

Humanity 1191

Chapter 1191 The Fruits of Victory

The great ship of the Blood Refinement World, which had been drifting in stellar space for countless millennia, finally stopped. From a vantage point in the stars, it appeared to have halted not far from the Nine Provinces.

However, this "not far" is, in the end, a relative distance. In reality, the distance between the two large domains remains a boundary that the current Nine Provinces cultivators cannot breach, as they lack the ability to traverse stellar space physically. To return to the Nine Provinces, they still need to rely on the teleportation of the Heaven's Augury Pillar.

The matters of the Blood Refinement World have largely settled, and the Nine Provinces cultivators participating in the expedition have embarked on their journey home.

Though many from the various minor and major sects have suffered casualties during this expedition, the surviving cultivators have reaped immense rewards, earning an unimaginable amount of battle merit.

Whenever Nine Provinces cultivators obtain battle merit, their first thought is to exchange it for spirit fortune sticks for cultivation.

To do this, they must return to the Nine Provinces.

Though the nature's spiritual energy in the Blood Refinement World is sufficiently rich, when it comes to cultivation speed, using spirit fortune sticks remains the more convenient method. Moreover, the spiritual energy in this world will not maintain such richness indefinitely; as the world's foundation dissipates and its level diminishes, the spiritual energy will become increasingly scarce.

The ultimate fate of the Blood Refinement World is highly likely to become a domain with only a faint spiritual energy presence. At that point, human life in this world won't be greatly affected, but if cultivators linger here long-term, their cultivation will progress very slowly. Relying solely on the foundation of the Blood Refinement World, it might not even give rise to Cloud River Realm cultivators.

In the future, the Blood Refinement World will exist as a vassal domain of the Nine Provinces, with its greatest function being to continuously provide each minor and major sect in the Nine Provinces with suitable cultivation talents.

This information was naturally spread by Lu Ye. There was no need to intentionally disseminate it; just mentioning it casually during idle conversations would quickly make it widely known, as it wasn't really a secret.

As for how Lu Ye came to know this, it was, of course, Number Nine who told him!

This was also deduced by Number Nine, representing the best possible outcome for the Blood Refinement World. In fact, it had the capability to completely drain the world's foundation. However, if that happened, the entire domain would become a wasteland, bringing about a cataclysm for all the humans living in this domain.

When it was first crafted, the cultivators of the previous Nine Provinces era assigned it two tasks: to protect the Nine Provinces and to protect the human race. Naturally, it would not engage in activities harming the human race, even including humans from the Blood Refinement World, who were also within its protective domain.

Nine Provinces cultivators began to return one after another.

Within the Nine Provinces, in the Heaven's Augury Halls of various sects, the Heaven's Augury Pillars resonated as familiar figures reappeared, their auras manifesting, prompting the resident cultivators to quickly come to inspect and welcome these heroes.

If the earlier transportation of Nine Provinces cultivators through the Heaven's Augury Pillar into the Blood Refinement World still had some degree of resource consumption on the Nine Provinces' foundation, then this return from the Blood Refinement World to the Nine Provinces, while not negligible, consumed much less.

This was because the distance between the two domains was close enough that the people in the Nine Provinces could see the Blood Refinement World just by looking up.

At the Lock Horns Grotto Heaven, the cultivators from each sect gradually departed, finally leaving only the people from Ziwei Dao Palace and the Righteous Blood Sect.

As they left one after another, eventually only Lu Ye, Lann Qiyue, Shui Yuan, the sect master, and Pang Huanyin remained, along with Amber and Yiyi.

The sect master looked at Lu Ye and said, "I can handle this; should I stay while you return to the Nine Provinces first?"

Lu Ye smiled and replied, "You've worked hard all your life; let this disciple handle such a trivial matter."

In truth, it wasn't just Lu Ye who stayed. Practically every minor and major sect had someone remaining, not for any other reason than that each had staked out their piece of territory in the Blood Refinement World during their battles with the Blood Race but had yet to thoroughly investigate what resources it held.

Now that the war in the Blood Refinement World was over, it was naturally time for a detailed exploration.

Not to mention, the Blood Refinement World is rich in various mineral deposits. Since the Blood Race doesn't understand the Path of Artifact Refining, nor do they engage in Artifact Refining, the domain's mineral resources are virtually untapped.

To the Nine Provinces cultivators, these are invaluable treasures, and it is only right to make good use of them.

There are also various rare herbs growing in the depths of the pristine wilderness, largely ignored by the Blood Race, yet in the hands of the Nine Provinces cultivators, they can serve their purpose.

Additionally, during the exploration, cartography must be conducted. The territory that the Righteous Blood Sect has demarcated this time is vast. Without an accurate map as a guide, future Righteous Blood Sect cultivators who come to the Blood Refinement World to mine resources or handle other tasks will find it inconvenient.

All these matters require someone to prepare in advance.

The sect master is too old for this kind of work, and Shui Yuan needs to hold down the fort at the sect headquarters, so it naturally falls to Lu Ye as one of the only three Divine Sea Realm members of the sect headquarters.

"Since you're willing, I won't compete with you for it," the sect master nodded. "I will try to dispatch personnel to take over from you as soon as possible."

