

Humanity 1061

Chapter 1061 A Good Sword Cultivator

Battle merit, in the end, is something that can be continuously obtained, but the Soul Severing Saber is one of a kind. How could Lu Ye possibly differentiate the importance?

Now, as long as the materials for the Boulder Mountain Saber meet the requirements, it can be enhanced with more restrictions at any time to improve its quality, saving him the trouble of seeking someone to upgrade it later. Moreover, the saber now has the effect of harming the psyche, which is truly rare!

Lu Ye wanted to find someone to test the saber. For a combat cultivator like him, a weapon that grows alongside him has improved leaps and bounds, making his hands itch for action.

However, considering his current identity as Li Taibai, he could only give up the idea.

Lin Yue's efficiency was high; the next day, she brought back the appointment order from Ten Thousand Demons City, appointing Li Taibai to the position of assistant Mountain Pass Chief of Dark Moon Forest Pass, to assist in guarding the pass.

Lu Ye didn't investigate his Ten Thousand Demons Ridge battlefield marking because once triggered, it could only last for a few hours. But he believed that if he were to check it, the identity column would definitely have changes.

Under normal circumstances, even if Lu Ye had already advanced to the Divine Sea Realm, he wouldn't qualify to be a small pass chief, because he didn't have notable achievements and hadn't made substantial contributions to Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. Not even meeting the minimum military rank requirement.

In the current grand situation of the Nine Provinces, both the Haotian Alliance and Ten Thousand Demons Ridge have altered some old rules, tending towards flexible arrangements.

At Dark Moon Forest Pass, Lin Yue was unable to manage alone, so she seized a wild Divine Sea Realm to vouch for her, and Ten Thousand Demons City readily agreed. Nowadays, everywhere was in need of manpower; although a freshly advanced Divine Sea wasn't much, it was still a Divine Sea.

Lu Ye couldn't help but sigh.

While he was with the Haotian Alliance, he was just a squad leader in the Law Enforcement Hall. With no news for two years, he was even removed from position. Yet, at Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, he was given significant responsibility, becoming a small pass chief at a mountain pass. In Dark Moon Forest Pass, he was second only to one, above many, truly showing the unpredictability of life.

Of course, he knew this was a special act during a special time.

"A squad of cultivators has encountered some trouble four hundred miles east, where a Divine Sea Realm insect race is spotted. You need to make a trip."

After issuing the appointment order, Lin Yue didn't hesitate to instruct Lu Ye.

This was something the two Divine Sea Realms had to do.

The appearance of the insect plague was a great disaster for the Nine Provinces, but for many cultivators, it was a feast. As long as they survived, they could continuously earn battle merit and rapidly enhance their cultivation, a rare opportunity never before experienced.

Thus, whether in the Haotian Alliance or Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, many cultivators were exerting efforts to kill insects. Firstly, to protect the peace of the Nine Provinces, and secondly, for themselves.

Most cultivators in Dark Moon Forest Pass were scattered outside, looking for insect races to kill. The few that remained were either resting or recovering from injuries and would soon leave.

In the past, such a situation would be impossible, especially since Jinglan Lake Pass of the Haotian Alliance was just a thousand miles away. If their defensive strength weakened, it would be easy for the enemy to take advantage.

But now, driven by the current situation, both factions tacitly stopped large-scale attacks on each other, so even with the weak defense at Dark Moon Forest Pass, there was no worry about an attack from Jinglan Lake Pass.

Of course, small-scale conflicts were still inevitable.

As a governor of the pass at the Divine Sea Realm, there was usually no need to act, but if the cultivators under them discovered a Divine Sea Realm insect race and couldn't handle it, they would need to step in and kill it.

This is precisely why Lin Yue had been exhausted recently. In name, she was the grand pass chief, glamorous and prestigious, but in reality, she was running around saving people.

Finally managing to recruit a robust person like Lu Ye, obviously, he had to be deployed to solve the problem.

Firstly, she truly needed rest, and secondly, she wanted to test Lu Ye's capabilities.

Back when Li Taibai was at True Lake Level 3, he could instantly slay a True Lake Level 7, and she once regarded him as a rising star who could rival Lu Ye the Sect Destroyer. Now, having advanced to the Divine Sea Realm, his strength was undoubtedly not weak, and dealing with a Divine Sea Realm insect race shouldn't be a problem.

With the grand pass chief's order, Lu Ye naturally only had to comply.

Moreover, even without this order, he needed to go out for a trip.

He couldn't possibly linger in Dark Moon Forest Pass forever.

Without delay, a sword light flashed as Lu Ye soared into the sky, heading straight eastward.

Having advanced to the Divine Sea, his flying speed became much faster, not to mention he was now riding the sword.

Along the way, occasionally an insect race would block his path, but his body never stopped. Sword Qi flew from the sword gourd at his waist, slicing those insect races in half, their blood splattering in all directions.

Covering several hundred miles took no time. Looking down from high altitude, a large gathering of insect races could be seen below, resembling spiders, albeit only in shape.

Because the most distinctive feature of the insect race was their thick exoskeletal shell, which was the same regardless of shape.

Ordinary spiders don't have exoskeletal shells.

These spider-shaped insect races were sizable, each about the size of a baby, crawling rapidly on the ground, occasionally spitting silk from their mouths.

A group of more than ten people was trapped in the center, unable to advance or retreat.

The strength of these people was not weak, most were in the True Lake Realm, with a few in the Cloud River Realm. Normally, even if they couldn't defeat these spider insect races, escaping shouldn't be a problem, but unfortunately, a massive web in the sky blocked their escape route.

On that web lay a house-sized spider insect race, emanating a very fierce aura, already having taken the life of one cultivator, feasting upon them.

In this situation, it was obvious that a large spider of the Insect Race had brought its descendants out to hunt, and they stumbled upon this group of cultivators.

The small spiders were tasked with encircling the cultivators, preventing their escape, while the large spider indulged itself.

When Lu Ye arrived, the cultivators' defensive circle had dwindled to less than thirty feet, on the verge of collapse.

On the spider web, the large spider had finished its meal of the unfortunate cultivators and was about to target another victim.

It seemed this was a quite meticulous Insect Race, knowing to trap its prey here to eat fresh at any time.

As if sensing Lu Ye's swiftly approaching presence, the Insect Race's instincts made the large spider lift its compound eyes to look in Lu Ye's direction, then its mouthparts moved, and a strand of spider silk shot straight at Lu Ye.

The trapped cultivators also saw Lu Ye, and one of them shouted, "Hold on, someone is here to save us!"

Before the words had even settled, the spider silk suddenly transformed into a web that wrapped Lu Ye tightly.

The face of the cultivator who shouted turned green, not recognizing Lu Ye, and not knowing what background this Divine Sea Realm powerhouse had, only feeling that this person was rather impulsive. Approaching the battlefield so recklessly at such a level, now caught up, he feared the outcome would be grim.

One must know, that spider silk is poisonous!

However, just as the thoughts turned, a burst of firelight suddenly appeared in the air.

With a roll and sweep of the firelight, Lu Ye's figure re-emerged, and the web enveloping him was burned away completely.

Immediately followed by the clear sound of swords, several sword lights flew out from the sword gourd as if someone was writing in the air, and those sword lights transformed into strokes, crisscrossing the space where the large spider was.

Words and Sword Theorem!

This was a Sword Dao heritage obtained from the Soaring Dragon World, which Lu Ye had taught to Li Baxian, and he himself naturally could activate it.

Under the illumination of the Soaring Dragon World's Origin, he possessed an incredibly profound sword cultivation foundation, and now that the Words and Sword Theorem was unleashed, even if the sword master of the Beixuan Sword Sect came, he would have to praise him as a fine sword cultivator!

The chitinous exoskeleton on the large spider's body provided no protection whatsoever. With Lu Ye's cultivation improvement, the power he could exert from the sword gourd had greatly increased.

Sword cultivators are known for their lethality, under the brilliance of these few sword lights, the large spider's form immediately became rigid, yet the sword lights did not pause, under Lu Ye's control, they flew into the swarm.

They swept silently, and many of the Insect Race fell one after another.

Until a few strands of Sword Qi slowly dissipated, several hollowed-out spaces were cleared in the expansive encirclement, with numerous small spiders dead and injured beyond count.

Hanging in the sky, the large spider also shattered into pieces, with blood and corpse fragments scattering down.

A dozen or so cultivators were energetically reinvigorated, and they all began launching their own methods to advance outward.

The large spider's death evidently had an enormous impact on the small spiders, causing them to become utterly disordered and hardly a threat to the cultivators anymore.

Lu Ye strolled leisurely through the air, with sword lights occasionally flying out from the sword gourd.

But he could clearly see below, it seemed the dozen or so people were not of one group. Originally, they could band together when trapped and in danger, but as the greatest threat was removed, they split into two groups.

Lu Ye immediately understood that some of them were cultivators of the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, while others should be from the Haotian Alliance.

The cooperation of cultivators from both major factions was not unheard of; there were precedents of such alliances within some secret realms on the Cloud River battlefield.

But those collaborations were due to the circumstances, and it was rare to see such cooperation within the native lands of the Nine Provinces.

The dozen or so people exerted strength together, and with Lu Ye's coordination from the side, within just one incense stick's time, the insects here were thoroughly exterminated.

The two groups were panting heavily, yet were both vigilant and worriedly watching Lu Ye in the air.

The cultivators of the Haotian Alliance were unsure of his background, and the several cultivators from the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge were equally clueless about his origins.

Lu Ye didn't bother to explain, casually saying, "Why are you still staying here? Waiting for the Insect Race to retaliate?"

The commotion from the battle just now was notable. If there were other Insect Race members nearby, they would surely be attracted over.

The leaders of the two groups hurriedly bowed and said, "Thank you, my lord, for rescuing us!"

No need to figure out Lu Ye's origins at this point; judging by his demeanor, regardless of faction, he didn't seem intent on making things difficult for them.

The two teams darted off in different directions, soon disappearing from sight.

Lu Ye continued onward, flying for about 30 miles before descending with the sword light, diving into a fissure below.

After the great changes in the Nine Provinces, there were many such ground fissures from where the Insect Race emerged.

Chapter 1062 Mongrel

When Lu Ye came in, he immediately saw quite a number of Insect Race creatures climbing upwards.

He went on a killing spree to clear the nearby Insect Race before he found a hidden spot to activate the Split Shadow.

A moment later, another figure identical to Lu Ye appeared. He took off his Crimson Dragon Battle Suit and dressed the doppelganger in it, removed the sword gourd from his waist and hung it on the doppelganger's waist, then left two storage sacks with some supplies for the doppelganger.

Once everything was set, the doppelganger commanded the sword light, rushed out of the ground fissure, and dashed towards the direction of the Dark Moon Forest Pass.

Meanwhile, the main body concealed his form, silently left the ground fissure, and headed towards Haotian City.

The vision started becoming strange, as two different scenes simultaneously appeared in Lu Ye's view. Fortunately, Lu Ye had experienced this before, and now that he had been promoted to the Divine Sea Realm, his Mental Consciousness was much stronger, so this change didn't affect him much.

It was simply multitasking.

A vague uneasy feeling lingered, this feeling started yesterday but was not clear, and Lu Ye didn't pay much attention to it. Until today, this feeling became much more distinct.

Lu Ye did not know what was going on, he could confirm that no one was watching him nearby, but under such a feeling, he always felt the illusion that someone was watching him.

He did not believe it was an illusion.

Now with his Divine Sea Realm cultivation, his perception was much stronger than the True Lake Realm, so if he had such a feeling, it must have a reason.

The source was temporarily difficult to ascertain.

After advancing dozens of miles, Lu Ye then released his concealment, soaring upwards to travel through the air.

An hour later, a fleeing light was directly approaching from ahead.

From this direction, it should belong to someone from the Haotian Alliance, judging by the spirit force fluctuation on the opponent, about the Divine Sea Level 3.

Lu Ye did not know who was coming, so he slightly avoided.

In high-altitude flight, those with lower cultivation should yield to those with higher cultivation, this is common sense.

The method of yielding is naturally flexible, it could be lowering elevation, or moving sideways, all according to one's intent.

Lu Ye chose to lower his altitude.

However, he did not expect that while he was lowering his altitude, the other person also lowered their altitude.

