he continues his cultivation, it certainly would not be difficult for him to become the next Pill Sovereign in the coming days!

The next Pill Sovereign!

Even the Rain Sovereign was slightly moved. A genius in the Dao of Alchemy like Ning Fan was extremely important to the future of the Rain World.

Ning Fan's innate talent in the Dao of Alchemy was astonishing. If he becomes a Seventh Revolution Pill Master one day, probably the Rain Sovereign would need to ask for some Seventh Revolution Pills from him in order to achieve the immortal realm...

"This kid has the Black Devil Sect as his backer, the Indestructible Fire Body and a scary innate talent in the Dao of Alchemy... If he isn't the person who will stop me in attaining the immortal realm, I must draw him over my side. He is someone whom I must never turn against!" The Rain Sovereign's eyes flashed with determination.

Logically, Ning Fan was considered to have passed the Black Stage after successfully making the Void Inquiry Pill. However, both him and the Pill Sovereign had yet to leave the illusory realm.

Inside there, Ning Fan was packing up the remaining spiritual herbs that were not used during the process and sealed that Void Inquiry Pill that he had just concocted into a box. Then, he cupped his fists at the Pill Sovereign courteously and said, "Elder Li, please give me guidance!"

Even though Ning Fan had pride, he was not a self-conceited person.

The Pill Sovereign was a senior in the Dao of Alchemy. Thus, he was very pleased to ask for guidance from him.

The Pill Sovereign closed his eyes and stroked his white bear. Then, he sighed and said, "Even though there are still some flaws, there aren't as many as before... It's only been a decade since we last met and your pill refinement realm has already reached this level. If you continue to continue for another few

hundred years, I'm afraid I can no longer hold a candle to you... The younger generation sure is formidable..."

Ning Fan lowered his head while listening to the Pill Sovereign obediently without interrupting him.

The Pill Sovereign's eyes flashed with greater approval. The rumors circulating around the world claimed that Ning Fan was a supercilious man who took lives brutally and endlessly. In the Pill Sovereign's eyes, however, Ning Fan was just a person who showed his true nature to the world. Besides, he was also a well-mannered man who never forgot who had helped him.

Divine cultivators, devil cultivators, demon cultivators... All these were not important at all.

The Pill Sovereign raised his hand. With hesitation, he patted Ning Fan's shoulder. His expression was friendly and warm. He treated Ning Fan like one of his descendants.

"You are a good kid..."

Ning Fan's body jolted in surprise. He was never treated in such a way by any seniors. He was born an orphan. His adopted father was never kind to him. Old Devil, on the other hand, had disrespectful behaviors for someone at his age... It was his first time getting a pat on his shoulder and praised by an elderly person...

You're a good kid...

An inexplicable feeling rose within his heart. He felt somewhat sad but warm at the same time.

He recalled Old Devil. He recalled his mother who was nowhere to be found. He recalled Yun Tianjue who was as cold as ice...

Perhaps he could also live a life like an ordinary person and enjoyed the care, protection and compliments from the seniors.

However, fate had made a joke with him from the very beginning which forced him to deal with things in his life on his own and persevere with gritted teeth.

“Are you willing to follow my guidance...?” The Pill Sovereign’s eyes were filled with hope as he expressed his intention to keep Ning Fan as his disciple once again.

“This junior already has a master.” Ning Fan replied to him apologetically.

“*sigh*...” The Pill Sovereign let out a deep sigh. He was slightly disappointed while feeling jealous simultaneously.

He envied Old Devil for having the chance to keep such a good disciple...

“Ning Fan, your pill refinement realm is going to attain the High Grade Sixth Revolution. I want to give you a big gift. However, I’m just wondering if you are bold enough to receive it!”

“What gift?” Ning Fan’s eyes glinted.

“Do you want to see with your own eyes how to break through to the Seventh Revolution?!”

The Pill Sovereign’s eyes turned grim and he unleashed the aura force of his medicine soul which had already reached the level of the Seventh Revolution!

At this moment, the Pill Sovereign’s pill refinement realm was still at the Peak Grade Sixth Revolution. However, after spending many years in secluded cultivation and travels, he was already able to achieve the Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Realm a few years ago.

However, he had been suppressing his pill refinement realm without accomplishing the breakthrough just because he wanted to let Ning Fan see with his own eyes how a Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Master achieves an advancement!

“My medicine soul is the soul of divine wood!”

As the Pill Sovereign released his medicine soul, a huge and towering tree suddenly grew from the ground. It was black and purple!

The color of black was already extremely faint while the color of purple had nearly permeated the entire tree.

Black was the color of the Sixth Revolution while purple was the color of the Seventh Revolution... Every cultivator in the temple turned pale when they saw the scene on the bronze mirror.

Even the Rain Sovereign himself rose to his feet in shock. He hurriedly walked away from his throne and went beneath the bronze mirror. With excitement in his face, he stared at the scene in the mirror!

“The Pill Sovereign’s pill refinement realm.. is going to advance to the Seventh Revolution!”

Seventh Revolution!

Seventh Revolution!!

Seventh Revolution!!!

The first Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Master in the Rain World was about to appear in the. How could the Rain Sovereign not be overjoyed by it?!

Aside from astonishment, Qing Yuanzi was staring at the bronze mirror with admiration and envy.

According to hearsay, when a pill master was advancing to the Seventh Revolution, they would trigger a change in their medicine souls. During the process, they would borrow the soul power of heaven and earth to reconstruct their medicine soul!

Usually, when Seventh Revolution Pill Masters were about to achieve a breakthrough, they would not allow anyone near them to prevent anyone from splitting the soul power of heaven and earth they would get and influence the result of the reconstruction of their medicine souls.

The Pill Sovereign was on the verge of attaining the Seventh Revolution. However, he let Ning Fan stay beside him to observe the process. He was not worried about Ning Fan seizing the soul power of heaven and earth from him.

To Ning Fan, being able to observe the advancement of a Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Master at such a close distance was an extremely huge opportunity!

If he secretly obtains some of the soul power of heaven and earth which the Pill Sovereign absorbs, it would even enhance the quality of his own medicine soul..

Qing Yuanzi stared at the bronze mirror with jealousy.

Why wasn't it me who watches the Pill Sovereign's advancement?

In the illusory realm, Ning Fan's eyes widened with surprise.

The Pill Sovereign did not try to avoid Ning Fan at all. With a wave of his hand, he directly took out two cattail hassocks and placed them on the ground.

He sat on one of them with his legs crossed and started pushing through the bottleneck of the Seventh Revolution while leaving the other one for Ning Fan.

He did not worry about Ning Fan seizing the soul power of heaven and earth from him at all. Moreover, he was planning to split some of it with him...

Just like how his master did to him last time...

“Hurry up and sit in a meditation position and absorb the soul power! Don’t let this chance go to waste!”
The Pill Sovereign ordered with a deep voice.

Ning Fan bit his teeth. His eyes were filled with confusion.

He never expected that the Pill Sovereign would treat him so well...

However, how would he be willing to absorb the soul power of heaven and earth from the Pill Sovereign? It would be similar to requiting good with evil...

“I’m not taking your soul power!”

He sat down with his legs crossed!

But he certainly was not going to absorb the Pill Sovereign’s soul power. Instead, he wanted to guard for him and aid him in achieving the Seventh Revolution!

Rumble

At this moment, the sky in the illusory realm suddenly cracked like a broken eggshell. A gigantic black and white ring shadow emerged beneath those rifts.

The moment the ring shadows appeared, Ning Fan only felt that the medicine soul within him started trembling. It felt like it was going to collapse!

Chapter 557: Little Dull Bird

The moment the black and white ring shadows appeared, the ten suns above the sky of the illusory realm exploded one after another. The sky began becoming dim and dark. The earth, however, started to tremble and the lava surged, initiating a raging flame that engulfed each of the volcanoes!

As the ring shadows flashed, an unimaginable medicine soul gradually permeated heaven and earth. It was so powerful that it could crush the medicine soul of any Fifth Revolution Pill Refinement Masters!

It was the medicine soul power accumulated in the Heavenly Dao from the countless deceased pill masters since ancient times. It was the reward that heaven and earth gave to a Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Master!

A Fifth Revolution Pill Master did not have the right to observe the breakthrough of a Seventh Revolution Pill Master at all! Every single one of them was unable to endure the force given out by the medicinal soul of heaven and earth!

Each of the volcanoes erupted in succession, filling the sky with sparks of flames. Those flames, however, suddenly fell down, raining down upon the Pill Sovereign's location.

At this moment, the Pill Sovereign's forehead was beaded with sweat. He was sitting down with his eyes closed, beginning to push through the bottleneck of the Seventh Revolution.

A towering ancient tree was standing upright behind him. It was the form of his medicine soul.

That ancient tree had luxuriant foliage. It gave off a faint layer of light screen that was condensed from medicine soul power, preventing the rain of flames from falling upon him.

Ning Fan raised his head and looked into the sky. His expression turned grim as he was staring at the black and white ring shadows.

"This black and white ring shadow is the first ring of the Heavenly Dao – The Ring of Life and Death. If cultivators at the First Step of Cultivation are unable to escape the restriction of the first ring of the Heavenly Dao, they won't be able to achieve immortality..." Luo You explained.

"A mere black and white ring shadow like this is the Heavenly Dao of the Lower Realm, huh..."

Ning Fan was deep in thought. This black and white Heavenly Dao was probably the one he offended in the past.

Maybe it was an illusion. When he stared at the black and white ring shadow, he suddenly felt that the ring shadow turned into a huge eye. Its black pupil was clearly distinctive from the whites of the eye around it. That large eye batted once at him...

After he observed it carefully, he realized that the ring shadow did not undergo any changes. It seemed just like an illusion.

There was an instant where a fierce and piercing qi seemed to have been released from the ring shadow and it was locked on Ning Fan.

The Heavenly Dao of the Lower Realm seemed to have recognized Ning Fan and knew that he was the person who captured the messengers of the heavenly tribulation twice and offended the might of the heavens.

However, a brief moment later, that qi which was targeted at Ning Fan dispersed.

The reason why the heavenly ring appeared today was because the Pill Sovereign achieved the breakthrough in his pill refinement realm.

Even though the Heavenly Dao detested Ning Fan, it was aware of what was right and wrong and it did not intend to go against the rules and punish Ning Fan.

Only an indolent female voice suddenly echoed from the ring shadow of the Heavenly Dao and entered Ning Fan's ears. Other than Ning Fan, no one else could hear that voice.

“Junior of the Rain World, you are quite bold to harm my puppets in the Lower Realm. I have been in control of the heavenly ring for 150 million years. You are the first cultivator who dare to defy the heavens publicly. Although your sins are deep, I know what is right and wrong and I won't summon tribulations upon you personally now. Besides, you are already not far away from the heavenly tribulation of the Void Pierce Stage. I'm looking forward to you dying in that heavenly tribulation... But still, hopefully you can go through the tribulation safely...”