As long as Lu Ye completes the preliminary preparations on this side, there won't be much more for him to do. The sect will send personnel to be stationed at the Lock Horns Grotto Heaven long-term, making it convenient to recruit disciples from the Blood Refinement World in the future.

The situation is pretty much the same for the other sects.

The Blood Refinement World is peaceful now, with no Blood Race causing trouble. The remaining humans are living comfortably and contentedly.

With the current skills of Lu Ye, looking across the entire Blood Refinement World, there's truly nothing that can threaten him.

Lu Ye looked at Pang Huanyin: "Junior Sister Pang, upon returning to the Nine Provinces, remember to request Heaven's Augury to grant a Heaven's Augury Pillar; only then will it be convenient for future exchanges between the two worlds."

In the Nine Provinces, any sect establishing itself on Nine Provinces territory has the right to respectfully request Heaven's Augury to grant a Heaven's Augury Pillar.

In the past, this was the only one.

But now the situation is different, all minor and big sects in the Nine Provinces will establish a branch in the Blood Refinement World. The existing hundred plus Heaven's Augury Pillars alone are insufficient for convenient exchanges, so Number Nine made an exception, allowing all sects in the Nine Provinces to

apply for another one. When this new Heaven's Augury Pillar is positioned at the branch's location, future exchanges between Nine Provinces territory and Blood Refinement World will become convenient.

Any sect's cultivator can easily achieve teleportation between Nine Provinces and Blood Refinement World through the Heaven's Augury Pillar, though this must certainly come at a certain cost.

Pang Huanyin nodded solemnly: "I've noted it down. As for the survey of the Dao Palace territory, I must trouble Senior Brother."

Lu Ye said: "It's an easy task."

Quickly, everyone departed, and this time even Amber and Yiyi didn't stay behind.

Ever since Lu Ye advanced to the Divine Sea Realm, the urgency regarding cultivation for one spirit and one tiger has risen because they don't want Lu Ye to leave them too far behind. Currently, they are just a step away from Divine Sea, evidently intending to return to Nine Provinces to prepare for advancement.

Perhaps next time they meet, one spirit and one tiger will have undergone a transformative change. Of course, this mainly depends on Amber, as Yiyi is Amber's minion spirit, whose power strength relies on Amber's growth.

Lann Qiyue also left together, and this time to the Nine Provinces sect headquarters, she will officially be inducted into the Righteous Blood Sect, becoming a disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect.

For this, she has been looking forward to it for a long time.

Once Lann Qiyue becomes a disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect, the sect will have four Divine Seas. If Yun Xuechu is included, it becomes five! This number is already considerable.

Furthermore, whether it is Giant Armor or Hua Ci, both are steadily advancing toward Divine Sea. Nowadays, the Righteous Blood Sect has sprung up with a multitude of Cloud Rivers; though the number

of True Lakes is not high, given time, their quantity will increase. These newly appeared True Lakes will continue striving toward Divine Sea.

Compared to the past when the Righteous Blood Sect was nearly delisted by Heaven's Augury, the current Righteous Blood Sect barely exhibits the traits of a big sect.

For a sect to stand firm, it must have sustainable developing backup forces. If there is a break in these backup forces at any stage, it will significantly impact the development of the sect.

Lock Horns Grotto Heaven became desolate and empty, the Blood Race eradicated, Nine Provinces cultivators departed, leaving only Lu Ye alone.

He exerted his power, condensed a doppelganger, equipped the doppelganger with a Crimson Dragon Battle Suit, and a sword gourd, dividing into two directions to start surveying this territory of a hundred thousand miles radius.

Nowadays in Blood Refinement World, those engaging in the same activities are mostly Divine Sea Realm, as Divine Sea Realm has Mental Consciousness, offering unique advantages in surveying tasks.

Many mineral deposits are hidden deep underground; merely relying on sight cannot discern the subtleties, yet with a sweep of Mental Consciousness, the situation becomes clear.

Lu Ye and his doppelganger operated simultaneously, meticulously traversing each mountain, memorizing the topography and various mineral and medicinal reserves discovered, while also recording the distribution of human race villages within this domain.

These human race congregating villages will be the talent source for the Righteous Blood Sect in the future.

After surveying the situation on the Righteous Blood Sect side, he proceeded to survey the territory of Ziwei Dao Palace.

Spent almost half a month before he returned to Lock Horns Grotto Heaven.

All surveyed information was imprinted on his mind. Next, he needs to create an accurate map, which is not difficult for him; even though he has never done it before, he has seen what a ten-part map looks like.

Just copy as if tracing a printed example.

After waiting several days at Lock Horns Grotto Heaven, the Heaven's Augury Pillar suddenly reacted.

Immediately, several figures manifested.

Leading them was Pang Huanyin, who had returned, having evidently acquired a Heaven's Augury Pillar, and now necessary to head to the territory of Ziwei Dao Palace to place the Heaven's Augury Pillar there. Subsequently, cultivators of Ziwei Dao Palace will be able to teleport directly to establish a branch.

For the Righteous Blood Sect, it doesn't need to be this troublesome; Lock Horns Grotto Heaven is ready-made.