Their figures quickly approached, and just as Lu Ye was about to yield again, the person said aloud from afar: "Oh? Is it Lu Yiye, Young Friend Lu?"

Lu Ye was slightly surprised, not expecting this person to recognize him, so he responded: "Indeed it is!"

The person was somewhat amazed: "Young Friend Lu has actually been promoted to Divine Sea? Congratulations."

Lu Ye frowned: "How do I address you?"

"I am Zhang Song from Qingyue Sect!" He said, raising his hand and waving it towards Lu Ye, a hint of blue light entered the view.

Lu Ye was still pondering what sect Qingyue Sect was...

Sect that could produce a Divine Sea Realm cultivator must be above 3rd grade, he did not have very detailed knowledge of the sects above 3rd grade in Bingzhou, but at least he had heard of the names.

Above 3rd grade, there was simply no Qingyue Sect.

Yet unexpectedly, Zhang Song suddenly increased his speed, instantly closing in on Lu Ye, with spirit force and blood Qi surging around him, he punched towards Lu Ye.

This punch carried tremendous force, if Lu Ye were still at the True Lake Realm cultivation, he simply could not withstand it.

This sudden change took Lu Ye by surprise, the opponent displaying the battlefield marking of the Haotian Alliance, he naturally instinctively felt this was an ally, hence he would instinctively lower his guard.

Lu Ye indeed relaxed his vigilance a bit, but because of that persistent feeling of being watched, he remained somewhat cautious.

Not wary of Zhang Song, but of possible hidden enemies lurking in the shadows.

This slight vigilance gave him the opportunity to react quickly.

A sharp ringing sound echoed, the Boulder Mountain Saber unsheathed, and fierce saber light slashed out.

With a boom, spirit force burst, waves surged, both figures were stunned.

Zhang Song's face clearly showed an expression of surprise; he unexpectedly approached aggressively without warning, attacking Lu Ye with cultivation two levels higher, logically it was impossible to fail, to ensure the success rate of the surprise attack, he even deliberately fabricated a tale of Qingyue Sect, precisely to distract Lu Ye.

Yet who would have thought that such meticulous planning failed to achieve his goal!

Upon seeing Lu Ye at the very first moment, Zhang Song realized the intelligence was wrong; Lu Yiye was not at the True Lake Realm, he had already been promoted to Divine Sea.

However, thinking Lu Ye, as a nascent Divine Sea cultivator might not be able to exhibit strong power, he continued with his plan.

He thought it would be easy, but little did he expect to hit a snag.

The opponent's reaction was swift, the saber strike extremely dexterous, and the power transmitted from the long saber couldn't be underestimated.

A newly promoted Divine Sea Realm cultivator, having such power?

Thoughts fluctuating, Lu Ye's second strike already chopped down, Zhang Song hurriedly raised his arms, dense blood Qi and spirit force intertwined to form a solid defense.

Boom...

The immense power came crashing down, making Zhang Song feel like the opponent was swinging not just a saber, but an entire mountain at him.

What made him even more uneasy was that this blade's sharpness was excessively fierce, showing signs of breaking through his body cultivator's defenses with just a single strike.

The might of the Boulder Mountain Saber, after its upgrade, was fully manifested in this moment.

With 180 restrictions embedded, numerous Hefty Weight Spirit Runes hidden within, each strike not only carried the explosive force of Lu Ye himself but also the terrifying pressure formed by the spirit runes. The combination was far from a simple one plus one; even Zhang Song, a body cultivator, found it hard to withstand.

However, the power of the Boulder Mountain Saber was secondary to this effect.

The main factor was Lu Ye's own foundation.

After ascending from True Lake Level 9 to Divine Sea, Lu Ye spent over half a year and even ventured deep into the Blood Sea at great risk to continuously accumulate the foundation of his physical body. Yet due to the early birth of his Mental Consciousness, he couldn't grasp that fleeting chance to break through, resulting in an increasingly robust physical foundation.

If an average person just needed to accumulate the weight of a jar to ascend to Divine Sea, Lu Ye had accumulated more than the weight of a large wine jar in True Lake Level 9, the kind that could hold ten jins of wine.

The ascension to Divine Sea was fraught with hardships, but once that barrier was crossed, it was like a vast open sea.

A firmer foundation, a more resilient base, and the extraordinary process of reaching Divine Sea resulted in earthshaking changes in strength, allowing Lu Ye to continue his previous prowess of slaying enemies across realms.

With the revamped Boulder Mountain Saber, what was a mere Divine Sea Level 3?

Plus, after months of painstaking refinement by over seventy elders, Lu Ye himself was unsure of his limits at this point.

Having witnessed the might of many tigers, how could he fear the snarls of a stray dog?

The first slash barely counted as evenly matched since Lu Ye struck it in haste.

By the second slash, the protective aura around Zhang Song's body was already in turmoil, with blood Qi surging.

Lu Ye's sabers moved with incredible speed, followed immediately by the third strike.

Like a balloon being punctured, the protective blood Qi and spirit force around Zhang Song's body was slashed open, the sharp Boulder Mountain Saber cutting a blood line across his crossed arms, and the immense force pressed down, sending him plummeting.

Zhang Song showed a look of horror.

He was shocked by the terrifying power Lu Ye suddenly unleashed and horrified by how he felt at the moment.

As a physique cultivator, with a robust body and strong recovery abilities, his body was their strongest reliance once they reached his level of cultivation; few cultivators of the same rank could destroy their bodies.

Even the Boulder Mountain Saber with 180 restrictions could only carve a bloody gash on his arms.

Such flesh wounds were insignificant to a physique cultivator with thick skin and tough flesh, easily recoverable.

Yet the sensation after being wounded made Zhang Song's heart race wildly.

When the Boulder Mountain Saber slashed him, his psyche suddenly hurt, as if an invisible blade light slashed into his Divine Sea.

Yet he hadn't discerned any sign of Lu Ye invoking soul power.

As his body plummeted, Lu Ye shadowed him closely, enveloping him with blade light.

Zhang Song roared, his face filled with humiliation.

Attacking from ambush with cultivation more than two minor levels higher, only to be beaten up was something intolerable for the fiery-tempered physique cultivators.

He wanted to fight back, but having lost the initiative, what chance was there?

With each flash of blade light, all he could do was desperately shield himself, yet every slash from Lu Ye sent a sharp pain through his psyche, making it difficult for him to engage Lu Ye in a battle of spirits.

Boom...

Zhang Song's body slammed into the ground heavily like a meteor, creating a massive crater, leaving him momentarily dizzy and disoriented.

His psyche was disturbed, making it difficult for him to focus.

He couldn't fathom what the opponent had done to him; why was there no fluctuation of soul power, yet his psyche was injured?

He knew this mission was a failure; being no match for the opponent, what was there to discuss about the mission?

All he could do now was escape quickly and report the information!

Dust and smoke rose, forming a natural cover, as Zhang Song's blood Qi surged, and he fled in one direction.

However, Lu Ye, as if prescient, intercepted his path, a saber in hand, stabbing forward, with countless blade lights falling like a cascade of stars onto Zhang Song.

Sizzling sounds echoed as Zhang Song's body shuddered repeatedly, dozens of bloody holes appeared on his body surface, halting his forward rush and sending him flying backwards.

No wonder physique cultivators' bodies were as sturdy as leather; had it been the fragile body of a magic cultivator, these injuries would have been deadly. Though Zhang Song appeared in a sorry state, his life was not in danger.

With difficulty, he stabilized his form, kneeling halfway to the ground.

The pain in his psyche became increasingly apparent, as though his entire psyche was being torn apart, contorting his expression into a fearsome and horrid facade.

Lu Ye raised his left hand, and with the surge of spirit force, a bizarre scene unfolded.

The blood flowing from Zhang Song's wounds seemed to come alive, crawling over his body, transforming into streams of bloodlines that covered his entire form in the blink of an eye.

Chapter 1063 A Familiar Feeling

A thread of blood lines linked together, as Lu Ye clenched his hand, they abruptly tightened, resembling a rope, binding Zhang Song firmly.

Blood Spirit Shackles!

A type of Blood Path Secret Technique.

It must be said that many of the Blood Race's secret techniques are extremely strange and mystical, stemming from their bloodline legacy, impossible to perform for those outside the Blood Race.

Lu Ye refined a drop of Sacred Blood, and with it ascended to the Divine Sea, the power of the Talent Tree burned away the bizarre force within the Sacred Blood that could have transformed Lu Ye into a Blood Race, granting him an incomplete bloodline legacy of the Blood Race.

He could also easily perform various blood techniques.

He approached Zhang Song with his knife, lowered his eyelids, and asked lightly, "Why?"

He couldn't understand, this person was clearly from the Haotian Alliance, why would he ambush him.

Moreover, he had only just returned to the Nine Provinces two days ago.

Was it a coincidence?

It didn't seem like it; this person seemed to be coming specifically for him.

But he obviously didn't know that Lu Ye had already ascended to the Divine Sea, which was why he appeared surprised when they met.

Since there was no personal grudge between them, there must be someone behind the scenes.

Counting carefully, on the Haotian Alliance side, those who openly wanted him dead included only one person, Liew Yuemei.

But she was severely reprimanded by the sect master last time, and now she may not have the courage.

Zhou Kui barely counts as half, but Zhou Kui should not have the ability to employ someone of Divine Sea Level 3 cultivation to kill him, it's not that Lu Ye looked down on him, it's just stating the facts.

Other than these two, who else could have a grudge against him?

What made Lu Ye more concerned was whether the bad feeling he sensed was related to Zhang Song.

He had to find out.

In fact, he could activate a bit of Telepathy Divine Runes to investigate the cause, but ever since using this spirit rune once in the Blood Refinement World, Lu Ye decided not to use it unless absolutely necessary, because that feeling was just too awful.

Zhang Song was still struggling, but bound by the Blood Spirit Shackles, and with his psyche wounded, how could he have the strength to escape?

His heart was darkened, knowing that this mission not only failed but also left his fate bleak.

He really hadn't expected Lu Yiye to be so capable, he thought it would be a breeze to capture Lu Ye with his Divine Sea Level 3 cultivation.

As a result, now he himself was captured alive.

In cultivator combat, defeating, killing, capturing alive, are three entirely different concepts, each progressively harder, Lu Yiye's ability to easily capture him alive meant his strength far exceeded Divine Sea Level 3, the hardest part for him to accept was that he didn't even know this person's limits.

Feeling the sharp breath of the long knife against his neck, Zhang Song chuckled quietly, "Want to know why? Ask in Huang Quan."

Lu Ye's face changed, hurriedly activating his Mental Consciousness, turning it into an invisible impact, aiming it at Zhang Song.

Yet it was still too late, with a soft 'puff', something seemed to explode in Zhang Song's mind, following which, his head tilted, losing breath, he fell down limply.

Lu Ye quickly went up, checked Zhang Song's condition, and found he was truly dead.

This scene... seemed familiar.

It reminded him of the experience in the Chen family at Mount Mi over two years ago.

Back then, the Chen Family Patriarch Chen Tianchui died before him in the same bizarre manner.

Later he was captured by Yu Daiwei, taken to a small unnamed secret realm, where while chatting with Mount Tai, he tested with words, confirming that the Chen family was under Mount Tai.

The person behind the scenes was clear now.

At that time in the Chen family, their group was inexplicably attacked, finally, he unleashed the Dragon Throne, slaughtered all sides, resolving the crisis.

Now just returning to the Nine Provinces for two days, someone came to cause him trouble again for no reason.

It seems Mount Tai already knows he's back in the Nine Provinces.

That's right, he exchanged battlefield marking with Yu Daiwei at that time, the thought was that this could be used to locate Yu Daiwei's position, because he wanted to cause trouble in that small unnamed secret realm, if Yu Daiwei's marking could connect, it indicated she was in the secret realm, and naturally, he had to be discreet.

If Yu Daiwei's marking couldn't connect, it indicated she had left the secret realm, Lu Ye could then act freely without concern.

Unexpectedly, today, it was used against him by the other side.

Yu Daiwei evidently discovered that his battlefield marking was in a contactable state, hence decided that he had returned to the Nine Provinces, but perhaps she couldn't come herself on time, thus sent Zhang Song to intercept.