The lady seemed to have chuckled. Then, it vanished all of a sudden. That voice seemed to be coming from very far away. Neither the Pill Sovereign nor Luo You could hear it. Only Ning Fan was able to hear it.

Ning Fan's eyes widened with surprise.

Who exactly is the lady who spoke to me via telepathy just now? Her abilities are so terrifying...

Commanding the Heavenly Rings for 150 million years... Could she be an immortal emperor...?

Ning Fan sighed. He never expected that he would be targeted by such a frightening lady.

Luckily, she was a lady who goes by the law and did not try to summon tribulations on Ning Fan personally.

Although the heavenly tribulations that Ning Fan faced became scarier and scarier starting from the Void Glimpse Stage, they also did not give him no chance to survive...

The heavenly tribulations might be terrifying, but their power was still restricted to the level of the First Step of cultivation. The Heavenly Dao was not so cruel as to summon an immortal tribulation on him.

An immortal tribulation was the heavenly tribulation that the Heavenly Dao of the Second Step of cultivation would summon for immortals... If Ning Fan were to encounter that level of heavenly tribulation, he would not need to make any struggles at all as he would be directly killed.

With that lady's strength, she could kill Ning Fan in a single breath. Even so, she did not abuse her power and go against the laws to summon an immortal tribulation to kill him. In a way, she could not be counted as his enemy.

Ning Fan had a feeling that even though she looked forward to seeing him die in the next heavenly tribulation he would face after attaining the Void Pierce Stage, she was also excited to see him go against the heavens and get through the tribulation...

Perhaps the terrifying heavenly tribulations that came after him every time was just a test while the heavenly tribulation puppets were his rewards...

“Ning Fan! What are you doing? Hurry up and absorb the soul power that is flowing across heaven and world!” The Pill Sovereign suddenly opened his eyes and urged him.

Ning Fan did not utter any word. He had already decided not to absorb the Pill Sovereign’s soul power.

Every time when a pill master was advancing to the Seventh Revolution, there was a limitation to the soul power that heaven and earth would grant to them.

For ordinary Peak Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Masters, even if they absorb all the soul power that the heavens and earth give to them, they also might not necessarily be able to advance to the Seventh Revolution.

If Ning Fan absorbs the Pill Sovereign’s soul power now, it would then lower his chances of success in the advancement...

Ning Fan was not a kind person. However, since the Pill Sovereign was kind to him, he was not going to repay his kindness with evil!

Suddenly, he stood up. He did not plan to absorb the soul power at all. Instead, he turned into a ray of light and flew out of the protected area of the ancient tree, soaring into the sky. Standing mid-air, he said.

“I’ll help you withstand the tribulations!”

His words were simple and brief but they were loud and determined.

Upon hearing his words, the Pill Sovereign was stunned. Then, he looked touched but he sighed with a hint of disappointment at the same time.

“Silly child... This is a rare opportunity! If you absorb some of the soul power, perhaps your pill refinement realm can advance to the High Grade Sixth Revolution!”

“I never lack opportunities in my entire life. If I am not blessed with opportunities, I’ll just need to seize them with force. The only thing that I can never neglect is my Dao Heart!”

With determination in his eyes, he opened his mouth and inhaled. The rain of flames that fell around the sky were absorbed into his abdomen.

Then, with a wave of his hand, he gathered the soul power that was scattered across heaven and earth near the ancient tree to make it easy for the Pill Sovereign to absorb it.

He took out several formation disks and planted layers of Mortal Void Grade formation light around the ancient tree!

He knew that the moment the Pill Sovereign finishes absorbing the soul power, he would then start facing the tests from the heavenly tribulation!

The heavenly tribulation of the Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Realm was not trivial. What Ning Fan was doing now was considered as helping the Pill Sovereign increase his chances in achieving his advancement.

The Pill Sovereign sighed and closed his eyes. He had decided to grant Ning Fan a vast opportunity but if Ning Fan insisted not to accept it, he also could not force him.

After making a sigh, what occupied more of his heart was the feeling of relief.

His judgement was not wrong. The disciple that he had set his eyes on was indeed a man with excellent personality. Unfortunately, that man already had a master and therefore, there was no chance for him to be his master in this life anymore...

“Fine... Since you don’t accept my soul power of heaven and earth, this second session of guidance is invalid...”

“Why? Having the chance to observe a pill master attaining the Seventh Revolution at such a close distance is an opportunity itself!”

Ning Fan smiled at the sky. Just like what he had said, how many chances does one have in the world to observe the breakthrough of a Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Master?

Commonly, every Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Masters was worried about others seizing their soul power. Thus, most of them would choose to achieve the breakthrough in a remote area without allowing any outsider to witness it.

The Sixth Revolution was like Heaven while the Seventh Revolution was like attaining the Immortal Realm. Breaking through to the Seventh Revolution was even more difficult than the Sixth Revolution. Its difficulty was not just in the aspect of soul transformation but also the fact that a majority of pill masters could not get the experience from those who had successfully achieved the breakthrough. Pill masters without the necessary knowledge could only explore themselves, just like a blind man travelling at night. Thus, it was naturally beset with difficulties...

The Pill Sovereign closed his eyes and stopped speaking.

In the Temple of Rain, each of the old monsters were shocked by Ning Fan’s tolerance.

Be it a divine cultivator or a devil cultivator, there is basically no one who could persevere in not seizing the soul power.

How many Sixth Revolution Pill Masters in the world could keep their mind intact upon seeing a Seventh Revolution Pill Master who wants to share his soul power with them...?

Even the likes of Chu Chang An also began to have respect for Ning Fan.

Yun Qingge’s eyes were staring at the bronze mirror, deep in thought.

She was Yu Chong Er's master. She was the daughter of a former Rain Sovereign. Guarding the Rain Palace was always her main priority.

Yu Chong Er had developed infatuation for a devil cultivator to a point of giving him the Heaven Deceiving Cloak, sacrificing her Insect Sovereign's Blood and even stealing the White Tiger Vambrace for him... This made Yun Qingge extremely furious.

Yu Chong Er did not tell Ning Fan that she did not request the White Tiger Vambrace from her master but she stole it from her instead...

Yun Qingge already found out that Ning Fan was that devil cultivator. Hence, she harbored enmity against him!

She stubbornly thought that Ning Fan used some kind of lowly tricks to bewitch Yu Chong Er which caused her to do such audacious acts.

Today, she saw that even though he might be a devil cultivator, he was a magnanimous person. Therefore, she denied her original thought of him bewitching and hoodwinking Yu Chong Er...

"Could it be that Yu Chong Er gave him those things out of her own free will..." Yun Qingge seemed to have understood something and her eyes were gradually filled with confusion.

One day, two days, three days... After seven days, the Pill Sovereign had finished absorbing all the soul power of heaven and earth within the illusory realm. He then took out an unknown pill from his pouch and ate it.

That pill seemed to be effective in tempering one's medicine soul as it gradually restrained all the soul power that he had just absorbed.

The moment he finished taking in the soul power, waves of bone-chilling wind suddenly blew across the place!

At the areas where the chill wind passed by, the lava in the cracks on the land were extinguished bizarrely!

Every mountain and river directly disintegrated into ashes!

Even the ancient tree that was protecting the Pill Sovereign began withering rapidly!

In just an instant, the Pill Sovereign's medicine soul was severely injured. Blood flowed out from his lips. His eyes widened with shock!

"What a strong chill wind tribulation!"

A chill wind tribulation was a heavenly tribulation that only Void Fragmentation Realm experts would encounter.

The Pill Sovereign was at the Third Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm. However, even when he broke through to that cultivation realm, the chill wind tribulation he faced also was not as strong as this!

Even if the Pill Sovereign is fully prepared, he also would not have more than fifty percent chance of getting through such powerful heavenly tribulation!

As for the current him, he did not even have ten percent of chance as he did not expect that the chill wind tribulation would be so powerful!

Despite just breaking through to the Low Grade Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Realm, the chill wind tribulation he faced was actually comparable to the heavenly tribulation at the Fourth Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm!

In the Temple of Rain, surprise filled everyone's faces. Even the Rain Sovereign's scalp tingled.

“Everyone said that the Seventh Revolution is like achieving the Immortal Realm. I didn’t believe it at first. However, judging from the current situation, that saying is true. Even I will have difficulties in withstanding such a powerful heavenly tribulation... No. I must immediately enter the illusory realm of the Black Stage to help the Pill Sovereign get through the tribulation!”

Even though the Rain Sovereign had suspicions for the Pill Sovereign, he naturally became willing to lend him a hand as the latter was about to achieve the Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Realm which would be of great use to him.

However, as he swung his body, his expression turned grim suddenly. To his surprise, he discovered that the entire illusory realm inside the heavenly dwelling space of the Black Stage was sealed by the power of Heavenly Dao. With his power at the Fifth Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm, he also could not break it open!

“This is bad! I can’t get inside the heavenly dwelling space. The Pill Sovereign is in danger!”

For the first time in his life, the Rain Sovereign hated himself for being unable to help the Pill Sovereign.

Even though he relied heavily on the Pill Sovereign in the past, he suppressed him even more. After all, he was unwilling to see that the Pill Sovereign could grow his influence in the Rain World. If he were to see him in danger in the past, he naturally would not be nervous.

Today, however, the Pill Sovereign was on the verge of attaining the Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Realm. After the Rain Sovereign had reassessed the advantages and disadvantages of the Pill Sovereign’s existence, he chose to help him.

Unfortunately, he also was unable to enter the illusory realm of the Black Stage. There was no way he could help the Pill Sovereign at all.

If the Pill Sovereign achieves the Seventh Revolution Pill Refinement Realm, the Seventh Revolution Pills he concocts would be an important aid to the Rain Sovereign in achieving the Immortal Realm...

The Rain Sovereign's face was filled with rage. After so many years, a Seventh Revolution Pill Master was about to be born in the Rain World. However, reality told him that the Seventh Revolution Pill Master was facing a terrifying chill wind tribulation and he had a ninety percent chance of dying!

"The Pill Sovereign can't die!" He roared in wrath. Those who did not know him well would probably think that he had a deep relationship with the Pill Sovereign. However, it was just for his own benefits in reality.

Inside the illusory realm, Ning Fan stood amidst the waves of chill wind. His eyes were filled with astonishment.

The moment the wind appeared, he could not get out of the illusory realm. Moreover, he also could not enter the Yuan Yao World or the Profound Yin World!

The chill wind tribulation was extremely scary. Even the Pill Sovereign only had ten percent chance of successfully withstanding it. He without a doubt did not stand a chance against it!