Besides Pang Huanyin, there were Chen Yu, Kong Niu, and Ruan Lingyu, who had clearly come to replace Lu Ye in overseeing the branch sect in Blood Refinement World.

Chapter 1192 - 1190: Another Victory Banquet

The first batch of cultivators who joined the Righteous Blood Sect have now advanced to the True Lake Realm. They also participated in the previous expedition.

Compared to other sects in the Nine Provinces, the losses sustained by the Righteous Blood Sect and the Ziwei Dao Palace in the expedition were negligible. With Lann Qiyue assisting in eradicating the Blood Race, her cultivation at the Divine Sea Realm might not be very high, but the suppression effect of her saintliness was deadly to the Blood Race.

Thus, during the eradication of the Blood Race, the battles on the side of these two sects were essentially a crushing victory.

Sitting at the sect branch is a significant responsibility. Sects with the means generally choose someone at the Divine Sea Realm for this task. The Righteous Blood Sect doesn't have such conditions at the moment, with only enough Divine Sea cultivators available, so the True Lake Realm had to step in, just barely managing, though it required a bit more effort.

The Cloud River Realm is not suitable for this role: firstly due to the insufficient level of cultivation, and secondly because they are too slow. The territory spans a hundred thousand miles, and if an issue arises, a lot of time would be spent just on traveling.

Kong Niu and the other two have many tasks ahead of them. At a minimum, they must let the people in the branch's territory know that the Righteous Blood Sect will be open to them, and those with sufficient aptitude can join and travel to the Nine Provinces to learn from masters.

Additionally, they still need to organize manpower to mine resources.

Of course, these tasks are to be executed as sect tasks, and they will receive generous rewards in cultivation resources.

After one or two years, personnel from the sect headquarters will be dispatched to replace them, ensuring their own cultivation won't be affected too much.

That is roughly the process.

Lu Ye briefly coordinated with the three of them and then chatted with Pang Huanyin before using the Heaven's Augury Pillar to return to the Nine Provinces.

He reappeared in the Heaven's Augury Hall of the Righteous Blood Sect. Upon returning to the Nine Provinces, he faintly sensed some minute anomalies.

Due to the world's constraints, the Nine Provinces cannot birth cultivators beyond the Divine Sea Realm. Because of this, cultivation progress after reaching the Divine Sea becomes increasingly difficult.

This is why many cultivators are stuck at Divine Sea Level 6, Level 7, and Level 8 for years without advancing. It's not due to a lack of talent or cultivation resources, but due to the world's constraints.

Lu Ye has also felt this; despite his rapid progress, after reaching the Divine Sea, he could distinctly feel some invisible force of restraint. The higher his cultivation, the stronger this force felt.

However, because his foundation is so solid, combined with the support of his Talent Tree, while he can sense this force of restraint, it has little impact on his advancement.

But this time upon returning, he clearly felt that invisible force of restraint had weakened!

This is undoubtedly a result of the Nine Provinces absorbing the foundation of the Blood Refinement World and strengthening itself.

At Divine Sea Level 6, he could feel it so clearly. Those at Divine Sea Level 9 would certainly sense it even more acutely because the constraints of the world are strongest and most directly felt by this group.

This has led to the current state of the Nine Provinces, where Divine Sea cultivators, especially those at Level 9, are all in high spirits and full of anticipation.

It's finally confirmed that Lu Ye's earlier statements about the world's foundation were not empty words.

At the celebration feast for the end of the insect plague, Lu Ye publicly presented a shocking assertion. Though it shook hearts and minds, there was no concrete evidence at the time, so whether things were as Lu Ye claimed, no one could guarantee.

Moreover, at the time, it was a fact the Blood Refinement World was swiftly approaching the Nine Provinces, so the cultivators couldn't delve deeply into it and could only protect themselves first against the Blood Refinement World's invasion.

It wasn't until the pacification of the Blood Refinement World and the return to the Nine Provinces that they immediately sensed the change.

Thus, everyone was filled with joy and motivation.

Cultivators born in this era are extraordinarily lucky. In the post-Nine Provinces period, many generations were not without some individuals of extraordinary talent, but because of the limitations of the great environment, many were forever trapped in the Divine Sea Realm, unable to reach the upper realm.

Now, in this era, Nine Provinces cultivators are finally going to follow in the footsteps of their ancient predecessors and step out of the domain that nurtured them, venturing into stellar space.

Whether it's a blessing or a curse, no one knows, but a cultivator's life is ultimately one of continual advancement, driven by the instinct to pursue higher cultivation realms. Even if not in this time, cultivators will inevitably step onto the grand stage of stellar space.

This is something no worldly constraint can obstruct.

Lu Ye spent a few days of peaceful life back at the Righteous Blood Sect and, a few days later, under the guidance of the sect master, headed to Haotian City.

The reason was the celebration feast prepared in the Nine Provinces in honor of the great victory in the Blood Refinement World expedition!

In fact, even before Lu Ye's return, the Nine Provinces' cultivators had been preparing it. The reason for waiting until today was to await Lu Ye's return.