Only both she and Zhang Song underestimated his strength, leading to Zhang Song's demise here.

This is also common human behavior, two years ago Lu Ye's cultivation was only True Lake Level 5, even if Zhang Song confirmed he had ascended to the Divine Sea upon seeing him, he would certainly not take him, a newly ascended person, seriously, ending up being struck down by Lu Ye like a dead dog after a brief clash.

The situation is roughly clear, but there's still one thing Lu Ye doesn't understand.

What method did Mount Tai use to control Zhang Song, making him prefer death over saying a word.

The people from the Chen family were the same back then.

Dao soldiers might be loyal enough to Mount Tai, but neither the Chen family nor Zhang Song seemed like Dao soldiers.

This kind of method that makes subordinates willing to die is simply unbelievable.

The source should be in the brain, because whether it was Chen Tianchui or Zhang Song, before they died, Lu Ye heard a slight abnormal sound coming from their brains.

He hurriedly crouched down, placing a finger on Zhang Song's forehead, and his Mental Consciousness surged to investigate.

Yet nothing was found.

Zhang Song had died, but that looming feeling of being watched did not disappear; instead, it became stronger.

It seems the source of this feeling was not Zhang Song. If not him, then it was either Mount Tai or Yu Daiwei.

It was most likely the latter. Mount Tai, being the mastermind, had many capable subordinates and couldn't handle things personally all the time.

Did they use a tracking disc? Lu Ye had a revelation.

Although he had been tracked with a tracking disc before, his cultivation was low back then, unlike today, with a Divine Sea Realm cultivation. His powerful foundation made his senses very keen, hence the perception of that elusive trace of tracking.

The stronger the perception became, the closer the other party was to him.

Lu Ye suddenly felt a surge of fighting spirit.

To be honest, he wasn't satisfied with the fight against Zhang Song earlier.

After advancing to the Divine Sea, although he battled daily, it was always a one-sided beating from the seniors. The seniors in the Blood Refinement World understood thoroughly the importance of rigorous tempering, so they didn't hold back when teaching him, making it as brutal as he could endure.

No matter whom he sparred with, Lu Ye always ended up dazed, yet those seniors were careful not to cause any lasting damage. Even if he was severely hurt, it wouldn't affect his ability to take a beating the next day.

Under such conditions, Lu Ye was unsure where his limits lay because he lost every battle.

Upon returning to the Nine Provinces, he consecutively killed two Divine Sea Realm Insect Race members in a single stroke without room to showcase his skills.

The battle with Zhang Song was also swift and decisive.

He urgently needed a suitable whetstone to test his own mettle.

A cultivator unaware of their own limits is not a qualified cultivator. Throughout their life, they would eventually encounter various crises. If they cannot accurately judge their strength, they might easily fall into dangerous situations.

So, if Yu Daiwei really came for him, it would be a fantastic opportunity.

As for whether he could win, it was no longer in Lu Ye's consideration. If he couldn't win, he couldn't win, nothing shameful about it—the cultivation gap was a fact. He was still young. Yu Daiwei, though appearing young, was actually far older than him. He would have his day to surpass her.

Besides, if he couldn't win, he could run. Among the many secret techniques of the Blood Race, the Blood Escape Technique was unparalleled in the world. When executed, Yu Daiwei could do nothing but eat dust behind him.

Having made up his mind, Lu Ye simply decided not to leave.

He collected Zhang Song's belongings and then placed the corpse into the storage sack.

A Divine Sea Realm from the Haotian Alliance turned out to be under Mount Tai's command; this was not a trivial matter and needed to be reported back to Haotian City to inform the sect master.

If there's one Zhang Song, could there be a second, a third?

He did not send a message to the sect master or Qian Wudang. The Nine Provinces were currently chaotic, and those two would undoubtedly be swamped with affairs. There was no need to trouble them unless there was full confidence in capturing someone.

Back in the True Lake Realm, Lu Ye would request assistance from the seniors without hesitation when in danger since his strength was inadequate and there was no other way. But now that he was in the Divine Sea Realm, if he relied on the seniors for everything, what kind of cultivator would that make him?

In less than an hour, a streak of light rapidly approached from a distance.

Yu Daiwei's expression was rather bewildered because the turn of events left her puzzled.

Even though she was of the Divine Sea Level 8 cultivation, flying here all the way from Leizhou took considerable time. During this period, using the tracking disc, she found that Lu Ye was moving, heading directly toward Haotian City.

This forced her to dispatch Zhang Song to intercept halfway, otherwise, if Lu Ye reached Haotian City, she would lose her chance to strike.

Logically, Zhang Song taking action should not have been a problem. What unexpected situation could arise from a Divine Sea Level 3 cultivator capturing someone from the True Lake Realm?

Yet, an unexpected incident happened.

Zhang Song's battlefield marking suddenly burst apart, which undoubtedly meant that Zhang Song had died.

Instinctively, she thought there must be some powerful figure hidden by Lu Yiye's side, or Zhang Song couldn't have died for no reason.

A Divine Sea Level 3 is not so easy to kill.

From afar, she saw a figure standing on a desolate peak, and with full Ocular Power, she observed—it was none other than Lu Yiye.

Yu Daiwei immediately became alert, casting her gaze around warily while her Mental Consciousness swiftly unfurled.

She was searching for the powerful being hidden in the shadows.

Lu Yiye, in this posture, clearly knew someone was tracking his whereabouts with a tracking disc. Despite knowing this, he didn't leave but rather waited in this desolate area.

This was extremely unusual in itself.

Yu Daiwei felt as if this place had already set up a net to trap her.

She immediately halted, stopping ten miles away from Lu Ye.

She couldn't be blamed for being so cautious; it was a precise deduction based on the available information.

On the barren peak, Lu Ye looked up at the approaching Yu Daiwei, his gaze calm.

Everything was as expected. It was this woman who used the tracking disc to track his movements, and Zhang Song was undoubtedly dispatched by her.

Chapter 1064 Hound

Ten miles apart, Lu Ye's eyes were calm as Yu Daiwei glanced around with suspicion, but didn't find anything suspicious.

In contrast, where Lu Ye stood, there were traces of a battle, with a large pit not far away, clearly made by someone falling from the sky, and many bloodstains scattered on the ground.

"What are you looking for?" Lu Ye asked, gripping his saber, secretly gathering force.

"How did he die?" Yu Daiwei was confused. Based on her investigation, there didn't seem to be any strong cultivators lurking nearby. This situation could only mean two things: either there was indeed no ambush, or the ambusher was a ghost cultivator concealed, making it undetectable to her.

If there's a ghost cultivator she can't detect, it certainly isn't someone to be underestimated, making her even more cautious.

"I killed him!"

Though not directly, he was forced to death by him.

Yu Daiwei sneered, "You alone?"

It wasn't that she looked down on Lu Ye; it was the prevailing thought. Two years ago, True Lake Level 5 Realm — no matter how fast Lu Ye's cultivation speed was, how strong could he be now?

How could Zhang Song, a Divine Sea Level 3, die at Lu Ye's hands?

"Me alone!" As Lu Ye spoke, he exerted power, spirit force surged around, and deep footprints formed on the ground as his figure charged toward Yu Daiwei like thunder.

Through this movement, his spirit force intensity was immediately revealed.

"Divine Sea Realm!" Yu Daiwei was astonished, pondering earlier how Lu Yiye might not have advanced much in cultivation over the past two years, now realizing he had actually ascended to the Divine Sea Realm.

That's quite a significant advancement! No wonder the Venerable Lord considers him burdened with great destiny; indeed, he defies common logic.

In an instant of shock, their distance closed to mere miles.

Yu Daiwei raised her hand, casting a subtle spell. She was a magic cultivator, which Lu Ye had long suspected, so he actively chose to rush toward her.

Magic cultivators have range; combat cultivators have proximity. The focus of their encounter lies in distance. Without closing in, one can't pose a significant threat to a magic cultivator, but once close enough, it's the magic cultivator's turn to feel awkward.

The spell swiftly reached Lu Ye, who dodged, but with a powerful magic cultivator like Yu Daiwei, spells weren't easily evaded.

Magic is akin to weapon control; once cast, it can be controlled further.

If successfully dodged, it was because the magic cultivator intended so.

Magic cultivators below the Divine Sea struggle to manipulate their spells smoothly, but once their cultivation reaches Divine Sea, with Mental Consciousness, they experience a qualitative change.

Yu Daiwei wasn't sure how Lu Ye managed to ascend to Divine Sea so quickly, but ultimately, he was still at Level 1 with little experience of the Divine Sea Realm's perilous encounters.

Her spell, once evaded by Lu Ye, quickly looped around in pursuit, while she launched another spell toward Lu Ye, forming a pincer attack.

Feeling proud, thinking the arrogant child will now understand the might of Yu Daiwei.

Of course, she hadn't exerted her full power, using less than forty percent, believing it was sufficient to capture Lu Ye, preserving her strength against any potential ambushes.

For this reason, a defensive spirit treasure was ready to be unleashed once the hidden ghost cultivator appeared.

However, the next moment, she was startled, as Lu Ye faced the second spell without dodging, and with a saber strike, amidst a thunderous roar, spirit force went berserk.

Lu Ye's figure emerged unscathed, continuing his advance without slowing down, closing yet another mile quickly toward her.

Feeling the fierce, domineering threat and intense aggression ahead, Yu Daiwei raised her hand again, unleashing spell after spell.

In response to the numerous spell attacks, Lu Ye's only tactic was direct confrontation, breaking through wave after wave.

As saber light glistened, none of the spells achieved their mark, and the distance between them rapidly decreased.

For the first time, Yu Daiwei's expression changed, realizing she gravely underestimated Lu Ye's capability.

Logically, given their vast cultivation gap, her techniques should leave Lu Ye struggling, yet he unveiled strength well beyond his cultivation, effortlessly evading spells with his saber.

Even without exerting full strength, her array of techniques should suffice against an ordinary Divine Sea cultivator, yet Lu Ye dismissed it casually.

What kind of anomaly was this?

Despite the vast cultivation gap, Yu Daiwei dared not allow Lu Ye to close in; she, a delicate-bodied magic cultivator, faced great risk against a combat cultivator up close, regardless of the power imbalance.

Especially as Lu Ye, once taking the initiative, displayed immense aggression, she could vividly imagine the relentless storm she'd face if he reached her.

Instinctively intensifying her force, Lu Ye's forward momentum finally slowed, as the array of spells became the greatest obstruction.

At this moment, Lu Ye was only one mile away from Yu Daiwei.

From this distance, he could certainly engage in a spell duel, using Blood Path Secret Techniques with ease, yet it was pointless.

Though capable of employing various Blood Path Secret Techniques, lacking profound mastery, predicting their effectiveness was uncertain; attacking her strength with his weakness would be foolish.

His only thought was to figure out how to get close!

Yu Daiwei's heart was in turmoil because she discovered that Lu Ye saying Zhang Song was killed by him was very likely true!

Judging by the strength Lu Ye had displayed, he certainly had the capability to slay Zhang Song, and this was evidently not his limit.

If this were true, it meant there were no ambushes nearby, nor any terrifying ghost cultivators; it was all in her mind scaring herself!

Yu Daiwei was furious. The last time she captured Lu Ye, he was utterly defenseless, but in just two years, the boy she could easily handle had grown to such a stage?

She kept increasing her own power output, gradually reaching seventy percent, finally intercepting Lu Ye's advance.

Yu Daiwei let out a long breath; it wasn't easy. A Divine Sea Level 1 cultivator took seventy percent of her strength to contend with—telling this would likely make no one believe.

Yet such an unbelievable event was happening right in front of her eyes, and she was experiencing it firsthand.

She increasingly admired the Venerable Lord's insight. Perhaps only someone like this could assist the Venerable Lord in achieving great deeds? Yet she knew that boy was not easy to tame; the Venerable One would find it no simple task to subdue him.

While she was lost in her thoughts, Lu Ye was suddenly advancing and retreating amidst the storm of magic spells.

The advance was to get closer.

The retreat was because he had no choice.

Between each advance and retreat, he couldn't manage to close the distance with Yu Daiwei.

He wasn't sure how much power Yu Daiwei had used, but it probably wasn't her full strength. Yet, in the face of such a powerful Divine Sea realm magic cultivator, this was already the limit of what he could achieve.