All the Mortal Void Grand Formation he had set up were turned to flying ashes by the wind tribulation.

That bone-piercing cold wind continued to blow toward Ning Fan and he could only feel that his body was going to be reduced to ashes as well. He quickly recovered from shock and activated his Yin Yang Devil Flame, summoning a black fire wall that covered the area of ten thousand zhang* (3.33m per zhang) around the Pill Sovereign!

When ice and fire mix and the yin and yang achieves harmony between each other, yin yang flame is produced.

The flame that Ning Fan used was the combination of twenty-four types of Heavenly Cold Qi and Earth Flames. Its grade reached High Rank Seventh Grade. It contained a trace of power from the harmony of yin and yang which naturally had some resistance toward the cold wind.

All of a sudden, the wind was kept outside the fire wall.

Ning Fan looked at the Pill Sovereign who was still sitting in a meditative posture and slightly gnashed his teeth.

At this moment, the divine wood medicine soul inside the Pill Sovereign's body was gradually experiencing soul transformation. However, Ning Fan had no idea exactly how the transformation would occur.

When the wind tribulation assaulted suddenly just now, it inflicted a serious damage to the Pill Sovereign's medicine soul, causing him unable to use any of his magic power temporarily...

The Pill Sovereign coughed out a mouthful of fresh blood. His face turned pale. The moment the blood came out from his mouth, it immediately vanished into ashes.

He was injured by the cold wind. He knew that his chances of attaining the Seventh Revolution today were extremely slim. He did not even have the confidence whether he could escape to safety or not.

He felt a little regretful. If he had known that the wind tribulation would be so terrifying, he certainly would not have been so opinionated to promise to share soul power of heaven and earth with Ning Fan.

If he had known that the tribulation would be so powerful, he certainly would have chosen a remote and deserted area to achieve the breakthrough on his own. In that case, even if he fails to withstand the tribulation, he would only just sacrifice his own life without involving anyone else...

He suddenly understood why so many pill masters would be so cautious and avoid being noticed by anyone including their closed ones when they were achieving the Seventh Revolution.

Perhaps some of them were just unwilling to share the soul power with others.

For some others, however, it might be because they had no assurance to withstand the tribulation and did not want to put their disciples or descendants in danger...

The Pill Sovereign sighed deeply and took out an ancient brown wooden plate from his pouch.

It was unknown how old that wooden plate was and what ability it had. However, it seemed to hold a mysterious power within.

The moment the Pill Sovereign took out the wooden plate, the entire illusory realm started trembling.

In the temple of Rain, the Rain Sovereign was staring at the wooden plate through the bronze mirror with an expression filled with joy and concern.

“This is... World Tree Token! According to rumors, there was once an ancient tree that grew in the Eastern Heaven Immortal Realm. It is called ‘World Tree’. The flowers it produced naturally carry a heavenly dwelling space. The fruits it bears naturally contain small chiliocosm! A piece of that tree bark can be made into a token. Cultivators who hold the token can immediately make an escape even if they are trapped inside a small chiliocosm!”

“However, this token can only be used once and it can just bring out a single person at a time. After it’s used, it will self-destruct!”

“The Pill Sovereign is able to get out of the heavenly dwelling space with the token in his hand. However, Ning Fan will still be in danger!”

The Rain Sovereign gritted his teeth. There was only one token. Even if the Pill Sovereign could escape, Ning Fan would still be killed by the wind tribulation...

“These two individuals are important to my great plan of achieving the Immortal Realm. Whoever dies is also a huge loss... What should I do?!” The Rain Sovereign pounded the dragon table beside him with his fist.

A brief moment later, the Pill Sovereign did something that many cultivators in the temple felt unthinkable.

He gave the World Tree Token to Ning Fan...

“Hurry up and activate this token to leave this world! I’ve dragged you into this. I can’t let you die in this place!”

Ning Fan’s face was filled with shock. He did not move forward to take the token.

At the crucial moment of life and death, the Pill Sovereign chose to sacrifice himself and let Ning Fan live. This made Ning Fan clench his fists tightly.

Ning Fan gnashed his teeth. He still had his closed ones to protect. He still had revenge to seek. He could not die here now.

The wisest decision for him right now was to take the token and leave this place on his own. Besides, even if he leaves, the Pill Sovereign would still have a ten percent chance to successfully withstand this tribulation. He might not necessarily be dead for sure...

However, no matter what, Ning Fan could not make that decision.

He never claimed to be a smart person because smart people would know how to protect themselves and preserve their lives. He, however, did not know it...

What he knew was that when someone showed him kindness, he must repay them with kindness; when someone harmed him, he must take revenge!

He might be able to remain unmoved after killing millions but he would never watch someone whom he cared about die in front of his eyes!

He was not going to run away nor hide!

So what if the powerful wind tribulation is strong and powerful? Is this something that could make him yield in fear for death?

Ning Fan placed his palm on his storage pouch. The next moment, he took out the two Void Fragmentation Realm puppets, Zhi Huo and Zi Dian. Without hesitation, he crushed them with his hands!

“Detonate!”

The sky was veiled by the strong cold wind. No one was able to clearly see what Ning Fan had detonated. Only the Pill Sovereign who was close to him could see it.

However, the moment the two puppets were detonated, an unimaginable destructive force destroyed the entire Black Stage!

Even the heavenly tribulation at the Fourth Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm would also be slightly dispersed by the power released from the detonation of two puppets at the First Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm!

As soon as the Black Stage was destroyed, Ning Fan carried the Pill Sovereign who was already grievously injured and picked up the countless fragments of the two puppets. When the power of the Heavenly Dao was in chaos, he flew out from the illusory realm!

His puppets were destroyed. He failed to clear the stage. However, he did not care about it at all!

On Ning Fan’s back, the Pill Sovereign managed to escape for his life and left the wind tribulation to stay amidst the ruins of the Black Stage.

The medicine soul in his body was experiencing changes gradually. All he needed to do before officially attaining the Seventh Revolution was to go into seclusion and stabilize his medicine soul.

He might have successfully achieved the Seventh Revolution but he was not pleased at all. Instead, he was guilt-ridden. Suddenly, tears coursed down that old man’s cheeks.

He saw it vividly! In order to save his life, Ning Fan had destroyed two Void Fragmentation Realm puppets!

He did not know why Ning Fan would have two Void Fragmentation Realm puppets and he was not planning to ask him.

He only knew that anyone who possessed two Void Fragmentation Realm puppets would definitely be reluctant to destroy them. Only Ning Fan who would go to such lengths as to sacrifice his precious puppets just to save his life!

“Ning Fan, I owe you my life. You have sacrificed two puppets in order to save me!” The Pill Sovereign did not know what he should say. Inwardly, however, he had made up his mind that as long as he is alive, he would never allow anyone to harm Ning Fan.

“It’s just two puppets. Don’t worry. Compared to our lives, the puppets are nothing. Besides, there might still be a chance to repair them...”

Ning Fan waved his hand, hinting at the Pill Sovereign that he did not need to thank him.

Internally, however, he was smiling bitterly.

Well, the two Void Fragmentation Realm puppets had exploded into countless fragments. Could they really still be repaired...?

However, even though those puppets were precious, Ning Fan did not have any regret at all for his actions.

After all, the reason why he tried to overrun the whole world was just because he wanted to leave no regrets behind.

In the Temple of Rain, each of the old monsters were dumbfounded. They had no idea what technique Ning Fan had used that could even destroy the wind tribulation...

Even the Rain Sovereign was unable to believe what had just happened. His eyes turned grim.

That kid's ability sure is frightening. It's so strong that it could even destroy such powerful wind tribulation... Apparently, he is withholding too many secrets...

Inwardly, he began to be wary of him again. However, he naturally would not investigate what technique Ning Fan used to stop the wind tribulation right now.

At the end of the day, the people who were of great use to him, the Pill Sovereign and Ning Fan, survived. It was really a joyful matter.

Before everyone could start asking questions, Ning Fan was suddenly startled.

He saw that the merit point on his palace lord token increased by ten billion points. Then, it flashed with silver light and a dazzling jade box floated in front of him. It seemed to be the prize of clearing the third stage.

"This is..." Ning Fan's eyes glistened. With this item, he would not need to spend too much time to attain the High Grade Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Realm.

...

In the Purple Prefectural Studies Palace in Southern Heaven Immortal World.

A female celestial being in purple robes who was sitting leisurely in the eight trigrams palace stood up with her hands clasped behind her back.

The shadows of rings rippled on the bronze floor beneath her feet like water wavelets.

Through those ripple-like rings, one could see the stars on the entire universe.

The female celestial being stared at the ripples on the bronze floor and saw an insignificant Void Refinement Realm young man in countless stars domains away.

After witnessing him sacrifice two puppets, the lady's indolent and uninterested face suddenly was filled with a hint of surprise.

"This young man sure is a surprising devil cultivator. He is a lawless devil lord for having the guts to abduct my puppets who are responsible to summon tribulations. Now, however, he destroyed the two of them in order to save someone. His actions really exceeded my expectations... Even though he is just a cultivator in the Lower Realm, it's rare to find someone like him..."

"However, he still has to face his Void Pierce Stage heavenly tribulation! Now, I feel somewhat unwilling to let him die under the heavenly tribulation... Be it life or death, you don't have to be mad about him. He isn't someone who is unpardonably wicked. Why bother to be always against him?"

The purple-robed female immortal looked at the ring shadows beneath her feet affectionately.

In the next instant, they trembled abruptly and a half black and half white bird which gave off an auspicious aura flew out from them and perched on the female immortal's shoulder. It started tweeting and chirping to the female immortal, as if it was complaining to her. Its appearance looked rather dull and cute.

"Ji Ji Ji...!" The dull bird seemed to be extremely furious.

"Little dull bird, why bother arguing with a junior of the Rain World? You're one of the Dao Spirits of the First Ring of the Heavenly Dao. You can't be so impulsive. The Fu Li Race has gone extinct and the Heavenly Dao will never come back. If you continue to behave like this, I can no longer protect you."

"*Ji Ji Ji..." The bird seemed a little scared.

"Continue to summon tribulations to him. You can increase the power of the heavenly tribulations but you have to make sure to give him a chance to survive... Alright. Little dull bird, you may leave now. I still need to perform calculations on the calamities of the universe. I am not free to hear your grumbling."

The lady gently patted the bird's head and coaxed it to return to the ring shadows again.

The massive palace became as silent as the grave again. Only the sounds of the stars moving reverberated across the place.

Very quickly, the female immortal had cast Ning Fan to the back of her mind. There were too many living beings which needed her attention. Therefore, it was impossible for her to focus all her attention on a single person.

Above the eight trigrams palace, only three words were visible.

Tribulation Wielding Palace!