Undeniably, in the expedition to the Blood Refinement World, regardless of the early preparations or the subsequent campaigns, Lu Ye's contributions were immense, especially in the process of slaying the Sacred Seed. If this greatest hero did not participate in the celebration feast, it would have been somewhat unjustifiable and would have greatly diminished the event's splendor.

Furthermore, considering the abortive conclusion of the last celebration, this time the Nine Provinces pulled out all the stops, and the number of attendees at the grand event was expected to be several times more than the last.

This is both a celebration feast and a grand event where sect masters from the Nine Provincial States gather to discuss the future.

The original structure of the Nine Provinces has been broken, and how the Haotian Alliance and Ten Thousand Demons Ridge, the two major camps, will interact in the future is yet to be fully determined. Although there's a preliminary understanding, many areas still require discussion and adjustments before the new structure can fully form.

On the Righteous Blood Sect's side, only the sect master and Lu Ye attended; Shui Yuan isn't fond of such lively environments, and Lann Qiyue, being new to the Nine Provinces and of the Blood Race, finds it inappropriate to appear casually.

Haotian City is already overcrowded, with Divine Sea realms from the big sects of the Nine Provinces gathering together, socializing and laughing.

Due to the desire for the upper realm and previous sincere cooperation, the atmosphere between the powerhouses of both camps is mostly harmonious and jovial.

Lu Ye and the sect master arrived shortly before the banquet commenced, indicating that the sect master timed their arrival precisely.

Cultivators' gatherings are free of excessive formalities. As the leader of Bingzhou's Haotian Alliance, Pang Zhen stepped forward to give a brief speech, concluding with, "Enjoy the food and drinks; today we won't leave until we're drunk!"

The atmosphere suddenly became lively. The large square was filled with tables laden with exquisite fruits and dishes, mostly specialties from the Blood Refinement World. Figures moved among them, clearing empty plates and vessels, and bringing new food and drink.

The entire square buzzed with activity, resembling a bustling marketplace.

The top-tier elders were all present and seated in prominent positions, with cultivators constantly approaching to toast them.

Lu Ye's section was equally vibrant, filled with gratitude from those he helped during the expedition to the Blood Refinement World and those seeking to establish connections.

Everyone knew he was the one most favored by Heaven's Augury in this era; it's safe to say this is the era of Lu Ye. Even Feng Wujiang from the previous era doesn't compare, so naturally, they couldn't neglect him. Whether it had any practical use or not, getting acquainted was the first step.

Until, at a certain moment, a figure staggered over with a wineglass in hand, face flushed, clearly having drunk quite a bit.

Lu Ye quickly stood up: "How could I trouble Elder? I should be the one offering a drink to you."

The visitor was Wuchang.

Beside Lu Ye, the sect master also stood up.

Wuchang smiled, gesturing them to sit down, then plopped down opposite them without ceremony.

Once Lu Ye and the sect master settled back, Wuchang spoke: "They are all holding onto the air of seniority; I don't care about such things. I just came to ask, what's the path ahead for our cultivators' cultivation? Are there things we should pay attention to? What realm exists beyond the Divine Sea?"

At his words, the nearby chatter abruptly quieted, with the silence spreading rapidly, until the vast square became so quiet that a pin could be heard dropping.

What Wuchang wanted to know was exactly what all Divine Sea realms present wished to understand.

For the longest time, the Divine Sea realm was the limit of cultivation in the Nine Provinces, and nobody knew what lay beyond it, nor was there any experience from predecessors to follow. For the current Nine Provinces cultivation world, this situation is akin to crossing a river by feeling for stones.

If someone could shed some light on this matter now, it would benefit the entire cultivation world immensely.

Lu Ye was surprised: "Why would Elder come to ask me? I am only in Divine Sea Level 6..."

Wuchang gave him a sharp look: "Stop dodging, Heaven's Augury often gives you special treatment; do you think we old fellows are blind? If anyone has some understanding of what lies beyond the Divine Sea, it can only be you. If you can share some insights, please do; if you can't or don't know, let's pretend I never asked."

These words met with unanimous agreement, and eager gazes locked onto Lu Ye.

Lu Ye sighed, seeming to touch his battlefield marking unconsciously, but in reality, he was communicating with Number Nine.

Regarding Wuchang's question, he indeed knew something, mostly learned from Number Nine. Cultivators of the post-Nine Provinces period only reached up to the Divine Sea realm, while those from the pre-Nine Provinces period did not. Number Nine was crafted by the greats of the pre-Nine Provinces period and was thus familiar with cultivation matters.

However, matters concerning the future of a domain should not be publicized by him and need not be, because when the time comes, those eligible cultivators will naturally sense it.

If that wasn't the case, he would have told the sect master and senior brother about these things long ago.

But now, it seemed the top-tier forces of the Nine Provinces were getting impatient, leading Wuchang to lower his stature to inquire.

With so many people watching, not giving an explanation seemed unreasonable.

Moreover, it wasn't something that couldn't be said. Nevertheless, Lu Ye needed to consult with Number Nine.

Shortly after, Number Nine replied: You can speak.

Lu Ye understood.

Chapter 1193 - 1191: The Path to the Upper Realm

At Haotian City Square, under the watchful eyes of the crowd, Lu Ye spoke: "Regarding the matter of the upper realm, the younger generation doesn't actually know that much, I can only share some of the things I know right now, and I ask for your understanding."