He was less than half a mile from Yu Daiwei!

He remained unperturbed, keeping a steady demeanor that stood in stark contrast to his aggressive aura, as fierce as fire.

He was well-experienced in fighting magic cultivators; among the over seventy seniors in the Blood Refinement World, many were magic cultivators like the Tofu Lady...

He was naturally adept at handling magic cultivator attacks.

If Zhang Song was a mongrel, then Yu Daiwei was a hound, incomparable to a tiger like Tofu Lady.

Under Tofu Lady, Lu Ye could only be trampled because the difference in strength was too great. However, months of sharpening had long trained him to endure immense pressure.

A drop of Essence Blood suddenly exploded at his heart's core, and an intense blood mist instantly engulfed Lu Ye's entire body, making him look like a man of blood from afar.

On his chest, the swiftly constructed Bloodstain Spirit Runes were immediately activated.

The already violent aura suddenly surged, causing even the surrounding space to twist abruptly.

The stalemate was instantly broken, and amidst flashing blades, Lu Ye charged forward with full speed.

"Ah!" Yu Daiwei was still shocked by the powerful strength Lu Ye had displayed, but she didn't expect such a sudden change. With a startled cry, she dared not hold back any longer; her dense spell assault was pushed to the limit.

This time, she indeed utilized her full strength.

However, it was ultimately a step too late, mainly because Lu Ye's explosion was too abrupt, leaving her with no preparation at all.

The half-mile distance closed directly, with all spells along the way exploding. Seeing the terrifying blade light slash down, Yu Daiwei hesitated no more. The protective spirit treasure, originally meant to counter the "ghost cultivator," was activated.

An oval-shaped shield swiftly whirled around her, blocking the strike of the Boulder Mountain Saber.

Boom...

Spirit force went chaotic, the sound was deafening, and Yu Daiwei staggered slightly. Seeing Lu Ye's second saber strike coming down, she hesitated not and hurled a Psyche Secret Technique at Lu Ye.

She didn't want to use the Psyche Secret Technique on Lu Ye, as her task wasn't to kill him but to capture him again per the Venerable Lord's orders.

Using magic cultivator methods, there was still room for moderation, and she could control it perfectly. But there were too many uncontrollable factors with the Psyche Secret Technique.

If it accidentally damaged Lu Ye's psyche, making him demented or affecting his foundation, even if she captured him, she wouldn't be able to explain it to the Venerable Lord.

But plans couldn't keep up with changes, and using the Psyche Secret Technique was a reflexive counterattack.

The moment the secret technique was performed, Yu Daiwei secretly cursed, immediately withdrawing some strength.

At the same time, in Lu Ye's vision, he seemed to see an invisible sharp blade thrusting, piercing the depths of his psyche.

And then... nothing happened.

The Divine Sea was slightly disturbed, with only a slight pain, but it didn't affect him much and was quickly suppressed by the Soul Suppressing Pagoda.

His slash was blocked by the protective spirit treasure swirling around Yu Daiwei's side, as if slicing into cotton without any resistance.

Immediately following, a massive force swept over him, and even though he held his saber horizontally before him, he was still sent crashing away.

Chapter 1065 Showdown

In mid-air, Lu Ye hunched down, propelling his spirit force to stabilize his floating body. With almost no pause, he attacked Yu Daiwei again like a scarlet lightning bolt striking from the sky.

The long blade swung around, shattering numerous spells that rushed toward him.

Yu Daiwei quickly retreated!

Having suffered once, she had already assessed Lu Ye's terrifying strength and dared not stand still for another beating. It was a true shock to her that Lu Ye's power was so strong and that he had launched such a sudden attack, catching her completely off guard.

Two figures swiftly glided across the sky, spells and blade light surging amidst the pursuit and escape, making it extremely lively. The Insect Race drawn in by the fluctuations in spirit force often exploded into a mist of blood before they even got close.

However, the distance between them could no longer be closed.

The difference in strength was evident; although Lu Ye had activated his Bloodstain Spirit Runes, there was a limit to the enhancement it could provide to his power. It was impossible for the Bloodstain Spirit Runes to cause his strength to surge infinitely; this was expected.

Yet, he was fighting with great passion. Though he had only struck Yu Daiwei a few times since the battle began, without substantial effect, the goal was achieved—he had a clear understanding of his current strength.

Of course, he still had some tricks he hadn't used yet.

In this situation, the awkward part was that he couldn't close the distance with Yu Daiwei, but if he used the Blood River, there was still a chance.

Especially the Blood River Technique merged with essence blood—it was more powerful than the ordinary Blood River. Once he drew Yu Daiwei into the Blood River, he could take advantage of being on his home ground.

The earlier sudden assault was the best opportunity to cast the Blood River Technique when approaching Yu Daiwei.

He still had the Dragon Throne!

However, Yu Daiwei was not an ordinary Divine Sea Realm opponent. Lu Ye was uncertain if using all his trump cards could kill her!

Moreover, Lu Ye bore no ill will toward her. He waited here merely to use her as a whetstone.

Although Yu Daiwei had captured him before, she did nothing significant to him. Tai Shan had other matters to ask of him, and there was no deep enmity between them.

Zhang Song came merely to capture him, not to kill, and ended up forced to end his own life.

Through this conflict, Lu Ye realized his shortcomings.

He lacked a means to quickly charge to an enemy's side. For a combat cultivator, being unable to get close to an enemy made it challenging to pose a lethal threat.

This is something every combat cultivator needs to consider.

The Blood Escape Technique might be a direction, but when activated without essence blood, it wasn't fast enough to be sudden, lacking effectiveness for a one-hit result. Using essence blood had usage limitations.

As Lu Ye contemplated this, Yu Daiwei suddenly shouted, "Stop, I won't fight anymore!"

Lu Ye immediately halted, his aura simmering and hard to calm.

Yu Daiwei gained some distance before stopping, scrutinizing Lu Ye as if seeing him anew, with a hint of unwillingness on her face.

In a battle against someone at Divine Sea Level 8, fighting to such an extent with Lu Ye, she felt too embarrassed to speak of it.

If the fight continued, her abundant spirit force reserves would certainly grant her a greater advantage, but there was no need; she wasn't there to kill Lu Ye, only to capture him.

Looking at it now, completing this task seemed impossible, and she couldn't understand how this young man trained—they had the ability to defeat enemies beyond their level at every realm, especially upon reaching the Divine Sea Realm.

Given his displayed power, an ordinary Divine Sea Level 4-5 opponent facing him might die.

At the very least, it would take someone at Divine Sea Level 6 to contend with him.

In other words, she couldn't regard Lu Ye merely as Divine Sea Level 1 but rather as a Level 6.

Her strength was insufficient to capture a Level 6. Rather than continuing in this stalemate, attracting the Insect Race or even other Divine Sea Realm members of the Haotian Alliance, making peace was the only choice.

Luckily, this young man was sensible enough; when she said to stop, he immediately did so. Otherwise, under these circumstances, her only option would be to flee.

After all, she was in the shadows, unlike Lu Ye, who could openly walk and battle with enemies.

"You're something, kid!" Yu Daiwei bit her teeth, her expression suggesting she wanted nothing more than to bite Lu Ye.

Lu Ye said nothing, slowly sheathing his blade, though his aura wasn't diminished, and the Bloodstain Spirit Runes continued to function.

"Are you mute? Not a peep!" Yu Daiwei was somewhat furious, mainly because of the big disgrace this time, failing the task.

"Tai Shan is looking for me?" Lu Ye spoke.

Yu Daiwei's pupils shrank, "Where did you hear that name?"

Last time when the Venerable Lord chatted with Lu Ye, she was nearby and was sure the Lord didn't disclose his name. She certainly didn't mention it to Lu Ye either. So how did Lu Ye know the name Tai Shan?

It made no sense.

Without getting an answer, Yu Daiwei frowned and said, "The Venerable Lord wishes for you to come over; there's an important matter to discuss!"

Lu Ye calmly responded, "You have quite a unique way of inviting people."

If the strength wasn't enough, it wasn't an invitation but a capture, just like last time. Only by displaying enough might could he qualify to be invited.

"Tell Tai Shan that I will come to find him, but not now. Moreover, if you dare entangle with me before I approach you proactively, be careful that I'll expose all his little secrets!"

About Tai Shan, the Senior Brother had given instructions.

As someone who once served Mount Tai, Senior Brother knows what Mount Tai is doing. Lu Ye discussed this matter with Senior Brother on the Sacred Island.

If Senior Brother were still in the Nine Provinces, Mount Tai would naturally look up to him.

But human minds change easily, and given the passage of time, even Senior Brother cannot be certain of Mount Tai's current disposition.

He advised Lu Ye that when the opportunity is right, he should contact Mount Tai and lay everything out for discussion. If planned well, Mount Tai might become an ally.

This requires time, not now.

At the very least, Lu Ye needs to grow to the point where he can escape under Mount Tai's control before he has the qualification to converse with him, or else rushing in foolishly would only place his fate in someone else's hands, which is imprudent.

With these words, Lu Ye turned around and soared into the sky.

Yu Daiwei's expression was uncertain, but suddenly she remembered something and shouted, "Where is Dao Thirteen?"

"Dead!" A distant voice replied.

Yu Daiwei gritted her teeth and stomped her foot.

The Venerable Lord's Dao soldier numbers are not many. These entities can't be refined at will, and Dao Thirteen was a standout among them. Losing him like this is truly regrettable.

But now, unable to trace Dao Thirteen's whereabouts, and with Lu Ye declaring he is dead, it's very likely true.

Without lingering at the site, the recent battle, though brief, was quite a commotion and would have attracted Divine Sea Realm cultivators from nearby.

Flying a distance away, she found a secluded spot and reported the encounter with Lu Ye to the Venerable Lord.

She quickly received a message from the Venerable Lord: "Wait!"

Yu Daiwei naturally followed the command.

Meanwhile, Lu Ye continued forward, confirmed Yu Daiwei was not following, and dispersed the Bloodstain Spirit Runes.

With spirit runes enhancing him, although his strength greatly increased, the self-consumption is substantial, so it's not suitable to maintain for long periods.

In this battle, he lost a drop of Essence Blood, though for ordinary Blood Race, such a thing is extremely precious; for Lu Ye, it's not a big deal. Given time, he can refine another drop to replenish it.

After the better part of a day, a majestic city came into view ahead.

Haotian City arrived!

After more than two years, Lu Ye finally saw this familiar city again and felt a sense of nostalgia.

Without stopping, he rushed headlong into the city.

The number of cultivators within Haotian City has noticeably decreased, and under Lu Ye's Mental Consciousness, he couldn't even perceive many Divine Sea Realm cultivators; this wasn't something that happened before.

Such a situation undoubtedly relates to the current bug disaster.

Many cultivators are scattered throughout Bingzhou, either guarding human race gathering places, ground fissures, or rushing to various aid points, leading to fewer cultivators in Haotian City than before.

Of course, necessary defensive forces must still be stationed here; after all, this is also the Central Hub of the Haotian Alliance in Bingzhou.

Lu Ye first went to the sect master's courtyard; the sect master was not there, and the courtyard was empty.

As expected.

He then went to the Justice Department; there were no cultivators guarding the entrance, so he walked straight in.

He immediately saw a familiar face, worried dryly seated behind the desk, disheveled, and unshaven, looking like he hadn't rested in days, with a pile of jade slips waiting to be processed in front.

"Senior Brother Cheng?" Lu Ye exclaimed in surprise.

Seated behind the desk was Cheng Xiu.

Also one of Qian Wudang's trusted aides, back when Lu Ye was at Cangyan Mountain Pass, it was always Cheng who handled the Explosive Fire Spirit Stones with him.

He used to have a True Lake Level 9 cultivation, and now he's surprisingly in the Divine Sea.

In two years, Lu Ye is not the only one who's grown.

Hearing the voice, Cheng Xiu raised his head in a daze, quickly showing a look of astonishment.

Because Lu Ye had been missing for more than two years. Although it was ascertainable that he was still alive, no one knew exactly where he was. Before the bug disaster erupted, Thang Yifeng, the sect master of the Righteous Blood Sect, used many connections to inquire about Lu Ye's whereabouts, but all results were fruitless; after the disaster broke out, there was no extra energy to pursue Lu Ye's trail.