Chapter 558: The Heart of The Lightning Immortal

After the third stage, the Pill Sovereign had suffered quite serious injuries but he still needed to stabilize his pill refinement realm.

Ning Fan was also affected by the self-detonation within the third stage and was gravely wounded.

Hence, he could only abandon the fourth stage which he was about to go through.

Even though the Rain Sovereign still had doubts, he also was in the mood to dig deeper into Ning Fan's background at the moment.

All of his attention was focused in helping the Pill Sovereign treat his wounds. There was no need to explain the reason behind it. In fact, the entire Rain World got excited because of the Pill Sovereign alone.

At present times, the Pill Sovereign was the only pill refinement master who had achieved the Seventh Revolution in the Rain World! With him around, it was only a matter of time for the Void Fragmentation Realm experts in the Rain World to raise their cultivation base. Then, the name of being the weakest world among the Nine Worlds would one day fade away. This made filled countless old monsters in the Rain World with excitement!

Ning Fan was also healing his wounds in the Scarlet Heaven Palace. It had already been one month since the incident.

On that day, he did not go through the fourth stage which indirectly prevented him from a confrontation with Yun Qingge, although the latter already gradually gave up the enmity against him...

Other than treating his injuries, he also began reflecting on the dangerous encounter on the third stage during the past one month.

He had to admit that he became a little overconfident after subduing the heavenly tribulation puppets twice in the past and he also underestimated the Heavenly Dao of the Lower Realm.

The mysterious lady who appeared in the Heavenly Dao rings that day was far too strong. Her presence even made Ning Fan's hair to stand on end...

Filler Words

Ning Fan followed Chu Chang An to enter the portal. It was a world of clouds on the other side of the portal. There was nothing else in that world except for the misty clouds that stretched boundlessly to the distance.

Standing in the world of clouds, Ning Fan was deep in thoughts.

All the clouds within this heavenly dwelling space was a type of unique cloud, called 'shen cloud'. It could turn into any kinds of illusory realm as well as different landscapes of battlefield.

The test of the Heaven's Stage had yet to begin. If it has, Chu Chang An would control those shen clouds and command them to transform into the required illusory realms and arenas for the test.

Chu Chang An who wore a set of hemp robes and had fiery-red hair was exuding fire qi.

His eyes flashed with hesitation as he was standing on the sea of clouds. For a few times, he was about to speak to Ning Fan but then decided to swallow back his words. He seemed to have something to tell Ning Fan and that was why he did not start the test of the Heaven's Stage after so long.

Ning Fan and Chu Chang An stood facing each other one thousand zhang* (3.33m per zhang) away, maintaining the most fundamental vigilance.

“Does Elder Chu has something to tell me?” Ning Fan asked.

“Hehe. I indeed have something to talk to you... I want to make a deal with you...” Chu Chang An's eyes shone with determination and spoke his mind.

“A deal?”

Ning Fan was stunned at first. Then, countless thoughts ran across his mind. After pondering for a while, he could already roughly guess what the deal Chu Chang An was talking about.

Chu Chang An was a demon cultivator of the Blood Dragon Race. Back in the Dragon Determining Valley, he sensed a trace of blood dragon qi from Ning Fan and figured that the latter might possess some kind of supreme treasure of the Blood Dragon Race.

Because Ning Fan was under Yun Tianjue's protection that day, he did not investigate that matter further in the end.

Today, Chu Chang An requested to make a deal with Ning Fan. Without a doubt, he had set his eyes upon the Blood Dragon Demon Sword.

The Blood Dragon Demon Sword was forged using the bones of a blood dragon at the heavenly demon level. To Ning Fan, it was not of great use and was something dispensable.

To Chu Chang An, on the other hand, it was an extremely precious treasure. If he could devour the immortal blood dragon's bones in the sword, his cultivation base would certainly be enhanced greatly.

Ning Fan hesitated for a while. It was not impossible for him to give that sword to Chu Chang An since he sincerely wanted it. All the latter had to do was to give him something of the same worth in exchange.

If all the seals of the Blood Dragon Demon Sword are lifted, it should reach the power of an immortal sword. Unfortunately, even if Ning Fan breaks through to the First Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm, his magic power also would not be sufficient for him to eliminate all the seals and fully control an immortal sword.

To him who had a great deal of abilities and techniques, the blood sword was just like chicken ribs. If Chu Chang An could take out something that interests him, he certainly would be more than happy to exchange the sword for it.

However, if Chu Chang An wants to seize the blood sword by force... Hehe. Ning Fan was never a person who would put himself in a disadvantageous position!

Ning Fan gave Chu Chang An a meaningful smile with a smirk and said, "What Elder Chu wants to make the deal?"

What Ning Fan actually meant by asking the question was to imply that he indeed possessed a treasure of the Blood Dragon Race.

Chu Chang An understood it tacitly and his eyes began burning with excitement. He wished that he could immediately snatch Ning Fan's storage pouch and see what blood dragon treasure exactly was in it.

However, as soon as he met Ning Fan's unfathomable eyes, he instantly calmed himself down and dismissed that thought.

If Ning Fan was a common Void Refinement Realm cultivator, Chu Chang An would definitely dare to snatch the treasure from him.

However, Ning Fan was not an ordinary person. He was not only a part of the Black Devil Sect, but also a Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master who was someone Chu Chang An had to treat like his equal...

Chu Chang An sighed deeply. He would not offend Yun Tianjue just because of a treasure, much less the Black Devil Sect.

Since he could not take it by force, then he could only make a fair trade with him. After all, he has something that Ning Fan should need.

“Elder Chu, do you want to seize my treasure?” Ning Fan said with a forced smile.

“Hehe. My young friend, you must be joking. I’ve told you that this is a deal that both of us will make willingly. Thus, I will certainly use something that has an equal worth to exchange for your treasure.”

Elder Chu smiled and raised his head to look at the sea of clouds above the sky. Then, he warned with a meaningful tone. “Even though the four stages of tests are done within heavenly dwelling spaces, no one knows if there is no ear behind the walls. It’s better that we proceed our deal in private.”

As soon as he finished speaking, Elder Chu took out a blood-red handkerchief and tossed it into the sky.

The handkerchief grew in the air. Within just a few breaths, it became boundlessly huge, shielding the entire sky.

In the outside world, Revered Sage’s eyes immediately turned grim as he could no longer sense anything within the heavenly dwelling space of the Heaven’s Stage.

“What had happened?!” The Rain Sovereign asked via telepathy after noticing Revered Sage’s expression.

“Chu Chang An has cut off my senses!” Revered Sage replied with gritted teeth.

“Chu Chang An, huh... The Rain Sovereign’s eyes flashed with a cold glint.

Inside the heavenly dwelling space, Chu Chang An started rubbing his hands with excitement after concealing the both of them from Revered Sage’s senses and said to Ning Fan with an apologetic smile. ”

“Hehe. This blood-red handkerchief can shield one from the Heaven’s secret. Do you know that this Heaven Stage is being spied upon by someone using a secret technique? The Rain Sovereign seems to have suspicions on you... You have to be extra cautious in the upcoming four stages.”

Chu Chang An seemed like he wanted to express goodwill to Ning fan by shielding the two of them from Revered Sage’s senses.

“Elder Chu, thank you for your reminder. However, I am absolutely certain that I don’t have any unrepresentable secret. It’s fine if someone wants to pry into me. If they can’t find the result they desire, they will probably dismiss their enmity against me. If I hide myself from their senses, I’m afraid it will make things worse instead and draw even more doubts and suspicions on me.

“Hehe. This young friend is very confident. Since you aren’t afraid of being spied on, my action is superfluous. After we finish the trade, I’ll take off the blood-red handkerchief. For now, however, as I still need to make a deal with you, it’s still better to prevent anyone from spying on us.”

Chu Chang An took in a deep breath. He knew that they were going to talking about the serious matter next.

“I’ve sensed a trace of blood dragon qi from you... If I am not wrong, it’s the qi of blood dragon bones. Moreover, the level of the blood dragon bones isn’t low. Apparently, it’s... the bones of an immortal blood dragon! I wish to trade for the bones with you!”

Chu Chang An looked as if he was seeking for confirmation from Ning Fan. He wanted to see whether his guess was correct and whether that blood dragon bones was at the heavenly demon grade from Ning Fan’s facial expression.

However, Ning Fan was constantly maintaining his faint smile while his eyes were deep, making Chu Chang An unable to notice any emotion in him. The failure of obtaining an answer for his guesses filled him with disappointment.

He shook his head and asked with a bitter smile.

“This young friend, please tell me if my guesses are correct?”

Chi

Only the sound of a clear and crisp sword shrill that answered to Chu Chang An’s question.

With a flick of his sleeve, Ning Fan was already holding a long sword that had blood light revolving around it in his hand.

It was a long sword that was clear and transparent like a ruby. A few seals were placed on the sword to restrict its power.

Even so, Chu Chang An could still sense a rush of excitement coming from his bloodlines!

“I-Immortal blood dragon bones! It can’t be wrong. This sword is definitely forged using the bones of an immortal blood dragon! Young kid, give me that sword!!!”

Despite the state of mind that Chu Chang An had trained for countless years, he was also taken over by greed the moment he saw the blood sword which urged him to seize the sword from Ning Fan and make it his own.

However, when he saw Ning Fan’s calm and composed eyes, he immediately suppressed his miscellaneous thoughts and let out a few coughs. Then, with an awkward smile, he said.

“I’m sorry. I’ve forgotten my manners.”

“It’s fine. After all, it’s natural for a gentleman to love wealth and treasures. If he obtains it using the right way, there is naturally nothing wrong with it. In fact, I have the willingness to trade this sword with Elder Chu. However, I just wonder what item you can give me in exchange!”

Ning Fan held the blood sword with its tip pointing downward and stood with a faint smile. He remained as calm and collected as usual.

With his current capabilities, it was more than enough for him to keep himself safe. Thus, he was not afraid of Chu Chang An.

All of a sudden, Ning Fan's calm and leisurely demeanor stunned Chu Chang An. It reminded him of his previous master.

In that year, he was still just a blood dragon which had a low and insignificant cultivation base.

In that year, his master was the Demon Cloud Rain Sovereign whose name shook the entire Rain World. When he was facing tens of millions of enemies during the war of the Nine Worlds, he was also as calm as Ning Fan.

That calmness in him was an attitude, an attitude of being imperturbed in the hour of peril and it had nothing to do with one's cultivation base.

Chu Chang An got rid of all his other thoughts. Now, he had more respect for Ning Fan. Inwardly, he thought: perhaps within the next few thousand years, this kid will also become a strong being that will be regarded as someone as strong as the Rain Sovereign...