After carefully considering the wording, he continued: "The cultivation of our cultivators should be summarized into two steps: one within the domain and one outside the domain. The situation of cultivation within the domain needs no elaboration, as all of you seniors are already aware, the cultivators of the Nine Provinces now face the cultivation outside the domain."

"However, the cultivation of cultivators is closely related to the domain they are born in. If the domain lacks depth and level, it will not allow the group of cultivators to leave the domain and venture into stellar space. This is both a form of restriction and protection of the domain towards cultivators."

Wuchang was puzzled: "What do you mean?"

Restriction he could understand, because until now, regardless of how high they fly, Divine Sea Realm cultivators cannot leave the Nine Provinces World. Often when they reach a certain extreme altitude, they cannot fly any higher.

As for protection... they had never felt it before.

"Because the stellar space is filled with countless extremely dangerous energies that are completely invisible. These energies are omnipresent and are something that Divine Sea cultivators cannot withstand. So if any Divine Sea cultivator were to recklessly drift into the stellar space, they might die within moments."

Everyone became tense upon hearing this, especially those who had attempted to fly out of the Nine Provinces, secretly rejoicing that their attempts had failed. Otherwise, if they had truly rushed out of the Nine Provinces into the stellar space, they would have surely died.

From this perspective, the fact that Divine Sea cultivators cannot leave the domain is indeed a form of protection by the domain.

"Therefore, if Divine Sea cultivators wish to advance further, they must first obtain the power connecting them to the stellar space. Only after advancing to the next realm can they freely roam the stellar space. Recently, the depth of the Nine Provinces World has been increasing, and many seniors might feel their bottleneck, which has been limiting them for years, beginning to loosen. Some seniors may have even attempted breakthroughs, but I must advise you that breaking through now will not succeed and is not the best timing. Only after acquiring the power to connect with stellar space can a true breakthrough be made, allowing one to roam freely in the stellar space."

Immediately, someone asked: "How can one obtain the power to connect with stellar space?"

Lu Ye said: "Specifically, I'm not sure how to obtain it yet, but it is most likely related to our domain. As an aside, domains, like cultivators, can grow. However, the growth of cultivators is through various forms of cultivation, while the growth of a domain is by absorbing the invisible forces everywhere in stellar space. Essentially, every intact domain is in a state of growth. Additionally, devouring the depth of other domains is a faster way to grow, and this is indeed the case for our Nine Provinces right now. When the accumulation of a domain's depth reaches a certain level, a Heaven's Augury may appear, and at that time, you seniors will naturally know what to do."

Wuchang, sitting across from Lu Ye, gave him a glance, uncertain whether Lu Ye truly didn't know or knew but couldn't say.

But the answers received were already clear enough, making it unnecessary to dig further.

"Let's talk about the realms above Divine Sea." Lu Ye paused for a while and continued, "Earlier, I mentioned that the cultivation of our cultivators is divided into two steps. The first step is within the domain, the second step is outside the domain. Inside the domain, the four realms are Spirit Stream, Cloud River, True Lake, and Divine Sea. These form the lower four realms. As for outside the domain, according to what I know, there are three realms, namely Constellation, Moon Jade, and Sun Blaze, which form the upper three realms. In ancient times, these seven realms were collectively referred to as the lower four and upper three."

Everyone listened attentively, with no one questioning how Lu Ye learned about the realm division of ancient times. As Wuchang said, Heaven's Augury often provides Lu Ye with special insights, so that he knows things unknown to the world seems quite normal? Until this moment, a new door to the path of cultivation slowly opened before the Nine Provinces cultivators, stirring hearts and igniting the bloodline.

"The cultivation of cultivators ultimately focuses on themselves. The cultivation of the lower four realms involves the cultivation of Essence Qi, and this remains true for the upper three realms. The three realms of the upper realms correspond to a person's Essence Qi, such as the Constellation Realm, which corresponds to a person's essence. The essence's vitality lies in blood Qi; strong blood Qi leads to a strong body. This aligns with the key point of breaking free from the domain and stepping into stellar space, as only with a sufficiently strong physique can one qualify to navigate the stellar space. It is said, well, merely said, that a Constellation Realm cultivator can even regenerate limbs."

Upon hearing these words, the entire audience was in an uproar.

Limb regeneration is too vague and is absolutely unattainable for Divine Sea Realm cultivators, as the current Nine Provinces realm lacks such heavenly treasures with this effect.

Cultivators often worry about incurring irreversible injuries in fights, but if limb regeneration is possible, many restrictions can be ignored, making battles more dangerous.

This news indeed caused excitement and longing, especially among cultivators who have sustained losses in battle, who inevitably yearn for the possibility to compensate for their deficiencies by reaching the Constellation Realm.

Lady Moon's serene voice drifted from a certain direction: "As you said, the Constellation Realm corresponds to a person's essence, so does the Moon Jade Realm correspond to a person's Qi, and the Sun Blaze Realm to a person's spirit?"

"Indeed so! If the lower four realms are about the cultivation of Essence Qi, then the upper three realms are about their expansion and extension. Cultivation ultimately aims to refine oneself to the utmost."