Therefore, he never expected that such a person who had been missing for over two years suddenly appeared before him.

"Lu Yiye, you're back?" Cheng Xiu said with a smile.

Lu Ye also smiled, "Senior Brother Cheng has ascended to the grand position, changing the heavens and earth? Where's our Chief Qian, down and out?"

Cheng Xiu laughed and cried, "Junior Brother, don't speak nonsense. Lord Department Chief is out on important business and has entrusted me with handling affairs here."

Lu Ye understood.

He also knew that a strong figure like Qian Wudang wouldn't easily encounter any mishaps. He was just curious why Cheng Xiu was here managing affairs. Given the current situation, Bingzhou's situation might be more serious than he had imagined, otherwise, Qian Wudang wouldn't have easily left the Justice Department.

Chapter 1066 Reporting Safety

In the grand hall of the Justice Department, Lu Ye chatted casually with Cheng Xiu, who inquired about Lu Ye's whereabouts over the past two years. Lu Ye simply explained that he had been trapped in a small secret realm and only recently managed to escape.

The affairs of the Blood Refinement World were too bizarre to elaborate on.

Cheng Xiu couldn't help but sigh. Being trapped in one place for two years would be unbearable for anyone. In his mind, he imagined a dark, solitary, and cramped environment.

"By the way, Junior Brother Lu, you were away for so long that the Justice Department has relieved you of your captain position. Xiao Xinghe is now the captain of Team D-9."

Lu Ye nodded, "As it should be."

He had anticipated this, so it didn't come as a surprise.

"Currently, various places in Bingzhou are in need of manpower. Your return is timely, Junior Brother. Several teams are short on staff. See which team you'd like to join, and I'll arrange it for you."

Cheng Xiu had the authority for this; otherwise, Qian Wudang wouldn't have put him here to handle affairs.

Of course, major decisions were still directed by Qian Wudang.

Lu Ye then activated his spirit force.

Cheng Xiu's eyes widened, "Junior Brother, you are now in the Divine Sea?"

"Two years in the small secret realm, it was a blessing in disguise," Lu Ye explained.

Cheng Xiu was stunned for a while before regaining his senses: "Junior Brother, your cultivation speed is truly beyond reach."

Over two years ago, his cultivation was much higher than Lu Ye's. But now, their levels were equal. Though it was known that Lu Ye's cultivation was advancing rapidly, this was too extraordinary.

After calming himself, Cheng Xiu said, "Since Junior Brother is now in the Divine Sea, it's inappropriate to place you in any squad. The Lord Department Chief should return in a few days. Rest for a few days and wait for him to decide on your placement."

The squads in the Law Enforcement Hall were composed of True Lake Realm cultivators. Once promoted to Divine Sea, it was unsuitable to team up. Acting alone was more efficient.

Lu Ye had previously encountered such Divine Sea cultivators during missions. They acted as overseers and had jurisdiction over any squad in the Law Enforcement Hall.

Lu Ye had no objection and requested, "Senior Brother Cheng, I'd like to gather some resources. Can you authorize this?"

Cheng Xiu asked, "For public or private use?"

If for public use, it had a public quota; if private, a private quota. The two were not interchangeable.

"For public use!"

Cheng Xiu nodded, "What resources do you need, and in what quantity?"

Lu Ye listed several artifact refining materials, "As for the quantity, the more, the better."

"No problem," Cheng Xiu responded quickly, immediately signing an authorization, pressing the seal from the Department Chief next to him, "I am only temporarily managing departmental affairs, with

limited authority. You can access a certain amount now; if it's insufficient, you can ask the Lord Department Chief when he returns."

He didn't inquire further about Lu Ye's intentions. Since it was for public use, Qian Wudang would naturally look into it later, so there was no fear of embezzlement.

Lu Ye left the grand hall of the Justice Department and went to the Military Supplies Department with the authorization from Cheng Xiu.

The place was always guarded by Divine Sea Realm cultivators. Lu Ye had been here before to collect supplies for Team D-9, so he was familiar with the process.

The cultivator guarding the Military Supplies Department had left an impression of being a bit stingy. Guarding the vault, he seemed like a Pixiu, eager to hoard all the treasures inside, unwilling to let anything out.

Perhaps it was this very nature that had him assigned to watch over the treasure vault of the Military Supplies Department.

Fortunately, the resources Lu Ye needed this time weren't precious, and the quota wasn't large, so the process went smoothly.

He received the materials and hurried back to his courtyard.

The courtyard was empty, not a person in sight. The stone table and chairs in the courtyard were covered in dust, showing that Team D-9 hadn't returned to Haotian City for a long time.

He felt a twinge of regret. Initially, he pulled together Team D-9 intending to grow and progress with familiar friends. But things didn't go as planned; the team barely formed before he was no longer the captain.

Now, having advanced to the Divine Sea Realm, it was impossible to act with Team D-9, and given his cultivation pace, the gap between him and the others might just widen.

But regret was futile, a price of growth.

He pushed open the door and sat in his familiar spot, contemplating before sending out several messages.

Having disappeared for two years, the sect master, Second Senior Sister, and Master were surely worried. Previously, being in Ten Thousand Demons Ridge wasn't truly returning, so he hadn't thought to contact them. Now being in Haotian City, it was time to report his safety.

The first reply came from Second Senior Sister.

"Yiyi already messaged me, waiting for you to assure your safety. The Insect Race has already taken over the Nine Provinces!"

Though her tone was reprimanding, Lu Ye felt her deep concern.

He quickly replied, "I was busy these past days and just found some time. Please don't be angry, Senior Sister."

Second Senior Sister, of course, wouldn't truly blame him. She was just annoyed that he didn't message her immediately.

"How is the situation at the sect headquarters?" Lu Ye asked.

"No need to worry about the sect headquarters. With Madam Yun and me present, no major issues will arise. It's a good opportunity for the disciples to gain some experience. Besides, the Ziwei Dao Palace has also sent people to help."

Lu Ye understood and felt relieved.

Mainly because the sect headquarters doesn't cover a large area; currently, only a few spirit mountaintops are inhabited, which makes them easy to defend. Unlike other sects with vast estates, larger operations require more manpower.

Next came a message from his master, containing just one word: "Good!"

It probably meant she was informed. She should be with the Second Senior Sister at the moment, so there was no need for more words.

Lu Ye sent his respectful greetings, fully adopting the demeanor of a dutiful disciple.

The sect master was the last to send a message: "Where are you?"

"In Haotian City."

"I have some matters to attend to, but once I'm finished, I will return to Haotian City. Stay there and wait for me."

This was to prevent Lu Ye from running off again. Although it was known that Lu Ye had returned safely, it was better to see him in person for peace of mind.

Lu Ye quickly agreed.

He checked the battlefield marking imprint but found no one else needing reassurance. So, he took out the supplies previously received from the Military Supplies Department and began crafting by activating his spirit force.

Three days later, while Lu Ye was working diligently, the guard token at his waist suddenly shook.

He quickly investigated and found that it was a message from Qian Wudang, requesting a meeting at the Justice Department.

Lu Ye tidied up his ongoing work and then stood up.

After a short while, in the great hall of the Justice Department, Lu Ye stepped in. Qian Wudang was sitting behind the desk, appearing deep in thought. Hearing the noise, he looked up.

"This subordinate greets you, my lord!" Lu Ye approached and saluted.

Qian Wudang smiled slightly: "It's good that you're back! These past two years must have been tough?"

Lu Ye thought about his various experiences in the Blood Refinement World and replied, "Not too bad."

It wasn't too tough; rather, many experiences were quite bizarre.

Qian Wudang sighed: "After you were captured, Veteran Thang and I kept searching for your whereabouts, but unfortunately, we had no leads. Fortunately, you have strong fortune and managed to escape on your own. Do you know who captured you and why?"

Lu Ye said, "The one who captured me was a woman named Yu Daiwei, but she had someone behind her she referred to as the Venerable Lord. I couldn't determine who that was."

He didn't tell the whole truth, not to guard against Qian Wudang, but because the matter of Mount Tai was too involved. Many years ago, it was the right-hand support of the Senior Brother. If brought up now, it would surely implicate the Righteous Blood Sect. Certain matters could be discussed with Qian Wudang, while others were reserved for the sect master to make a decision.

"As for their purpose..." Lu Ye smiled wryly, "Honestly, I don't know why they captured me. Not long after my capture, the small secret realm collapsed, and I was trapped in a mysterious space. Fortunately, I managed to find my way back through many trials."

"Yu Daiwei..." Qian Wudang frowned in thought, "I've never heard of this person. What is her cultivation level?"

"Divine Sea Level 8!"

Qian Wudang squinted slightly. If she were merely one or two levels in the Divine Sea Realm, it would be normal for him not to know her. The Nine Provinces is vast; even in the Bingzhou region, he might not recognize all Divine Sea Realm cultivators. New ones emerge each year, and who would keep track of them all.

But Divine Sea Level 8 is different. Such a powerful cultivator shouldn't be unknown, yet he hadn't heard of her at all.

After pondering slightly, many things were unclear. He vaguely sensed Lu Ye wasn't being entirely forthcoming, but without Lu Ye speaking, it wasn't appropriate to probe further. So, he changed the topic.

"I heard from Cheng Xiu that you've advanced to the Divine Sea Realm?"

"Yes."

"Then that's truly a blessing in disguise." Qian Wudang nodded slightly, not surprised at Lu Ye's rapid advancement. Influenced by Lin Yinxiu, he vaguely felt Lu Ye was akin to the Senior Brother of a few decades ago. Such individuals shouldn't be viewed through ordinary lenses. "While you were away these two years, the Nine Provinces' situation has turned upside down, with insect plagues rampant. You've probably already noticed."

"I witnessed it on my way back."

Qian Wudang assumed a serious expression: "With the urgent need for personnel everywhere, your return is timely. I have a task for you."

"My lord, please instruct."

"Craft Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, as many as you can!"

Lu Ye was secretly delighted. This task truly suited his inclinations. Even if Qian Wudang hadn't mentioned it, he would have actively requested it.

He had no choice. With the tumult in the Blood Refinement World and Empyrean Sea, he was now in need of a large number of fire spirit stones to refuel the Talent Tree and explore more spirit runes.

Now that it's an assigned task, it naturally comes with battle merit rewards. Additionally, crafting fire spirit stones itself earns battle merit, yielding even more benefits.

With the insect plague spreading now, Explosive Fire Spirit Stones can be crucial, especially to cultivators with lower cultivation levels. Having a few Explosive Fire Spirit Stones at hand can turn the tide at critical moments.

Chapter 1067 Big Baby

Lu Ye was unaware that more than two years ago, the Military Supplies Department had already negotiated several times with Qian Wudang regarding the issue of Explosive Fire Spirit Stones.

In the view of the Military Supplies Department, such a strategically significant and widely applicable killing weapon should be under their unified allocation rather than controlled by the Justice Department. The Military Supplies Department's role is precisely this, while the Justice Department should focus on law enforcement, and managing such strategic resources clearly oversteps their bounds.

But what kind of person is Qian Wudang? Naturally, he deflects the responsibility. Others might not know the secrets of the Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, but he does. Only Lu Ye can refine this item, and if it were to be managed by the Military Supplies Department, then Lu Ye himself would have to be handed over entirely.

How could he agree to that?

"No problem." Lu Ye agreed readily. "But, sir, I have a treasure I'd like you to see."

Qian Wudang chuckled, "A treasure? What kind of treasure?"

With his high status, he's seen all sorts of treasures, yet Lu Ye's mysterious demeanor piqued his interest.

Immediately, he saw Lu Ye take out an array disc and hand it over.

Qian Wudang received it and inspected it with a glance. The array disc seemed crudely refined, its maker unknown, and even without careful scrutiny, its quality seemed evidently not high.

What kind of treasure is this?

But he knew that the surface can't determine the worth of an array disc, the internal structure counts, and since Lu Ye brought it out, it was worth the anticipation.

He injected his spirit force into the array disc.

A faint humming sound emerged, and a layer of radiance expanded, covering a radius of ten zhang around it.

When in the Blood Refinement World, the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc refined by Lu Ye could only cover a five-zhang radius. But as his cultivation improved, the newly refined array disc could clearly have a greater effect, at least doubling the coverage diameter.