"Since I've ascertained that the grade of the blood dragon bones, I'm willing to use three items to exchange for it. This is the first item!"

When Chu Chang An flicked his finger, a blood-red immediately flew toward Ning Fan.

Ning Fan reached out to grab the storage pouch. As he scanned it using his spirit sense, he discovered that there was ten billion immortal jade.

"Not enough!" Ning Fan said indifferently with a neutral expression.

Chu Chang An secretly praised Ning Fan within his mind. If ordinary Void Refinement Realm see such amount of immortal jade, they more or less would be dumbstruck. For Ning Fan, however, he did not

even flinch at all. If it wasn't because he was adept in scheming, it would then be because he was already used to big scenes and would not be shocked by such an amount of immortal jade.

“This young friend, be patient. There is still the second item!”

Chu Chang An sent another storage pouch to Ning Fan. He grabbed and checked it. The items within the pouch were actually ten bottles of Imaginary Sea Pill.

One bottle contained ten pills and there were one hundred pills in that pouch.

Imaginary Sea Pill was a Mid Grade Sixth Revolution Pill. A single pill could give a Void Inquiry Stage expert five thousand units of magic power... Those pills were extremely precious.

If Ning Fan takes every last one of the Imaginary Sea Pills in the ten bottles, his magic power would shoot up by five hundred thousand units!

Even with Ning Fan's shrewdness, his eyelids could not help but twitch slightly. However, he dismissed that astonishment in his face at the next moment and said with a flat tone.

“Not enough!”

Chu Chang An chuckled dryly. He knew that Ning Fan was not someone who could be satisfied easily.

Luckily, he still had the third item to give him. And Chu Chang An was very confident that the final item could convince Ning Fan.

“Fine... Originally, I was reluctant to take this item out because it's worth is slightly above that of the heavenly blood dragon bones... However, it is useless to me. Instead of letting it stay idly in the storehouse, it's better to use it to make a fair trade with you...”

Chu Chang An sighed and sent out a third storage pouch to Ning fan.

As soon as Ning Fan grabbed the storage pouch, he could already sense a massive amount of lightning power from it even before opening it to check what was inside. Furthermore, he even felt that the storage pouch was pounding like a living heart...

When he opened the pouch and took a single glance at the item inside, he immediately took a deep breath and said, "This is enough..."

Chapter 559: The Trip to The Tree World

In the Scarlet Heaven Realm, Ning Fan was sitting alone at the inner part of the cloud mountain in silence for a long time.

He never expected that the Rain Sovereign would assign such a mission to him...

In this message-transmitting jade slip, the Rain Sovereign had told him in general about the reason of using his Indestructible Fire Body.

The Burning Immortal Valley in the Western Flame Country was the old site of the Shedding Orchid Sect. At the deepest part of the Burning Immortal Valley, there was a forbidden abyss that was surrounded with immortal flame called the Abyss of Death. It was an area that even Void Fragmentation Realm fire cultivators could not enter.

The Rain Sovereign once explored the Abyss of Death. He tried several times but still failed to enter the place. However, he could sense a terrifyingly dense medicinal qi of a pill from within that place.

According to his investigate, an Eighth Revolution Pill was sealed inside the Abyss of Death. Moreover, it was the most precious pill of the Shedding Orchid Sect!

Low Grade Eighth Revolution Pill – Wing Transformation Pill!

Once a Void Fragmentation Realm expert of any level consumes the pill, they would have an extremely small chance of directly becoming an immortal!

If a Peak Void Fragmentation Realm expert consumes it, they would have at least third percent chance of instantly becoming an immortal!

The Rain Sovereign was an expert at the Fifth Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm. If he consumes the Wing Transformation Pill, he would not have a huge chance in directly becoming an immortal. However, even if he fails, his cultivation base would at least increase by one heavenly layer. Moreover, the effect of the pill would establish the foundation of immortal cultivation in him. If he attains the Peak Void Fragmentation Realm in the future, his chances of becoming an immortal would still be thirty percent higher than ordinary cultivators!

The reason why the Rain Sovereign had been carefully devising a plan to access the Abyss of Death was all because of that Eighth Revolution Wing Transformation Pill!

What the Rain Sovereign told him was a top secret. Even the few princes of the Rain Palace also were not clear about what was being sealed within the Abyss of Death.

The Rain Sovereign never told anyone about the Wing Transformation Pill. It was all because if the news about the existence of the Wing Transformation Pill is leaked, perhaps the Void Fragmentation Realm experts of the entire Nine Worlds would be in chaos. All of them would think of every way possible to seize the pill...

Filler Word.

After it was hit by Ning Fan's finger, the snow-white beast shadow let out a miserable shrill and stopped charging at Ning Fan. It tried to escape by turning around and transforming into a ray of snow white light.

Without a doubt, it was impossible for Ning Fan to let it flee. He pointed out a finger and used the Heaven Sealing Technique to restrict the beast shadow's movement.

Then, with a flick of his sleeve, he pulled it into his hand and studied it carefully. It was the shadow of a white tiger that was only the size of a palm.

The white tiger shadow was not a living creature. Instead, it was something that the ferocious baleful qi within the spiritual equipment transformed into.

After it was caught by Ning Fan, that little white tiger was still baring its fangs while swing its claws with a fearsome look on its face.

Ning Fan applied some magic power from the center of his palm to destroy the shadow of that white tiger. Then, a brilliant light flashed. An ancient dark silver vambrace appeared in his hand.

The length of that armor could envelope the front part of Ning Fan's arm just right. It felt cold and it seemed to contain a sharp killing qi.

There were the carvings of mountains and seas and patterns of mystical beasts on the armor. It was a well-made craft.

It had extreme toughness. The materials that were used to forge this armor were undoubtedly uncommon...

The armor not only had amazing defensive power. What impressed Ning Fan was the killing qi that it contained.

If he refines this vambrace, the power of his fists would probably experience an unthinkable improvement.

“My master said that this spiritual equipment is forged by a spiritual equipment master from the Heaven Immortal World. Its raw material is an ominous tooth that an immortal white tiger shed. White tigers are bloodthirsty creatures. Immortal white tigers, on the other hand, are even more vicious creatures that kill countless, accumulating thick and heavy baleful qi... Even my master also can't suppress the baleful qi of this spiritual equipment. However, I had a hunch that you should be able to suppress it... Because you're so competent...” Yu Chong Er said with reddened cheeks.

“You really think highly of me... A vambrace that is made out of a white tiger's tooth, huh... Thank you for giving me this gift. I like it a lot.”

Ning Fan put his finger at the vambrace, commanding it to turn into a ray of white light and fly back to the brocade box. Then, he kept the box into his storage pouch.

“It’s good that you like it... I’ll take my leave first. My master is going to scold me again as he couldn’t find me for the past one month...”

Riding on her five-marked cloud, Yu Chong Er stuck out her tongue at Ning Fan and left reluctantly.

Logically, she had already finished repaying Ning Fan all the favor she owed him by giving him the Heaven Deceiving Cloak, Insect Sovereign’s Blood and the White Tiger Vambrace...

However, why would she still feel slightly unwilling to leave Ning Fan, as if the fibers that are still clinging together even after the lotus root has broken.

“Damn it... Yu Chong Er, you must be sick. That’s why you aren’t willing to leave the Scarlet Heaven Palace...” Yu Chong Er muttered to herself.

“Miss Yu, please stay for a moment.” Ning Fan suddenly called.

“I-Is there anything else...?” Yu Chong Er turned over shyly.

“These body refinement pills are pills of the devil race. They can raise the cultivation level of a Jade Life Body Refinement Realm cultivator. I concocted them in the past and the Rain Palace does not have any of it. If you don’t mind, please take these pills. I suppose they will be greatly beneficial to you in breaking through to the Second Level of the Jade Life Body Refinement Realm.”

Ning Fan smiled gently and took out an exquisite storage pouch. With a flick of his finger, he sent pouch to Yu Chong Er.

Since she had given him a gift, he naturally needed to give her something in return. Even though these pills were not as precious as the Profound Divinity Grade spiritual equipment, they showed his appreciation to her.

“T-This...” As Yu Chong Er caught Ning Fan’s storage pouch, her face had already become as red as a tomato.

She never expected that Ning Fan would give her something in return was not mentally prepared for this at all. Thus, she did not know how she should reply to Ning Fan.

Her heart was fluttering wildly. She kept the pouch and went away hurriedly like a hare.

This time, she was very certain that she really was sick...

She actually did not dare to speak a word to Ning Fan. It was too embarrassing...

...

Right after Yu Chong Er had left, Ning Fan received a golden message-transmitting flying sword. It was a message that the Rain Sovereign had personally sent to him.

“Ten days later, head to the Temple of Rain.”

The Temple of Rain was the main palace of the Rain Palace. It was located at the tenth realm of the Heavenly Cloud Country and the Rain Sovereign guarded it in person.

After hesitating for a while, he returned to the inner part of the cloud mountain for seclusion again.

Ten days later, he would be going to the Temple of Rain to see the Rain Sovereign.

Before that, he planned to refine the White Tiger Vambrace.

That piece of armor had immense baleful qi. Even some common Void Fragmentation Realm experts would not be able to restrain the baleful qi and refine the spiritual equipment.

With Ning Fan's baleful qi and the aura force from his Fu Li Ancestral Blood, however, it was an easy task for him to subdue this spiritual equipment.

In terms of the effect of this spiritual equipment, its defense power was in fact secondary. Its main effect was improving the power of one's body techniques.

In just three days, Ning Fan successfully refined the spiritual equipment into his right arm. For the remaining days, he sat below the rain stele to comprehend the rain intent.

On the seventh day, another message-transmitting flying sword flew into the Scarlet Heaven Realm from the Profound Heaven realm. It was a message from Yun Bushu.

There was only a sentence in that message.

“Hide your sovereign qi properly. Beware of Revered Sage.”

After receiving Yun Bushu's reminder, Ning Fan's expression turned grim and started to suspect that it was an exploratory message from Yun Bushu.

However, he shook his head after that and denied that idea as he thought that Yun Bushu might have really noticed that he possessed the sovereign qi.

He still recalled that after he condensed his sovereign qi, he was once tracked by a gigantic eye in the Profound Yin World.

Revered Sage was the Rain Sovereign's trusted subordinate and that large eye was his heavenly eye.

When Ning Fan condensed his sovereign qi in that year, the phenomenon that signified that birth of a sovereign being had shaken the entire Rain World. Countless people were searching for the second sovereign being in the Rain World... Even the Rain Sovereign was frantically looking for those who shared a resemblance with that person's back view and murdered every last one of them. He rather killed the wrong person than let his target run loose.

What made the Rain Sovereign fear Ning Fan today was just his innate talent in cultivation. To the mysterious person who condensed the sovereign qi, however, the Rain Sovereign had the absolute determination to wipe out his existence.