Everyone silently nodded, aligning with the principle of cultivation, which is focused on the individual. Therefore, in various schools, sects like Beast Taming and cover armorers are destined not to flourish because they rely too much on external force. Of course, some can achieve high levels, but these are rare exceptions and do not represent the entire sect.

"Once reaching the Constellation Realm, isn't everyone then physique cultivators?" someone asked.

According to Lu Ye, the Constellation Realm is about expanding and extending a person's essence, so what is the significance of other sects?

"Naturally, it won't be that simple. However, what kind of mysteries lie within, and how each faction's own beliefs will be challenged during the upper realm process—those are things a junior like me doesn't know. But once you all ascend to the upper realm, you'll naturally understand. However, one thing I do know is that physique cultivators find it relatively easier to break through to the Constellation Realm from the Divine Sea Realm compared to cultivators of other factions."

With these words, all the physique cultivators present beamed with delight, and Long Bai laughed heartily: "Kid, this old man hasn't read much, so don't try to trick me!"

"Naturally, I wouldn't deceive the City Lord on such matters."

It seems history is repeating itself.

After the last insect disaster, the celebratory banquet ended abruptly following Lu Ye's revelation of major news. There's a similar trend this time around.

The difference is, the previous banquet eventually turned into a mobilization before the Nine Provinces war, while this one resembles a symposium.

A symposium led by Lu Ye.

Among the Divine Sea Realm cultivators present, regardless of age, cultivation level, or background, everyone had various questions about the upper realm. Over the next period, people continually asked questions.

Lu Ye could only explain as much as possible. Although he had learned many things unknown to most during casual talks with Number Nine, his knowledge was still limited, and many things he couldn't answer.

Yet no one felt it inappropriate; if the celebratory banquet ended abruptly, so be it. For cultivators, nothing is more important than the upper realm.

Nowadays, the foundation of the Nine Provinces is increasing, making cultivation easier for Divine Sea Realm cultivators. Who wouldn't aspire to advance further?

Until half a day went by and there were no more questions left to ask, the Divine Sea Realm cultivators finally let Lu Ye off the hook; they seemingly realized that Lu Ye had exhausted his knowledge.

Lu Ye finally enjoyed a bit of leisure, but the Divine Sea Realm cultivators remained busy, still gathering in small groups discussing the various possibilities for the future.

Everyone was particularly enthusiastic about how cultivators could acquire power in line with the stellar space since Lu Ye hadn't provided a clear answer on this matter.

The celebratory banquet lasted for three days and nights, concluding amidst excitement and anticipation.

Many cultivators dispersed, and Lu Ye returned to the Righteous Blood Sect headquarters with the sect master, along with Wuchang.

Lu Ye sighed: "Senior, you've finally returned to the Nine Provinces; why not visit some old friends instead of following a junior like me?"

Wuchang chuckled: "At my age, I don't have any old friends left except those old folks at the Righteous Blood Sacred Land. I'm an independent cultivator with neither sect nor affiliation, wherever I go is home. Why not visit your Righteous Blood Sect? Are you not welcoming me?"

"Welcome, welcome, how could we not welcome you?"

Lu Ye roughly understood his intentions, thinking perhaps by following him, Wuchang might learn more information, as he'd said, in the domain of Nine Provinces, wherever he went was home, with no relatives or friends to visit. Instead of wandering aimlessly, it was better to stay by Lu Ye's side.

Thus, the Righteous Blood Sect gained a guest.

For the Righteous Blood Sect, this was actually a good development, as many disciples interested in pursuing the path of Ghost Cultivation could follow Wuchang's teachings.

The cultivation of Righteous Blood Sect disciples had always faced a somewhat awkward issue—the lack of a teacher.

This was unlike other big sects, where upon entry, disciples often have teachers from various factions specifically guiding and instructing them. Although the Righteous Blood Sect had developed well over the years, it still lacked suitable teaching candidates.

This is a common drawback shared by many developing sects; it's not that self-guided cultivation doesn't work, but having someone to teach on the cultivation path is always more convenient.

Chapter 1194 Spirit Jade

The sect master and Shui Yuan often teach the disciples, but both have limited energy and can't cover everything. Besides, due to the reason of their cultivation faction, they are completely clueless about the Path of Ghost Cultivation.

Now that Wuchang is here, he is a ready-made top instructor! He does not refuse this matter, and even quite enjoys the contact with the young members of the Righteous Blood Sect. This might be an old man feeling rejuvenated, even though Wuchang doesn't appear aged in his looks, his actual age is indeed not small.

After the celebration banquet, the native land of the Nine Provinces remained peaceful. The Nine Provinces cultivators are now mostly busy digesting the gains from the expedition to the Blood Refinement World, naturally having no mood or time to stir trouble everywhere.

But this does not mean the situation will remain as such in the future.

Through two cooperative endeavors, the relations between the two camps have improved unprecedentedly. Yet, the interaction among cultivators can hardly maintain such peace long term; over time, conflicts are inevitable to arise, and clashes are bound to recur.