This item played a crucial role in resisting the Blood Race's massive siege in the Blood Refinement World and can be equally useful in the Nine Provinces, especially at the current moment.

Therefore, Lu Ye immediately requested a batch of materials from Cheng Xiu for refining the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc.

Qian Wudang's expression gradually turned serious, and he couldn't help but sit up straighter. He sensed the mystery of the array disc and looked at Lu Ye, with a hint of excitement in his eyes, "Can this borrow power?"

Under the array disc's cover, he easily linked his energy with Lu Ye's, sensing that if Lu Ye was willing, he could effortlessly borrow energy from Lu Ye for his own use.

"Correct." Lu Ye nodded.

In an instant, Qian Wudang thought of many strategic applications for this array disc, realizing that its greatest function was not just borrowing power. The ability to allow different cultivators' energy to easily connect was its most profound feature.

If, by using this item, cultivators could connect energetically and form an array...

What Feng Wujiang could imagine, Qian Wudang also thought of, while Lu Ye, the crafter, took quite some time to realize this potential himself.

This is the difference in vision and experience.

"Don't tell me you crafted this thing," Qian Wudang looked at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye grinned at him.

Qian Wudang was speechless. Who is this person? Easily crafting Explosive Fire Spirit Stones and now this mysterious array disc as well.

Since joining the provincial guard, strange and curious items have come one after another, and whether it's the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone or this inexplicable array disc, they all have strategic implications of immeasurable value.

"You also know, sir, that I am proficient in the Path of Spirit Runes. Whether it's the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone or this As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, their cores are spirit runes, just different kinds of spirit runes. As long as spirit runes are constructed, they can be refined."

Qian Wudang wouldn't think it as simple as he said, not mentioning the array disc for the moment, just the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone. Though Bingzhou doesn't have a large number of spirit runes masters, there's still a considerable foundation of cultivators. Most can construct Explosion Spirit Runes.

Yet the only one who's been able to refine Explosive Fire Spirit Stones in large quantities thus far is Lu Ye.

Because constructing Explosion Spirit Runes on a fire spirit stone requires high standards, it's not something just anyone can do.

Long ago, the Nine Provinces also had the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone, not invented by Lu Ye, but due to the difficulty in refining and substantial risks, no spirit runes master dared to venture it over time.

The array disc is even more demanding; upon slight inspection, he sensed its complex spirit runes within. Only someone deeply versed in the Path of Spirit Runes could construct it, let alone applying it in Artifact Refining, which is even harder.

"As-Close-As-Siblings..." Qian Wudang nodded slightly, "That's a good name, is this the name of the spirit rune?"

"Yes."

"When you requested materials from Cheng Xiu, it was for crafting this item?"

Lu Ye nodded.

"What's the production output?"

The item is excellent, but if the production is insufficient, it can't be widely distributed, limiting its effectiveness and can only be equipped by a very select few elites.

"Producing seven to eight hundred pieces a day is not a problem," Lu Ye replied.

The refining process requires practice and skill. In the Blood Refinement World, Lu Ye refined this item with the cultivation of True Lake Level 9, with a daily output of two hundred pieces. Now that he reached the Divine Sea Realm, the output naturally increased significantly.

This is a conservative estimate; if he puts in full effort, a thousand pieces a day is achievable. The core of the array disc lies in the As-Close-As-Siblings Spirit Runes, which he can construct at will. The array disc's appearance doesn't matter; it's just a carrier for the spirit runes. He just needs to craft a rough model.

"This is truly a treasure!" Qian Wudang exclaimed excitedly, "A great treasure!"

It is foreseeable that once this thing becomes widespread, it will significantly enhance the overall strength of the Bingzhou cultivators. If enough are crafted, they can even be sent to support other Haotian Alliance cultivators in different provinces.

Currently, the disaster of the Insect Race is troubling the Nine Provinces, and what is lacking is such external forces that can directly enhance the cultivators' capabilities.

Qian Wudang's expression turned serious, and he said, "Lu Yiye, hear my command!"

Lu Ye cupped his fists and said, "At your service."

"I order you to immediately begin refining the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Discs. Dedicate yourself entirely to this task. All necessary materials will be supplied by my Justice Department without fail."

"Yes," Lu Ye accepted the order and then added, "As for the Explosive Fire Spirit Stones..."

"Let's set those aside for now. Focus solely on refining the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Discs."

"Oh, come on," Lu Ye quickly interjected, "If I only refine one thing, I might get tired. By alternating between two things, I can stay refreshed and be more efficient."

The main issue was that if he didn't refine Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, where would he take that thirty percent deficiency? Without the deficiency, where would he replenish the Talent Tree's fuel?

Qian Wudang looked at him meaningfully, "Since you have an idea, I'll allow it, but you must prioritize ensuring the supply of the array discs."

While Explosive Fire Spirit Stones are useful, they are ultimately consumables. By comparison, the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Discs undoubtedly have a greater role.

"Thank you, Sir."

Upon leaving the Justice Department hall, Lu Ye knew he would be busy for some time.

Back when he refined Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, he had bargained with Qian Wudang and secured a reward of five battle merits for each stone made. This time, however, he didn't mention any battle merit requirements.

The infestation of the Nine Provinces by the Insect Race concerns the fate of the entire human race. Contributing to this effort was not something he could shirk, nor was it appropriate to treat it like a business transaction.

Moreover, he knew that Qian Wudang's side would not treat him unfairly. If he successfully refines the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Discs, he wouldn't lack battle merit rewards.

Some things didn't need to be stated explicitly.

As soon as Lu Ye returned to his courtyard, Cheng Xiu arrived with a large supply of fire spirit stones and the materials needed for refining array discs. After a brief explanation, he informed Lu Ye that he would collect a batch of finished products every three days and quickly left.

This is the benefit of having organizational support. If you were alone, even with great skills, you would still expend a lot of effort gathering resources, wasting both time and energy.

Closing the door, Lu Ye began refining.

Previously, he didn't put much effort into controlling the output of Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, but now that was no longer an issue, and refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones was extremely simple for him, merely a hand-passing effort.

By comparison, refining the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Discs required a bit more thought.

With mental consciousness surging, he worked both hands simultaneously, one refining the Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, the other the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Discs. Lu Ye even had the spare capacity to check on the situation of his doppelganger, Li Taibai.

One must admit, after advancing to the Divine Sea, his mental consciousness became significantly stronger.

Although his cultivation is only at the Divine Sea Level 1, both the physical foundation and the strength of his psyche were unmatched by ordinary Divine Sea Realm cultivators.

On Li Taibai's side, all was well. As a Divine Sea Realm cultivator and the minor chief of the Dark Moon Forest Pass, he usually didn't need to act unless a Divine Sea Realm Insect Race was discovered and reported.

And with Lin Yue switching on patrols, they could ensure the safety of the soldiers at the mountain pass.

In recent days, Li Taibai had acted twice, completing his tasks with ease. The doppelganger possesses all of the main body's abilities, except for the Talent Tree's impurity-burning ability, since the doppelganger only had a root of the Talent Tree and no fuel storage.

Therefore, to maintain his own power, the doppelganger needed to meditate and cultivate after each confrontation to quickly recover the spent spirit force.

This way, as long as the battles weren't too frequent, there wouldn't be much impact.

Day by day passed, and every three days, Cheng Xiu would come to the courtyard to collect many finished products from Lu Ye.

Lu Ye wasn't just refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones and As-Close-As-Siblings Array Discs; he was also actively cultivating.

He had his own rhythm when it came to cultivation. Generally, after making significant progress, he would stabilize for a time, waiting for his foundation to solidify before moving on to the next step. This approach ensured his foundation grew more robust, which was one of the reasons he could often defeat opponents of higher levels.

Months of accumulation in the Blood Refinement World had stabilized his foundation at Divine Sea Level 1, so naturally, now he had to advance his cultivation.

With the activation of the gold-hued spirit fortune stick, a golden vortex slowly rotated before him, and the root of the Talent Tree plunged into it, voraciously absorbing the pure and surging energy within.

Chapter 1068 The Grand Council

At the very center of Haotian City stands the Harmony Light Hall, named with the meaning of blending in harmony with the dust.

If Haotian City is the central hub of Bingzhou's Haotian Alliance, then Harmony Light Hall is the core of that hub, as it's where the Elder Council resides.

Usually, whenever something significant occurs in Bingzhou, the Elder Council convenes for a meeting to discuss and handle it. The number of elders in the council isn't fixed, sometimes more, sometimes fewer, because some hold the title but aren't often present in Haotian City.

Like the sect master back then.

If not for the future of the disciples, the sect master wouldn't have come to the Harmony Light Hall at such an age to exhaust himself.

Though elders like the sect master are few, there are still several.

On ordinary days, except for one or two elders on duty, Harmony Light Hall is mostly empty, and no one disturbs them; there are various departments within the Haotian Alliance, and if anything arises, the departments can handle it.

The Elder Council doesn't have many specific responsibilities, merely overseeing major directions.

However, Harmony Light Hall does have lively moments, with a minor meeting every three months and a major meeting annually, gathering the upper echelons of Bingzhou Haotian Alliance.

Attendance at minor meetings isn't too high, but during major meetings, almost every elder of the council and every Department Chief who is available attends because this major meeting essentially determines the operational direction for the coming year.

Today happens to be the scheduled time for the annual major meeting, from just before 9 am, powerful cultivators arrive from various places and enter the Harmony Light Hall. Most of these cultivators are elderly, some middle-aged, but none are young.

By just before 11 am, the entire hall is filled with nearly thirty people, each holding significant positions within Bingzhou's elite sects. Aside from many elders of the council, all the Department Chiefs of Haotian City have arrived.

At the headseat, Pang Zhen slowly opens his eyes and speaks, "Is everyone here?"

He is the Vice Alliance Hierarchy of Haotian Alliance, the Vice Sect Leader of Righteousness Sect, and the Chief Elder of Haotian City's Elder Council. He's the usual host of these major meetings; it is customary.

Someone replies, "Anyone who could come should be here."

There are still some vacant seats, but not appearing at this moment likely means they were bound by other matters, a common occurrence.

Pang Zhen nods slightly, about to speak, then suddenly looks outside. Simultaneously, others also sense a powerful aura rapidly approaching.

Moments later, a Dao bone figure strides in, none other than the sect master Tang Yifeng of Righteous Blood Sect, looking travel-worn, his return from an unknown place.

"Exploring ground fissures, I came late and have kept you waiting," the sect master speaks as he seeks his seat.

"Veteran Thang worked hard." Pang Zhen nods slightly, glancing around, continuing, "Most people are here, let's not wait any longer and begin the discussions."

No one objects.

The topics discussed include various changes occurring in Bingzhou over the past year, including troop deployments, personnel casualties, the spread of insect plague, etc. The Nine Provinces now face complex situations, and those present have immeasurably more issues to deal with than before.

New topics continuously arise, with everyone discussing and deciding on solutions. Being strong cultivators at Divine Sea Level 9, they naturally don't bicker like ordinary people and can quickly make decisions.

Each topic gets resolved, leading to discussions about the ground fissures.

The insect plague stems from deep underground, a challenging problem for Nine Provinces cultivators since the deeper you go, the denser the origin magnetic field becomes, significantly hindering the cultivators' power.

Therefore, to fundamentally solve the insect plague, it requires delving into the fissures to locate the Insect Race's insect hive for a permanent solution.

The Divine Sea Realm cultivators present have practically all explored the ground fissures, and like the sect master Tang Yifeng, have been searching for safe avenues deeper underground recently, unfortunately without substantive results.

The recent outings of Qian Wudang were also to personally investigate certain major ground fissures.

Currently, all anyone can do is explore as many ground fissures as possible, then consolidate all findings to see if a solution to the insect plague might be discerned.

Various messages are reported, but none offer any striking discoveries, making it quite helpless, yet this is the reality.

Every cultivator present possesses great strength, yet even so, feels insufficient against such a disaster sweeping across their domain.

"Junior Brother Pang, has anything been discovered in other provincial states?" an elder from the council asks.

Pang Zhen shakes his head, "Communicated with the Vice Alliance Leaders of the other provincial states the day before, and they haven't found anything either."

The elder sighs, "This world, when will it ever end?"