No one knew that Ning Fan was that person, including Revered Sage.

Ning Fan had been hiding his sovereign qi very deeply. Even though he had met several Void Fragmentation Realm experts such as Chu Chang An, Yun Tianjue, Yun Jinghong and Yun Daoku, none of them could notice that Ning Fan possessed the sovereign qi.

Yun Bushu was the only one who managed to see the sovereign qi in him and reminded him to hide it...

This Yun Bushu really has something on the ball.

“If Yun Bushu truly noticed that I possess the sovereign qi, the Rain Sovereign must also be able to notice it... I’ll be seeing the Rain Sovereign in another three days. I should completely conceal it just in case...”

Ning Fan stored his sovereign qi into his Yin Yang Locket. The locket was an immortal emperor’s treasure that could shield everything inside from other’s discovery. No matter how capable the Rain Sovereign is, it would be impossible for him to find out the sovereign qi.

He did not reply to the Yun Bushu’s message. If he gives a respond, he would be admitting the fact that he possessed the sovereign qi.

Deep inside, he believed that Yun Bushu had been through thick and thin with his father and he was someone trustworthy.

Inside his bones, however, he still kept some distances from him...

After all, completely trusting a person was not something that can be achieved overnight.

On the tenth day, a group of revered elders from the Temple of Rain came to lead Ning Fan to see the Rain Sovereign.

All of the revered elders emanated Divine Transformation Realm qi. However, their expressions looked sluggish and lifeless. When he studied them carefully, he found that each and every one of them was actually a puppet that was made out of a devil cultivator.

Ning Fan followed these puppets to the tenth realm of the Heavenly Cloud Country. Along the way, he was deep in thought.

The Rain Sovereign deliberately sent these puppets which were originally devil cultivators to receive Ning Fan. Was he trying to show Ning Fan his authority...?

Was the Rain Sovereign trying to tell him that if he goes against the Rain Palace, he would be end up being turned into a puppet...?

“If one doesn’t let me down, I won’t let them down... This display of power is useless to me.”

The tenth realm of the Heavenly Cloud Country – Heaven Controlling Realm!

The Heavenly Controlling Realm was located at the center of the Heavenly Cloud Country with the other nine realms surrounding it in a circle.

Along the way, endless rays of travelling light were dashing toward the tenth realm. All of them were trying to watch the scene of bustle.

When Ning Fan was in his seclusion in the past half a year, the news of him defeating the eight palace lords and becoming the strongest lord of the nine palaces spread throughout the entire Rain World.

Ning Fan had now truly become a mighty figure in the Rai World. Among the cultivators below the Void Fragmentation Realm, there was barely anyone who dared to approach him and make him their enemy.

Even those Absolute Void Stage experts who had achieved the yuan magic power might also need to show some respect to him.

There were a few hundred cultivation cities at the center of the Heaven Controlling Realm. The one that was located at the middlemost was called Heaven Controlling City.

Heaven Controlling City was built on ninety thousand zhang* (3.33m per zhang) above the sea of clouds. One million li* (500m per li) around the place was guarded by the divine messengers of the Rain Palace.

Upon reaching this place, those Divine Transformation Realm puppets that guided him here had accomplished their mission and they all retreated in silence.

Ning Fan left them behind and flew ninety thousand zhang* (3.33m per zhang) above the sky by himself and descended outside the Heaven Controlling City.

The moment he arrived, a group of cultivators with sharp and fearsome aura force immediately stood before him, blocking his path. They were the guards of the city.

Even though the group only consisted nine individuals, eight of them were at the Half-Step Void Refinement Realm while the leader of the group was a Void Glimpse Stage cultivator!

As soon as they saw Ning Fan's appearance, they instantly changed their behavior and said with a respectful tone.

"The Rain Sovereign has informed us that if the White-Robed Marquis arrives, he can enter the Heaven Controlling City to see the Rain Sovereign."

"I understand."

Ning Fan walked into the city all by himself. It was a huge city that had the shape of a turtle. There were not too many cultivators garrisoned within the city. Each of the guards that patrolled occasionally were at the Divine Transformation Realm.

After entering the city, Ning Fan could vaguely feel a massive demon qi from the cloud floor that he was stepping on.

There was the soul of a demon turtle which was at the First Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm residing in the entire Heaven Controlling City!

The demon turtle probably existed here as a guard for the Heaven Controlling City...

The Rain Sovereign really invested a lot in this place to actually get a Void Fragmentation Realm demon turtle to guard the city...

There was gigantic door at the central region of the Heaven Controlling City that was carved with three words – Heaven Controlling Gate.

The guardian of the gate was an old man in brocade garments who possessed a cultivation base at the Absolute Void Stage. He sat on the cloud tree located beside the gate with his eyes close. His expression looked extremely proud and arrogant.

Just as he sensed Ning Fan's arrival, he immediately stood up and said with a forced smile.

“I am Han Songzi, the lord of the Temple of Rain. Greetings to the White-Robed Marquis. Please wait for a moment. I'll now open the Heaven Controlling Gate... The Rain Sovereign and the Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm experts have already been waiting for you for quite some time.”

“Do I still need to get through this huge gate in order to enter the Temple of Rain...?”

Ning Fan scanned the huge gate with his eyes. After taking a quick look at it, he noticed that it was an entrance to a small chiliocosm.

The defense of the ten realms in the Heavenly Cloud Country were impenetrable. The Heaven Controlling City was so heavily guarded. Even so, the Rain Sovereign still hid the Temple of Rain within a

small chiliocosm. It was evident to show the cautious and oversensitive personality of the Rain Sovereign.

Upon hearing Ning Fan's question, Han Songzi just gave him a smile without giving him an answer. As he activated a golden token, the huge gate rumbled and opened.

It was a vast and boundless world of void on the other side of the gate.

A large majestic palace that shone in dazzling golden light was floating in the void space. It was none other than the Temple of Rain!

"White-Robed Marquis, please follow me."

Han Songzi took the lead and went inside the huge gate.

After hesitating for a while, Ning Fan's eyes glistened with determination and he also crossed the gate. Right after that, the huge gate closed.

With a pensive look, Ning Fan stared at the crack of the door that was gradually vanishing in the void space and secretly marked down its location.

If something goes wrong, he should be able to tear the door crack in the void space apart using his Wind Mist Finger and left with ease.

Along the way, he had been thinking about every possible scenario that might happen when he meets the Rain Sovereign.

Even though he was certain that he was still useful to the Rain Sovereign and would not be in danger, nothing in the world was absolute and staying cautious would never go wrong.

If he really faces danger, he could still hide inside the Yuan Yao World and nobody would be able to capture him.

The void space in front of him was filled with a repelling force that made it difficult for cultivators to move across the space.

Han Songzi chuckled and took out the golden token. As he waved it in his hand, a golden bridge suddenly appeared in the void space which directly led to the main entrance of the Temple of Rain.

When they set foot on the golden bridge, there was no longer any resistance force that prevented them from advancing.

Without saying a single word, Ning Fan followed Han Songzi to cross the golden bridge and entered the temple.

Inside the main hall of the temple, an old man in silver dragon robes was sitting on the throne with a cold expression.

Below him, there were the Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm experts, a few princes, the lord and vice lord of the eight strongest palaces and the masters of all the prestigious and righteous sects in the Central State!

Those who did not have a significant identity would not have the chance to come to the Temple of Rain at all!

The moment Ning Fan entered the temple, countless traces of spirit sense immediately shifted toward him, probing him from top to bottom. They wanted to see how capable the White-Robed Marquis whose name shook the entire Rain World was.

Ning Fan smiled gently. He did not stop them nor reveal his aura force.

Other than discovering his cultivation base at the Void Inquiry Stage, everyone in the hall could not sense anything else. Each of them then showed a look of surprise.

“The White-Robed Marquis’ qi is very well-reserved! He actually can conceal it from our senses!”

Ning Fan's eyes scanned across the masters of the prestigious sects in the Central State. When he noticed that there was not an Absolute Void Stage expert among them, he no longer paid attention to them.

Then, he indifferently shifted his gaze to the lords of the eight palaces. The way the eight of them looked at Ning Fan was mostly filled with respect and awe.

Ning Fan then averted his eyes and turned to look at the few Void Fragmentation Realm princes.

Yun Tianjue was absent among them.

As the seventh prince, Yun Jinghong, looked at Ning Fan, his eyes contained a hint of fear that came straight from the depth of his heart.

The sixth prince, Yun Youmu, on the other hand, was still keeping his eyes narrowed in slits while wearing an inscrutable smile.

When the fifth prince, Yun Zhongyan, saw Ning Fan arrive, he just let out a faint snort.

The second prince, Yun Xiaoxiang, however, frowned slightly and his eyes were as deep as the ocean. It was unknown what he was thinking.

Only the third prince, Yun Bushu, grinned at him and gave him a meaningful look. When he saw there was no longer a hint of sovereign qi in Ning Fan when he came, he felt less worried.

Secretly, he passed a message to Ning Fan via telepathy.

“Be careful of Revered Sage.”

“Thank you.”

Ning Fan replied to Yun Bushu and moved his eyes to the Great Four Void Fragmentation Realm experts.

Among the four of them the way Yun Daoku looked at him was filled with worries and fear.

The lord of the Dragon Determining Valley, Chu Chang An, had his brows tightly drawn together. His face was filled with doubts as he stared at Ning Fan. No one knew what he was pondering in his mind.

The Pill Sovereign who had returned from his travel was also here. He released a little of his medicine soul upon Ning Fan's arrival. When he sensed his Mid Sixth Revolution medicine soul, he put on a satisfied smile.

The last person was Yu Chong Er's master, the master of the Thousand Fantasies Sect –Yun Qingge.

This woman's magic power was at the First Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm. At the same time, she also possessed the First Heavenly Layer of the Nirvana Body Refinement Realm.

She wore a large cloak that tightly enveloped her body. The cloak was green and it had the pattern of cloud and mist.

After just taking a single glance at the cloak, Ning Fan was extremely sure that the cloak was a Profound Divinity Grade spiritual equipment that was similar to the Heaven Deceiving Cloak.

With the cloak enveloping her body, it was unable for one to see what Yun Qingge's attire was.

Her hair was tied backward and fastened with a green jade hairpin. She was gorgeous and her presence was as light and ethereal as cloud and mist.

However, her eyes when she looked at Ning Fan contained an unusual hostility.

“Have I messed with this woman before...?” Ning Fan pondered inwardly.

However, even though he had reviewed all his past memories, he also did not remember anything that involved Yun Qingge.

The enmity she had for him seemed to be rather odd and baffling.

Ning Fan's eyes eventually fell upon the Rain Sovereign.