However, one consensus the two camps have achieved is that within the Nine Provinces, there will be no further large-scale confrontations between the two camps' cultivators. Even if conflicts occur, they should be kept within a certain scope.

In a tranquil and harmonious atmosphere like this, the cultivators of the Righteous Blood Sacred Land relocated to the Nine Provinces, with Bingzhou chosen as the site.

This is reasonable; although the Righteous Blood Sacred Land was co-created by Feng Wujiang and many other old seniors, Feng Wujiang is ultimately the Sacred Master. He hails from Bingzhou, so placing the Righteous Blood Sacred Land in Bingzhou is naturally expected.

The foundation of the Nine Provinces is rapidly enhancing.

This is exceptionally noticeable to those top-tier experts because as the foundation of the Nine Provinces enhances, the bottlenecks that shackled them for years are increasingly loosening. If not for Lu Ye's prior words at the celebration banquet, many might have started secluded breakthroughs by now.

But since Lu Ye gave the prior notice, everyone knows breaking through now is futile work. Naturally, no one wants to waste time and effort. Hence, they are waiting, waiting for the Heaven's Augury to descend from the indistinct realm.

In this wait, Lu Ye's cultivation steadily advanced to the Divine Sea Level 7.

In the Blood Refinement World, he refined a lot of Sacred Blood of the Blood Race. Each drop of Sacred Blood harbored an enormous amount of energy, boosting his saintliness while also increasing his foundation. By the time he returned to the Nine Provinces, he was already close to Level 7, so this advancement was naturally smooth.

The improvement of his cultivation is secondary; what delights him the most is that the Talent Tree has begun metamorphosis again!

The process of metamorphosis was supposed to start months ago, but during the Blood Refinement World refinement of Sacred Blood, Lu Ye expended too much fuel of the Talent Tree and fire spirit stones, naturally causing the delay of the metamorphosis.

Initially, when Lu Ye obtained the Talent Tree, it could only burn off impurities mixed in the energy absorbed into his body, allowing him to cultivate without any worries.

With the first metamorphosis, the Talent Tree acquired the ability to absorb outside energy and could send out a section of Talent Tree roots to assist in forming a doppelganger.

The second metamorphosis is late, but Lu Ye eagerly awaits the changes it will bring.

At this moment, a seed like flame already exists in his Root Spiritual Orifice from the Talent Tree, likely indicating this metamorphosis process will require some time.

He can only wait quietly.

During this process, he can't cultivate, so he begins to enhance his knowledge in the Array Path and Path of Spirit Runes. When his cultivation wasn't high, both the Array Path and Path of Spirit Runes improved alongside his cultivation, but as his cultivation grew, he spent less time on these techniques, not because he didn't want to, but because he had no time.

It's perfect to take advantage of the Talent Tree's metamorphosis process for some intensive learning.

The Path of Spirit Runes goes without saying; his current proficiency might be no match for his master Yun Xuechu. But there's not much left for the master to teach him, and more often, they both engage in skills comparison, mutual exploration, and progress together.

As for the Array Path... his proficiency originates partly from the solid foundation of the Path of Spirit Runes and partly from the gifts of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda.

Thus, the Hundred Arrays Pagoda remains a subject of interest for Lu Ye.

If he could find the third part of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, his proficiency in the Array Path would certainly receive a massive leap.

Unfortunately, to date, no one knows where the third part of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda is located. All that is known is that the bottom part lies within the Tianyan Sect of Wuzhou, the middle part in the Cloud River battlefield; the missing third part seems to never have been discovered.

The best way to learn about this is asking Number Nine. Despite Number Nine usually maintaining a professional manner, reiterating several times that he cannot provide special privileges before Lu Ye refines the Heaven's Augury Compass, he frequently offers Lu Ye some extra instruction.

Wuchang and many top-tier human experts indeed feel this correctly.

Because Number Nine knew that among the current generation of cultivators, the only one it could rely on was Lu Ye. In the future, he was most likely the one qualified to refine the Heaven's Augury Compass.

In some ways, although Number Nine was a combination of an artifact spirit and Heaven and Earth's Will, it was not rigid and knew how to adapt.

"Hundred Arrays Pagoda? Can't find it. After being shifted to the current location by the mighty experts of the former Nine Provinces, many years have passed. Although I have obscured the existence of the Nine Provinces, some things will inevitably drift nearby, like world fragments, like the Hundred Arrays Pagoda... When they drift over, I just collect them. When I initially collected the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, there were only two parts, and the other part is completely missing."

Number Nine spoke as if it were scavenging junk, making Lu Ye feel amused, but it was indeed the case. The Nine Provinces World had stood in the starry sky for so many years, and various things drifted nearby. Number Nine naturally wouldn't collect useless items but would take those of value.

It was truly scavenging.

The Hundred Arrays Pagoda was one of the gains.

"When you qualify to roam the starry sky in the future, perhaps you might find the last portion of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda, but the hope is very slim."

The starry sky is vast and boundless, and who knows where the other part of the Hundred Arrays Pagoda has drifted? For a person to search for a specific item in the starry sky, it's basically hopeless unless guided by something special.

"Lu Ye, do you think the spirit jade should be distributed to those in need, or should they compete for it?" Number Nine suddenly threw out another question.