Another elder spoke, "The insect disaster has raged for two years now. While it is significant for us cultivators, we can still hold on. However, for the mortals, it's an unbearable pain. If this situation persists for another three to five years, the very foundation of the Nine Provinces cultivation world will surely be shaken."

Under the sweep of the insect disaster, all aspects of mortal life have been severely impacted. Unlike cultivators with profound cultivation, mortals need food, and so do cultivators with lesser cultivation. They cannot use spirit force to supplement their needs. Yet, many fertile lands across the Nine Provinces have been destroyed, with many places having no harvests for two years, relying solely on previous years' stored grains to survive. While cultivators can guard the cities from being overwhelmed by the Insect Race, scenes of mortals starving to death have already emerged in many cities.

Cultivators are closely tied to mortals. If there are too many mortal casualties, it will undoubtedly have an immeasurable impact on the Nine Provinces cultivation world.

This is also one of the reasons that the Haotian Alliance and Ten Thousand Demons Ridge have tacitly stopped conflicts in the past two years. Compared to the future of the entire cultivation world, the confrontation that has lasted for thousands of years seems less significant.

"We still need to find a way to safely delve deep underground."

"There's an origin magnetic field underground; the deeper one goes, the weaker a cultivator's power becomes. This is an unresolved dilemma."

"Veteran Thang, have you discovered anything this time?" Pang Zhen looked at the sect master.

The sect master shook his head, "This time, I ventured ten thousand meters underground. I saw the Insect Race but not the insect hive." At ten thousand meters depth, the sect master's cultivation was suppressed to seventy percent, and there were many Divine Sea Realm insects below. Although many were slain, the insects seemed endless, compelling a forced retreat.

"Then let's keep searching. Heaven always leaves a path; the Nine Provinces cultivation world cannot end with our generation."

The sect master nodded and was about to leave. Generally, when the grand meeting reaches this point, it should end. Having received news a month ago that his most promising disciple returned safely, he had long wanted to see him.

But what surprised the sect master was that the people who were supposed to disperse remained seated, not moving at all.

The sect master also paused, sensing that there might still be matters needing discussion.

A month had passed, so there was no rush at this moment, so he stayed to observe quietly.

A bizarre scene unfolded; everyone sat silently, with not even Pang Zhen at the head speaking.

What happened? Doubts arose in the sect master's mind.

"Is everyone holding back?" someone suddenly spoke. The sect master looked up and saw it was Chief Chow from the Military Supplies Department.

The sect master was greatly surprised because that department rarely spoke at meetings. Their job was managing military supplies, simply needing to perform their duties. Usually, others sought them out, and they rarely made requests, whether in the mortal or cultivation world. Those who managed money and resources were always in high demand, so it was unexpected what the Military Supplies Department had to say today.

"Fine, if you're all holding back like mute people, then I'll start!" Chow Ye said, brushing the table with his hand, causing several objects resembling array discs to appear on the table.

Everyone immediately looked over, and the sect master keenly noticed their gazes became somewhat fervent, like hungry wolves seeing prey.

"Recently, some array discs like these appeared in Bingzhou. Heh, I reckon many of you have already heard of them."

Some who hadn't heard of them, due to the discs' limited emergence a month ago and scant circulation, asked, "Chief Chow, what is the use of these array discs?"

"Can't you just see for yourself?" Chow Ye smiled slightly.

That speaker raised a hand to pick up an array disc, while others unaware also each took one. The sect master wanted one but was too late as the discs were all taken.

The Divine Sea Realm cultivators who got the discs infused them with spirit force, and next moment, a slight humming sound arose, releasing a layer of halo.

The range of one disc's coverage was ten meters square. Several discs positioned differently encompassed everyone present.

Those who understood knew their expressions didn't change, but those witnessing the function of these discs for the first time raised their eyebrows, feeling the mysterious power within.

"What kind of array disc is this, so remarkable?" exclaimed the first Divine Sea Realm cultivator who spoke, though it was their first experience, they immediately perceived many miraculous uses of the disc.

Thoughts swirled in their minds, almost envisioning their side's cultivators wreaking havoc on the battlefield with such discs.

"This is the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, containing the As-Close-As-Siblings Spirit Runes," Chow Ye explained. "Among you here, knowledgeable and widely experienced, is there anyone who has heard of such a spirit rune in the world?"

Everyone shook their head. Before these array discs appeared, no one had heard of such a mystical spirit rune.

"Only can say that talent appears in every era; the younger generation is formidable," Chow Ye sighed with admiration.

"Chief Chow, were these array discs refined by your Military Supplies Department?" If so, they could be widely promoted, potentially bolstering their side's cultivators' power significantly, which would be immensely important given the current situation.

"How could my Military Supplies Department possess such talent," Chow Ye replied somewhat sarcastically, glancing suggestively at Qian Wudang not far away.

Chapter 1069 Come and Duel!

In the Harmony Light Hall, many pairs of eyes turned to Qian Wudang, the sect master gradually became aware, feeling greatly surprised.

Honestly, upon first seeing this As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, he also thought it was something developed by the Military Supplies Department. You must know that the Military Supplies Department has gathered a large number of talents in artifact refining, alchemy, and spirit runes. It can be said that all sects in Bingzhou that have special talents fall under the jurisdiction of the Military Supplies Department in principle, and if needed, the Military Supplies Department has the authority to requisition any special talents from any sect for its use.

These talents with special skills gather in the Military Supplies Department, forming the basis to ensure the supply of military supplies to the front lines. In past years, the Military Supplies Department occasionally brought out some peculiar gadgets, but most were flashy without real use, only serving to amuse.

For this reason, the research institution of the Military Supplies Department is quite criticized, and it has been holding onto a resentment for years, wanting to prove itself.

If this As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc was truly developed by the Military Supplies Department, it would certainly wash away past shame and spread the fame of the Military Supplies Department.

But from the looks of it now, this thing has nothing to do with the Military Supplies Department, instead, it seems to stem from the Justice Department?

The sect master pondered in his heart, when did the Justice Department, such a group of killers, gain such artistic talent?

"Why is everyone looking at me? Drink tea, drink tea!" Qian Wudang was being stared at by dozens of pairs of eyes without changing his expression, he calmly picked up the teacup in front of him for a sip.

He had already heard about today's events, so he wasn't surprised.

Chow Ye slammed the table and shouted angrily: "Stop pretending! The origin of this thing is from your Justice Department, dare you say you don't know?"

"I know, of course I know, what's the problem with that?" Qian Wudang looked at Chow Ye innocently, "Your Military Supplies Department's research institution harbors a group of incompetent people, only able to develop flashy trash with no real use; someone in my Justice Department refined the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, and it did not block the path of your department. Why does Brother Chow have to get angry with me here?"

Chow Ye snorted: "Such a strategically significant artifact should indeed be managed by my Military Supplies Department, unified allocation to bring out its maximum value."

Qian Wudang laughed: "The array disc is in your hand, Brother Chow. If you wish to refine it, instruct your department's artifact refiners to disassemble and study it. Refining this object isn't difficult, right? Your department employs so many artifact refiners; they can't possibly be idling, some value should indeed be demonstrated."

"Such an artifact cannot be crafted randomly by just anyone!" Chow Ye huffed.

Of course, he had tried what Qian Wudang said. Upon obtaining the array disc, he immediately gathered his artifact refiners to disassemble and study it, aiming to replicate its crafting; embarrassingly, even those renowned across Bingzhou couldn't guarantee successful replication. While the crafting of the disc itself isn't difficult, the complexity lies in the spirit runes engraved within. Perfectly engraving such inscribed spirit runes during the crafting process is extremely challenging.

The result was that after half a month of attempts, among the numerous artifact refiners, they barely crafted five array discs, and those were products of sheer luck, difficult to replicate.

Were it not thus, he wouldn't bring the matter to the high council meeting, lest the face of the Military Supplies Department be lost.

The Military Supplies Department primarily oversees this domain; yet after so many individuals and years, there have been few remarkable achievements, whereas a single strike from the Justice Department was earth-shattering.

Recently, Chow Ye has become increasingly upset and aggrieved. Why does his department lack such talents? Why did Qian Wudang step on dog shit!

"If this thing isn't forged by humans, what is Brother Chow holding?" Qian Wudang softly laughed.

"Qian Wudang!" Chow Ye slammed the table again, "I think you Justice Department aren't thinking straight, do you still want to receive supplies from my Military Supplies Department in the future!"

"Deputy Alliance Leader, I protest!" Qian Wudang turned to look at Pang Zhen, "This man abuses power, using his authority to threaten me, preparing to withhold supplies from my Justice Department soldiers. How he dares behave so flagrantly in front of everyone is beyond me; behind closed doors, who knows how much oppression he'll employ. I implore the Deputy Alliance Leader and elders to uphold justice and remove him from the position of Military Supplies Department Chief, to choose someone more virtuous."

"Damned fool!" Chow Ye jumped onto the table, rolled up his sleeves, and prepared to lunge at Qian Wudang, but the Chief of Recruitment Department Shi Jian and Chief of the Department of Appointments Wan Guliu quickly restrained him, offering words of comfort.

Chow Ye struggled while yelling: "Come and duel, it's the rule of the cultivation world that whoever has the stronger fist speaks louder, let's see if old man doesn't beat you black and blue!"

Qian Wudang chuckled coldly: "Come on, despite your old bones and limbs, I won't show leniency when striking."

"Today, this old man will teach you why people say ginger grows hotter as it ages!" Chow Ye became even more excited.

"Hurry up, I'm just sitting here waiting for you." Qian Wudang sat calmly, tapping the table in front of him.

"Alright." Pang Zhen spoke calmly, "Enough of this. Qian Wudang, say no more, Veteran Chow, please sit back. After all, as department chiefs, such behavior at a high council meeting is improper."

Chow Ye, giving face to Pang Zhen's words, shook off his restraints, glared fiercely at Qian Wudang, then sat back down.

Qian Wudang continued to drink tea.

Pang Zhen looked around, feeling a bit of a headache. They are all figures of the Divine Sea Level 9; naturally, they wouldn't be so superficial as to go into a brawl at the Grand Meeting. Chow Ye truly has a fiery temperament, but it's not to the extent of being reckless. His current display undoubtedly shows some urgency and further indicates his regard for the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc.

The Military Supplies Department hasn't produced anything impressive for many years, and if things remained this way, it would have been fine. The trouble came when the Justice Department presented the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, making the Military Supplies Department look incompetent, which is why Chow Ye is so determined.

He manages the Military Supplies Department and naturally needs to consider his subordinates.

This has something to do with some minor disputes between him and Qian Wudang in previous years, initiated by the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone.

When this item appeared, Chow Ye approached Qian Wudang, hoping to shift the refining of the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone to the Military Supplies Department, counting it as their achievement. Of course, the Military Supplies Department would offer some conveniences in terms of resources, but repeatedly, the attempts were fruitless. Qian Wudang stood firm, and Chow Ye couldn't force his way, so he had to let it go.

Minor disputes don't affect the overall situation, but the value of the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc is different from the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone. The Explosive Fire Spirit Stone could be overlooked, but the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc couldn't be ignored.

Logically, Chow Ye wasn't wrong. Such treasures that can be widely disseminated should indeed be managed and distributed by the Military Supplies Department. That's their duty; that's what they do.

Unfortunately, the person capable of refining the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc belongs to the Justice Department, and Qian Wudang won't let him go; no one can do anything about it.

As Pang Zhen contemplated this, he turned his head towards the sect master: "What does Veteran Thang think?"

The sect master was studying the array disc in his hand, finding it remarkably wonderful. If it could indeed be widely disseminated, it would undoubtedly be a great benefit. He dare not say much, but the overall strength of the Haotian Alliance could at least increase by two or three percent, especially enhancing the Cloud River-True Lake level.

This is exceedingly impressive, something unmatched by any elixir pill or miracle cure.

Suddenly hearing Pang Zhen's question, the sect master was confused, not understanding why this matter was directed at him. He had joined the Elder Council for two years but hadn't really managed any specific affairs; he mainly sat there, providing a reliable figure for his disciples.

Thus, whether in grand or small meetings, he rarely expressed his opinions.

"Veteran Thang might not know, but this array disc comes from a disciple of your sect," Pang Zhen voluntarily explained.