The Rain Sovereign wore a set of silver dragon robes that were embroidered with the pattern of clouds. His white hair was bound up on the top of his head and decorated with a crown that made him look rather majestic.

Before Ning Fan's arrival, the Rain Sovereign's face was as cold as ice. Now, however, his face was adorned with a smile and filled with gentleness as he looked at Ning Fan.

The way he looked at him was as benevolent as when he was looking at his own descendent.

A grim-looking old man in black robes was standing behind the Rain Sovereign.

His cultivation base was just at the Divine Transformation Realm. However, his presence exuded a strong power of heavenly secret. Obviously, he was extremely proficient in the Dao of Divination.

His left eye was gloomy and vicious like that of a serpent. His right eye, however, was blind and the eye socket was only left with a scary hollow.

He was none other than the person who once used the Heavenly Eye Technique to track Ning Fan down – Revered Sage...

“Hehe. So you are Ning Fan, huh? Excellent. Truly excellent. Despite being just at the age of 900 years old, you've already attained this level. In the future, you'll certainly be able to break through to the Void Fragmentation Realm and become a pillar of my Rain Palace!”

Chapter 560: Northern Tree Ocean, Vast Cold City

The white-robed young man who secretly descended upon the Tree World was none other than Ning Fan.

Among the Nine Worlds, the Tree World belonged to the lower three worlds but it was much stronger than the Rain World.

In the Tree World, there were at least two thousand cultivation countries in total which were ruled by the three sovereigns of the world. Liu Haoyue whom had met Ning Fan once was one of the three sovereign of the Tree World, Snow Willow Devil Sovereign.

The Tree World was extremely huge. It was almost twice the size of the Rain World.

Ning Fan just arrived at the Tree World with the help of the rain portal jade slip. At this moment, he was standing amidst an ocean of trees. The surroundings were surrounded with countless tall ancient trees. However, he had no idea where this place was located at the Tree World.

Five tiny sword spirits were hovering beside Ning Fan. All of them were subdued by Ning Fan as he had planted Life and Death Sword Seal on every one of them.

Even though the little girls were reluctant to submit to Ning Fan, they also did not dare to defy the sword seal. All they could do was to serve Ning Fan as their master with dissatisfaction.

The first sword spirit was called Jingjing and she wore a set of golden robes.

The second sword spirit was called Momo. She donned green robes.

The third sword spirit was Shuishui. Her clothes were blue.

The fourth sword spirit was Huahua and she wore red clothing.

The fifth sword spirit was Tongtong. She was the one who stammered among them and she wore yellow robes.

“Humph! I’ll never surrender to you wholeheartedly. I’m just pretending to submit to you. Don’t be too cocky!” Jingjing said fiercely.

“Humph! If you dare to put me in the sword pouch, I’ll show you some color!” Momo threatened with a menacing tone.

“Humph! If you wish to learn my sword techniques, give me one hundred trillion immortal jade first!” Shuishui said ferociously.

“Humph! There seems to have fighting noise in the west. However, I’m not going fight for you!” Huahua uttered with a fearsome voice.

“H-H-Humph...!” The littler stammer, Tongtong, was glaring viciously at Ning Fan but she could not speak a complete sentence.

The five little girls were staring at Ning Fan with ferocity but Ning Fan turned a blind eye to them.

He raised his head gently and gazed into the western direction of the forests. Just as he arrived at the Tree World, sounds of people fighting could be vaguely heard from that direction.

Filler Word

“If I make a single step on the Dao Stairs, I’ll lose a day of life, huh...”

Ning Fan was first at first. After that, his face was filled with hesitation. When his eyes scanned across the area, he discovered an ancient silver stone stele at the foot of the mountain. The stele was carved with five letters which were in Divine Seal Writing.

“Each step costs a day!”

Indeed. Just as what he expected, every step that of the Dao Stairs would require one day of life.

“Could it a test about the Heart of Dao...?”

Ning Fan’s eyes turned gloomy and took the second step on the stairs.

After he ascended to the second step of the stairs, his lifespan was shortened by one day again.

He was not frightened by the Dao Stairs that would shorten one’s lifespan. Instead, he stopped ascending the stairs and started pondering.

As he still had twenty thousand years of life, a few days of life were not worth mentioning.

That being so, he continued ascended the stairs. Every step he took would drain away one day of his life.

When he stood at the 365th step of the stairs, he had lost one year of life in total.

When he climbed to the 730th step of the stairs, he had lost two years of life in total.

The higher he ascended, the deeper his eyes looked.

When he arrived at the 3650th step of the stairs, his lifespan was already shortened by ten years.

At the mountain slope beside the Dao Stairs he was standing, there was a second ancient stele that was also carved with five letters.

“Each step costs a year!”

Ning Fan frowned.

Is it possible that every step from now on will no longer reduce my life by one day but by one year instead...?

If every step ahead would shorten one's lifespan by a year, even Ning Fan would need to think twice before acting

After hesitating for a while, he took a step forward and ascended the 3651th step.

Instantly, one year of his life was drained away!

Ning Fan ignored the amount of life he had lost and took two hundred steps consecutively. When he stood at the 3850th step, his life was reduced by two hundred years.

Then, he saw the third stele standing at the slope beside the staircase. It was also carved with five letters.

“Each step costs ten years!”

Ning Fan wondered inwardly.

Could it be that I have to give up ten years of life for every step I take from now on?

He gazed forward following the trail of the staircase and saw that he would encounter the fourth stele after making two hundred steps. With his vision, he could vaguely see that the stele was also carved with five letters – each step costs one hundred years!

For every two hundred steps ahead, there would still be the fifth stele, the sixth stele, the seventh stele, the eighth stele and so on... However, he was unable to clearly see the details on the steles.

Ning Fan closed his eyes and doubts started to creep into his mind.

Ascending the Dao Stairs of this Earth Stage will actually shorten one's lifespan. Moreover, the higher I go, the more lifespan I will lose. It's obviously unwise to continue climbing up the stairs.

Even if Ning Fan possessed twenty thousand years of life, if a single step cost one hundred years or even one thousand years of life, he would die of old age at this stage...

Should I give up? Since this stage reduces one's lifespan, why not giving up this stage...

However, why will one lose their lifespan by climbing the Dao Stairs...? What exactly is the meaning behind the Rain Ancestor's intention of setting up this stage...?

Ning Fan closed his eyes and dismissed all the miscellaneous thoughts, emptying his mind. His ears could only hear the wind brushing against his face.

His mind became quieter. Gradually, he could not even hear the wind.

Slowly, he sensed a mysterious and enchanting power that was hidden beneath the Dao Mountain.

The power was extremely abstruse and it seemed to possess the Dao Power that could control life and death...

“Life and death...”

Ning Fan raised his head and stared at the endless Dao Stairs and his eyes became deep, as if he could see through everything.

At the first half of the Dao Stairs, every jade stair was surrounded with death qi which could seize one's life force.

However, starting from the fifth stele, the jade stairs were filled with life qi which could replenish one's life force.

The reason why the Rain Ancestor set up this stage was naturally not to seize the lifespan of the descendants.

Every step in the first four steles might take away one's lifespan but every step in the final four steles would return their lifespan.

From life to death and from death to life... By going through this process, a cultivator would be able to comprehend life and death.

This was an opportunity, an opportunity to comprehend life and death, the essence to ascend the heavens and become an immortal!

If one does not have a firm Dao Heart, they would probably give up this stage outright upon discovering that they would lose their lifespan for every step they climb.

Only those who had firm Dao Heart would persist in climbing the stairs. And when they reach the fifth stele, they would regain their lifespan and obtain an opportunity to comprehend life and death.

“One will age gradually for every step that made in the first four steles. Each step will draw them closer to their doom... In this phase, there is the Great Dao of Death.”

Ning Fan moved his fingers to perform hand seals, displaying the Immemorial Fishing Lines.

Strands of black fishing lines revolved around his fingers. At the same time, his eyes also turned pure black eerily. His presence was filled with death qi.

One step, two steps, three steps... Ning Fan continued climbing to the top of the mountain step by step. For every step he made, his lifespan would reduce by ten years.

However, he did not stop his pace, as if he felt nothing about the loss in his lifespan. After making two hundred steps, he arrived at the fourth stele but he had already lost two thousand years of life.

Starting from his current position, every step of stairs would cost him one hundred years of life.

Ning Fan did not have any hesitation and he began climbing the stairs one after another, moving toward the fifth stele.

One step cost him one hundred years of life. Ten steps cost him one thousand years of life. One hundred steps cost him ten thousand years of life...

There were 200 steps of Dao Stairs between the fourth stele and the fifth stele. In other words, one would need to lose twenty thousand years of life.

Usually, everyone who had arrived at this point would probably back off in fear. In Ning Fan's mind, however, there was no doubt or fear at all!

One step, two steps, three steps... Ning Fan's lifespan was draining away for every step he made and his appearance started to age.

When a cultivator's lifespan was about to finish, they would gradually show their age.

As Ning Fan's life force was draining away rapidly, the death qi around him became thicker and thicker.

From being a young man, his appearance gradually became like a middle-aged man. Then, he continued to age and became an old man who was at his final years of life.

His black hair turned gray. Age spots and wrinkles surfaced on his face while his body started to hunch over, forming a hunchback. Only his eyes, however, were pure black all the time. They looked frighteningly calm.

His flesh also started to wilt while his Sea of Consciousness dried up. His body felt like it was going to reduce to ashes...

Only his Dao Heart, however, was as solid as a rock. It was not wavered by anything at all!

After making two hundred steps, Ning Fan reached the fifth stele. The current him was already on the brink of death.

His eyes, however, looked deeper than before. At this very moment when he was about to die, his feeling about death was particularly profound!

“This is death!”

Ning Fan examined his dantian inwardly. In his dantian, a strand of pure black death qi was gradually forming!

Qi of Death! It was the power that countless rogue immortal s had spent their entire lives cultivating and comprehending! If one wishes to become an immortal, they must first experience life and death!

It was not true that one could gain immortality by becoming an immortal. In fact, only those who live a long life without dying deserved to be called as immortals!

There was only a strand of Qi of Death in Ning Fan’s body. However, it was like a seed that planted the Dao Comprehension of Death in Ning Fan’s heart.

If Ning Fan’s Dao Comprehension of Death increases in the future, this seed would eventually germinate and grow and become his aid in becoming an immortal!

“It isn’t a bad deal by exchanging twenty thousand years of life for this comprehension. However, I still have to get back the lifespan that I’ve lost from this Dao Mountain!”

Ning Fan's appearance was old and his voice was croaky but his eyes, however, were firm and stubborn. He scanned across the fifth stele. The stele was carved with five words in the Divine Seal Writing.

“One step returns one day”!

Starting from the fifth stele, the Dao Mountain would return the life that a cultivator had lost from the beginning for every step they make!

Ning Fan dismissed the death qi around him and performed a series of hand seals to display the Fishing Net of Creation.

This technique contained the Dao Power of Life. The moment he used this technique, his eyes instantly turned pure white and his presence was filled with a dense power of life force.

One step, two steps, three steps...

Ning Fan climbed all the way up, passing by the sixth, seventh and eighth stele.

One step one day, one step one year, one step ten years, one step one hundred years... The life he had lost in the previous journey was slowly returning to him.

His appearance gradually turned younger. His complexion slowly regained its vitality. His eyes were becoming deeper, just like the ocean.

Meanwhile, a strand of pure white life qi was forming in his dantian!

The moment the white qi was formed, the black and white qi in his dantian intertwined with each other, forming into a ring that was half-black and half-white. It then hovered above his primordial spirit.

His primordial spirit in the dantian opened his eyes and reached out his two tiny hands to grab the two strands of qi and swallow them into his abdomen.

Immediately, that miniature primordial spirit put on a smile of satisfaction.

“Excellent!”

At this moment, Ning Fan’s aura force rose. The black and white qi flashed in his eyes!

Standing on the eight thousand and five hundredth step of the Dao Stairs, Ning Fan’s lips curved upward into a smile.

After the formation of the Life and Death Q in his body, he did not get a brand-new ability. His magic power also was not improved. His Dao Heart, on the other hand, was unprecedentedly clear while his Dao Comprehension became more profound.

“The Rain Ancestor’s intention of leaving the Dao Stairs behind for the descendants of the Rain World to comprehend life and death was great. However, I just wonder what else is at the higher part of the mountain...”

Ning Fan glanced sideways to look at the ninth stele on the mountainside. It was also carved with five letters.

“Kill a person in ten steps”!

Deep in thoughts, he climbed ten steps slowly. Upon reaching the tenth step a golden light flashed before him and the silhouette of a burly man in golden armors appeared.

The burly man in golden armors had Void Glimpse Stage cultivation base. It was produced by a trace of sovereign qi left behind by the Rain Ancestor.

Moreover, this burly man existed due to the cloud mountain and was formed due to the sovereign qi. Thus, he would not disperse easily unless he is attacked by a sovereign qi attack.

The burly man had a blank expression. The moment he emerged, he instantly roared at Ning Fan coldly.

“Get off the Dao Mountain!”

Ning Fan narrowed his eyes. Since he possessed sovereign qi, he naturally had ways to kill that shadow in golden armor.

However, if he were to do that, he would be exposing his sovereign qi...

Perhaps Revered Sage was carefully observing the illusory realm right now, hoping to see the scene where Ning Fan eliminates the shadow using his sovereign qi.

Ning Fan shook his head.

If I wish to kill this golden-armored shadow, the only method probably is by using my sovereign qi.

However, the core test of this stage is one's Dao Heart. It isn't a test for one's abilities. Therefore, I might not necessarily need to kill this golden-armored shadow in order to clear this stage.

Ning Fan no longer paid any attention to that shadow. He continued moving forward directly and climbed the next jade stairs, trying to go past the golden-armored shadow.

The golden-armored shadow was infuriated. He turned around and hurled a punch at Ning Fan, aiming at his back.

Ning Fan directly summoned the Primordial Lightning Armor. He did not care about the fists from the golden-armored shadow at all.

As that punch was just equivalent to a Void Glimpse Stage attack, it could not break the defense of his Primordial Lightning Armor.

Ning Fan climbed up the stairs calmly. For every ten steps he made, a Void Glimpse Stage shadow in golden armors would appear but none of them could hurt him.

Ning Fan ignored every one of them. Gradually, it was unknown when all the shadows had disappeared...

What replaced them was all kinds of temptations. Shadows of heavenly ingredients and earthly treasures and figures of exquisite and alluring women would occasionally appear along the Dao Stairs.

Ning Fan walked all the way up the stairs. His Dao Heart was as firm as rocks. He did not spare a glance for those shadows.

As for this Dao Mountain, it did not seem to have a peak at all. No matter how long Ning Fan had walked, he also could not reach its end.

So this is the Dao Mountain. The Dao has no boundaries while the mountain had no summit. The path of cultivation itself is endless in the first place.

It's also difficult to say who is the strongest being on the cultivation path.

In the mortal realm, Vein Opening Realm cultivators are unrivalled celestial beings.

In low-grade cultivation countries, Gold Core Realm experts are regarded as old ancestors of a country.

In the Rain World, Void Fragmentation Realm experts are the sovereigns of the world.

In the Four Heavens, perhaps immortal emperors are the rulers.

However, immortal emperors aren't the strongest...

There is no peak in the path of cultivation. However, if one looks back at the path, which cultivation realm isn't a peak?

Today's beginning is yesterday's peak. Today's peak is the next year's starting point...

Ning Fan no longer raised his head and cast his eyes toward the top of the mountain. Instead, he lowered his head and stared at the path beneath his feet.

Slowly, the Dao Mountain no longer existed in front of his eyes. The Dao Stairs beneath his feet also disappeared.

After walking for an unknown amount of time, he suddenly stopped and raised his hand to pat his chest. With a faint smile, he muttered, "Dao Heart. The Dao is in the heart... The Dao Mountain itself does not have an end as the end isn't at the mountain peak but in one's heart!"

"If I make this place as the mountain peak, then here will be the mountain's summit!"

Chi

Ning Fan touched his glabella and starlight glinted. The Separation Slayer Sword appeared in his hand. Without hesitation, he raised that sword and slashed the Dao Mountain.

"He is... cutting the Dao!" Luo You suddenly cried out, as if she had just witnessed something astonishing.

Ning Fan had already discovered the true method of clearing this stage and that was to cut off the Dao Mountain. Then, wasn't the place where he was standing become the end of the mountain?

It was the correct way of clearing this stage. Moreover, it was an extremely important step for a true immortal to become an immortal emperor after cultivating for ages!

An immortal is someone who stands on top on the mountain while an immortal emperor must be someone who stands at the peak of the mountain.

Since there is no end in a cultivation path and no peak on the Dao Mountain, one has to cut the Dao in order to stand on the peak of the mountain! Only when one severs the unnecessary and unreachable Dao and keep the Dao beneath their feet can they become an immortal emperor!

Luo You was in disbelief that Ning Fan actually severed the Dao with a slash...

No one had ever told Ning Fan that one would need to cut the Dao in order to become an immortal emperor. He managed to figure it out based on his own power of understanding. It was truly frightening...

Obviously, only an immortal emperor was capable of severing the Dao. The current Ning Fan was still unable to cut off the Dao Mountain.

Even though his sword attack was strong and powerful, when it lanced on the Dao Mountain, it only caused the mountain to tremble slightly. After that, everything returned to normal.

Furthermore, his attack barely left any mark on the Dao Mountain...

“It’s so unfortunate. Although I have found the true method of clearing this stage, my current level is still far from enough to execute it...”

“The Rain Ancestor travelled across the Four Heavens and Nine Worlds unhindered. His capabilities could even impress immortal emperors. He left behind the Four Stages of Heaven and Earth. This Earth Stage perhaps was meant for the descendants of the Rain World to sever the Dao and become an immortal emperor...”

“Unfortunately, how would the Rain Ancestor be able to imagine that the Rain World would fall into today’s situation after his passing. In the Rain World, there isn’t an immortal. Besides, there are just a handful of Void Fragmentation Realm experts... I’m afraid no one in this world will be capable of severing this Dao Mountain.”

As soon as Ning Fan finished speaking, rays of dazzling light suddenly emerged behind him and sent him out of the illusory realm.

Even though he failed to sever the Dao Mountain and destroy the Earth Stage, he managed to discover the correct method of clearing this stage. Thus, he could also be deemed to have passed the stage.

In a flash, Ning Fan and Yun Daoku appeared in the Temple of Rain simultaneously.

All of a sudden, the entire temple was filled with cries of surprise.

“Oh my god! White-Robed Marquis actually managed to pass the Earth Stage! It’s extremely rare to have someone who managed to pass the Earth Stage successfully!”

“Indeed. The last time someone managed to get through this stage seems to be several hundred thousand years ago!”

“It’s already a rare occasion for common Void Refinement Realm cultivators to get through a single stage of the Four Stages of Heaven and Earth. White-Robed Marquis, on the other hand, has already passed two stages! According to rumors, he is also a Sixth Revolution Pill Refinement Master. It probably also isn’t difficult for him to pass the third stage... It’s indeed scary that the White-Robed Marquis can get through at least three stages today!”

“I wonder what prize the White-Robed Marquis will get after passing the Earth Stage!”

The Rain Sovereign’s brows were drawn together. Through telepathy, he asked Revered Sage who was standing beside him.

“Did he reveal any sovereign qi when he encountered the golden-armored shadows in the Earth Stage?”

“No...” Revered Sage answered truthfully.

“Is that so... The third stage can’t test anything about sovereign qi. It all rests on the fourth stage.”

Ning Fan took out his palace lord token. After passing the stage this time, his merit points increased by one billion points again.

Countless silver light dots flickered in front of him suddenly. Those light dots then condensed into a treasure box made out of silver. The item that was stored inside the box seemed to be the prize of passing the Earth Stage.

Before the treasure box was opened, a massive wave of vigorous magic power flowed out from within, causing all old monsters in the temple to catch their breaths in anticipation.

Even the Rain Sovereign's countenance changed with surprise taking over his grim expression. It even made him cast the matter about sovereign qi to the back of his mind!

"This is...! This is...!" Countless old monsters started to breathe more heavily and quickly.

Ning Fan also was slightly shocked. He did not expect that the prize of getting through the Earth Stage would be such an excellent item.

It was a great item and he liked it very much. However, since he obtained the item in the public, it was unknown if it would incite others to seize it from him...

Everyone in the temple could already guess what was inside the box. Ning Fan also did not try to hide it. With a gentle sigh, he opened the treasure box.

The moment the lid of the box was opened, cold white mist immediately wafted out from within.

The item that was stored inside the box was a Dao fruit!

It was a Dao fruit at the level of rogue immortal that was frozen by a seventh grade cold qi!

The magic power that this Dao fruit contains was at least two million units!

It was an extremely tempting item even to old monsters at the level of the Rain Sovereign!

“White-Robed Marquis, if I may be so bold, will you be willing to exchange for some other things with me using this Dao fruit...!?” A few Void Pierce Stage old monsters were already unable to suppress their desire and expressed their intention to trade for that Dao fruit.

“I’m willing to use a seventh-grade immortal void flame to exchange for this Dao fruit!” Even Yun Zhongyan, who was a prince of the Rain Palace, had made an offer.