"Refined by a disciple of my sect?" The sect master was taken aback and immediately realized: "You mean..."

Pang Zhen nodded: "It's Lu Yiye! Not only did he refine this item, but the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone also came from his hands."

Initially, Qian Wudang kept these matters well-hidden. The Military Supplies Department only knew that the Explosive Fire Spirit Stone was refined by the Justice Department, without knowing who specifically refined it. But some things don't withstand scrutiny, especially from strong Divine Sea Realm cultivators with intent.

During the two years of Lu Ye's disappearance, the supply of Explosive Fire Spirit Stones gradually ceased, and after his return, the supply resumed, along with the appearance of the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc.

The origins of these two items thus became evident.

The sect master laughed: "Does that kid have such abilities? I actually didn't know."

Pang Zhen nodded: "Youth can be awe-inspiring; this world will ultimately belong to the young." He also felt a sense of sighing internally. When Lu Ye joined the Righteous Blood Sect, Pang Zhen had witnessed it all. He hadn't expected that the young man, not valued by any sect and with only Yiye aptitude, would not only achieve Divine Sea Realm cultivation in just a few years but also accomplish things beyond ordinary capabilities.

If he had known earlier, the Righteousness Sect could have opened doors of convenience and incorporated him.

Learned that Lu Ye was the one refining these treasures, the sect master understood why Pang Zhen had asked him. After some contemplation, he said: "The item is excellent, but the key lies in whether it can be widely disseminated. If it can, it is strategic material; if not, it can only be considered a curious novelty, not contributing to the greater situation despite its effectiveness."

"Whether it can be disseminated or not, ask Qian Wudang. As far as I know, recently all Justice Department teams have been equipped with one, and even the Heralds Office had a fair share." Chow Ye snorted lightly.

Everyone knows that Justice Department Chief Qian Wudang and Chief of Heralds Office Fan Xiangyi have a good relationship, and what the Justice Department has, the Heralds Office generally wouldn't miss out on.

Everyone now turned their attention to Qian Wudang.

In such a situation, Qian Wudang naturally couldn't conceal anything. He didn't insist on holding the distribution rights of this item. It concerns the greater situation in Bingzhou; even though he is a Department Chief, he can't afford to act indiscriminately. However, no matter what happens, his troops must first be equipped.

Over a month, those who needed to be equipped had been equipped, so transferring the distribution rights wouldn't be an issue and would lessen some of his troubles.

Chapter 1070 I Saw Senior Brother

Of course, people cannot be released; Lu Yiye is part of the Justice Department no matter what, that's non-negotiable.

"The production is actually limited, because so far, only Lu Yiye can refine this item. I have searched for Artifact Refiners far and wide to craft it, but the results have been unsatisfactory."

"Just tell me how many he can refine in a day," Chow Ye asked eagerly.

"Not many, about seven to eight hundred pieces a day."

There was a moment of silence within Harmony Light Hall as everyone quickly began to ponder.

Seven to eight hundred a day equates to more than twenty thousand a month, and each of these array discs can be used by at least five people, even ten is possible. Taking an average number, the monthly production could equip a full 100,000 cultivators!

A definite strategic killing weapon!

Chow Ye became anxious and looked toward Pang Zhen: "Deputy Alliance Leader, I strongly request for Lu Yiye to be transferred to the Military Supplies Department, so as to fully utilize his value, and enhance Bingzhou guard's might in the shortest time."

"You must be dreaming," Qian Wudang shot him a sideways glance.

"You're speaking to a senior like that?" Chow Ye roared in anger.

"An old man who uses age as a shield deserves no respect."

The two began quarreling again, each making their case.

Pang Zhen gently tapped the table, and only then did the two stop talking, each looking to him, ready to hear his decision. Of course, everyone already knew what the outcome would be.

"The Military Supplies Department is responsible for supplying military materials, and this array disc is a wondrous thing, thus should be coordinated and distributed by the Military Supplies Department," Pang Zhen spoke softly, with no one expressing dissatisfaction or interrupting, "As for Lu Yiye, he shall continue at the Justice Department. Do you both agree?"

Both Chow Ye and Qian Wudang agreed without objection.

"Additionally, the fact that the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc is crafted by Lu Yiye must be kept strictly confidential; it must not be leaked!" Pang Zhen sternly reminded.

This serves as a protection for Lu Ye. Otherwise, if the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge finds out, they might stir trouble again.

Everyone naturally understood the stakes involved.

Thus, the debate ended. The Military Supplies Department obtained the distribution rights for the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, reducing troubles for the Justice Department. Moreover, when supplied with a large amount of array discs in the future, the Military Supplies Department would likely compensate by tilting allocations of other resources.

This is something everyone understands internally, so there's no need to put it out in the open.

With the discussions concluded, everyone dispersed. Qian Wudang and Chow Ye walked side by side outwards, discussing the many matters related to the transfer of the array discs, not at all showing that they had just been at each other's throats, almost ready to come to blows.

The argument was due to the different duties they represented, but not arguing stemmed from them both being Bingzhou cultivators.

In the room, Lu Ye continued working tirelessly, refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones on one side and the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc on the other, a golden vortex slowly spun in front of him, and his cultivation never ceased.

He had maintained this state for a month already, somewhat monotonously, but cultivation is like this; if one cannot endure monotony, how can one speak of glory being conferred?

Suddenly, he sensed something, slowed his actions, stood up, and pushed open the door, immediately seeing a familiar figure beside the stone table in the courtyard.

He quickly stepped forward to salute: "Sect Master."

Thang Yifeng looked at this disciple before him, his heart filled with comfort: "Good, still have all limbs intact." He gestured with his hand: "Sit!"

Lu Ye sat down, taking out a set of tea utensils from his storage space, and began brewing tea.

The Sect Master smiled slightly, not mentioning the matter of the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc, merely saying: "Actually, when I recruited you at Evil Moon Valley, I was considering sending you away after a while."

Lu Ye truly wasn't aware of this, and couldn't help but ask in surprise: "Send me where?"

"Back then, I hadn't decided, but you know, at that time, I wasn't planning to maintain the sect anymore. Recruiting you was simply due to obligatory rules; the sect's state at that time was really unsuitable for recruiting new disciples."

"I understand." Lu Ye nodded.

However, later things happened that no one could control; during the return to Mount Ao with the Sect Master, they were ambushed, and the Sect Master had no choice but to send him into the Spirit Stream battlefield, after which his identity as a disciple of Righteous Blood Sect was exposed, leading to pursuit and siege by large numbers of Ten Thousand Demons Ridge cultivators.

The identity of Righteous Blood Sect disciple was already confirmed, so sending him away held no value anymore. After Lu Ye endured many challenges to return to Mount Ao, the Sect Master dispelled his thoughts.

And over the years, the sect, originally intended to be removed by Heaven's Augury, was in the midst of a revival.

"I must thank you; without you, Righteous Blood Sect would be gone by now. If it really was, I would become the sect's sinner, leaving me speechless after death to face the ancestors."

Lu Ye felt a sudden rush of anxiety: "Sect Master, that's too much; what I did was part of my duties."

"There are no 'part of my duties' or not. The sect didn't give you much advantage; instead, trouble came along since you joined, and the protection I provided was extremely limited. Growing up in such an environment is truly difficult," the Sect Master sighed.

Take the incident of Lu Ye being captured last time; although he set out immediately to rescue him, he couldn't save Lu Ye. For the past two years, he was filled with self-reproach, but fortunately, Lu Ye returned completely, and his cultivation soared, ascending to the Divine Sea.

"I can tell, just like your elder brother, you are someone favored by Heaven's Augury, capable of stirring up storms. But Yiye, your elder brother's story is a lesson to be learned. I don't want you to hide your talents—you are young, and having the courage to dream, fight, and act is a good thing. Just remember, no matter what you do in the future, always prioritize your own safety. Only when you are secure can everything else follow."

"I will remember," Lu Ye responded, offering the brewed tea.

The sect master accepted it with satisfaction and took a light sip.

Lu Ye hesitated for a moment before saying, "Sect Master, there is something I wish to report."

The sect master, while drinking his tea, replied, "You need not be concerned in front of this old man; say what you want. I have seen everything in my long life. If you have any doubts, I can at least guide you a little."

Lu Ye took a deep breath: "I have seen my elder brother."

"Pff..." The tea was sprayed out by the sect master, and fortunately, he quickly turned his head, or Lu Ye would have been splashed all over. After wiping his mouth, he set down the cup uncertainly and said, "What did you just say? This old man is getting on in years, my hearing isn't as good as it used to be."

"I have seen my elder brother!" Lu Ye seriously repeated.

Before his return, Lu Ye had asked his elder brother if he had any messages, as there were many people in the Nine Provinces who were concerned about him. He could convey a few words if he returned.

But his elder brother told him there was no need to say anything, it would only add to the worries. If they were meant to meet again, all would be revealed in due time.

Lu Ye understood his elder brother's concerns. To all those close to him, he was someone who had been dead for decades, and time had smoothed over many pains. If Lu Ye suddenly told them his elder brother was alive, it would surely cause a stir.

The key was, even if they knew the elder brother was alive, they couldn't meet right away, leaving them with aching longing—what would be the point?

Therefore, Lu Ye did not intend to tell anyone else about his elder brother still being alive, but he couldn't hide it from the sect master.

Certain things needed to be said.

The sect master paused, then chuckled, "What nonsense are you talking about? Your elder brother has been dead for decades—where did you see him?"

"Sect Master, I am telling the truth."

Seeing Lu Ye's serious expression, the sect master's smile gradually faded, his demeanor becoming solemn: "Explain in detail."

"Here's what happened..."

Lu Ye then recounted how he was captured by Yu Daiwei and saw Mount Tai in that small secret realm, then figured out a way to collapse the secret realm.

"I had experience escaping from a small secret realm before, so I was somewhat familiar. I thought that after the small secret realm collapsed, I would return to the Nine Provinces, but who would have thought I'd end up in a place called the Blood Refinement World."

Lu Ye briefly explained the general situation of the Blood Refinement World, glossing over his early experiences there, and mentioned the Empyrean Sea.

"My elder brother went to the Blood Refinement World decades ago and established the Righteous Blood Sacred Land there, which is the only haven for the human race in that domain. Surrounded by the Blood Race's armies, my elder brother leads the human race cultivators of the Righteous Blood Sacred Land in repeated defenses."

"Moreover, there are over seventy old predecessors there, each a top-tier master, such as Mong Jie, the third-generation sect leader of the Righteousness Sect, Jian Guhong, the fifth-generation sword master of the Beixuan Sword Sect, Mi Xuan, the chief Great Elder of the Canglang Sect from two hundred years ago, Granny Jiew, the second-generation Valley Master of Medicine King Valley, and an Artifact Refiner named Ouyang Zi. It is with the support of these predecessors that the Righteous Blood Sacred Land is able to endure painfully."

Despite the sect master being experienced and composed, Lu Ye's words shook his heart and mind.

The sect master initially thought Lu Ye had been deceived. After all, he had never met Feng Wujiang, and Lu Ye was young. If some powerful figure used mysterious means to deceive him, it might work.

But the more he listened, the less it seemed like Lu Ye was lying.

"So, for the past two years, you haven't been trapped in some small secret realm, but have been in this place called the Blood Refinement World?"

"Yes," Lu Ye nodded.

The sect master seemed to comprehend something, pointing upward: "This is... Heaven's Augury's work?"

Only Heaven's Augury, with its profound and unfathomable skill, could accomplish something like this.

"No doubt about it."

The sect master remained silent for a long time before bursting into laughter: "Still alive!"

This was the best news he had heard in years. He had harbored a deep resentment over his disciple's death for many years. Never did he imagine that someone he thought was long dead was actually alive, just residing in another domain.

Moreover, from Lu Ye's account, the sect master sensed something extraordinary.

Not only was his disciple sent to the Blood Refinement World, but many top-tier masters—whom he had heard of but never met—had also been sent there, which was certainly thought-provoking.

"Before I left, my elder brother instructed me not to say anything, but I thought, at the very least, you should know."

The sect master stroked his beard: "Your elder brother has his considerations, and his advice is correct. What has been said today stays between you and me; it should not be told to others, or it would only disturb the hearts of people."

"I understand."