Lu Ye was puzzled: "Spirit jade? What is that?"

"It's the resource needed for cultivation after the Divine Sea Realm, containing the power to connect cultivators with the starry sky."

Lu Ye came to a realization: "The Constellation Realm cultivation requires this thing? What about Spirit Stones? What about nature's spiritual energy?"

"For cultivation beyond the Divine Sea Realm, Spirit Stones and ordinary nature's spiritual energy are already not very effective. Spirit jade is the crystallization of numerous starry sky energies, and it is the main means for cultivators beyond the Divine Sea Realm. Only by refining spirit jade during the breakthrough to the Constellation Realm can a cultivator break through the Divine Sea Realm and step out of their domain."

In other words, this thing is the treasure that the top experts of the current Nine Provinces dream of!

"Is this thing difficult to obtain?" Lu Ye asked.

"It's not extremely difficult, but aggregating it consumes the foundation of the domain. You know, the growth of a domain comes from either swallowing up the foundation of other domains or slowly enhancing itself by continually absorbing energy from the starry sky over many years. Hence, the birth of every spirit jade is a consumption of the domain's foundation. Generally speaking, worlds that aren't strong enough can't give birth to spirit jade, because the starry sky energy absorbed is used for the world's own growth, which is an inherent need of the world. Only when the world's level grows to a certain extent, like the current Nine Provinces situation, does it qualify to condense spirit jade, but the quantity mustn't be too much or too frequent, otherwise it will affect the domain's growth."

"If that's the case, how will future cultivation be ensured?"

"Stellar space energy is omnipresent, and domain after domain and world can absorb it, so cultivators naturally can too. It's like the Nine Provinces' nature's spiritual energy, but your cultivators' stage has shifted from the small world of the Nine Provinces to the big world of the stellar space. But this method of cultivation is bound to have a low efficiency."

This is understandable. Just take the current cultivators of the Nine Provinces; there are many ways of cultivation, inhaling nature's spiritual energy, taking elixir pills, using Spirit Stones, but the enhancement through inhaling nature's spiritual energy is the slowest. Of course, this method is relatively safe and reliable, not bringing any hidden troubles to cultivators, unlike taking elixir pills, which enhances rapidly but leaves pill poison accumulation.

Once you reach the Constellation Realm, you no longer inhale nature's spiritual energy, but instead inhale stellar space energy. It's the same cultivation method, with different energy sources.

"To enhance cultivation efficiency, meteorites, dead stars, and various unusual locations in the starry sky will give birth to spirit jade. Powerful domains will even give rise to spirit jade veins within them. In the starry sky cultivation, as long as you strive hard enough, you can always find them." Saying this, Number Nine sighed, "Actually, strictly speaking, cultivators are like a swarm of blood-sucking insects to a domain, only with the domain's foundation blood do they qualify to step into the starry sky. So, if you ever plan to die, remember to return to the Nine Provinces before doing so. That way, the benefits you've gained from it will be repaid."

Lu Ye's face darkened: "I'm only in my twenties, and you're already hoping for my death?"

Number Nine was getting more and more outrageous!

"So, how should we handle this?" Number Nine shifted the topic back to the main issue.

"How was it handled during the former Nine Provinces period?"

"I'm not sure. My creation was solely for shifting the Nine Provinces, and at that time, the Nine Provinces' Heaven and Earth's Will wasn't clear, nor would it discuss anything with anyone."

"Then let them compete. The cultivator's creed is competition, competing with others, competing with the heavens, only by competing can one go further."

"Let's go with what you say."

Chapter 1195 The First Constellation

Number Nine had made a decision. In reality, it had never had any opinions of its own...

In the past, it did not reveal itself to people, so no one noticed anything. But since it showed its true self before Lu Ye, its dependence on Lu Ye had become increasingly severe.

Many times, Lu Ye felt that it was not like an artifact spirit that had existed for thousands upon thousands of years, but rather like an undeveloped child.

Perhaps for an artifact spirit, a millennium is but an infant stage?

Several days later, on Bright Heart Peak, while Lu Ye was with his master studying the various transformations of spirit runes, Yun Xuechu suddenly let out a soft "oh" and swiftly exited the chamber, looking skyward.

Lu Ye followed her out, feeling something.

At the same time, on Righteous Peak, the sect master looked upward.

Throughout Nine Provinces, all cultivators who had reached a certain level in the Divine Sea Realm felt a peculiar sensation at the same time.

In the next moment, a point of spirit light appeared from above the Nine Heavens. The light was not dazzling, but even from a great distance, all Divine Sea Realm cultivators could see it clearly.

That point of spirit light, like a feather drifted down from the heavens, headed straight for a location within the Nine Provinces!

This location was none other than Bingzhou!

Beside the sect master, Wuchang laughed heartily, "I am going too!"

With those words, he soared into the sky, heading directly toward the spirit light.

The sect master appeared tempted but ultimately restrained himself.

In Beixuan Sword Sect, a sword light shot upward, merging Jian Guhong and his sword as one, with the power of the sword like thunderbolt.

In the Righteousness Sect, Mong Jie snorted lightly, bending slightly, and in the next instant, he shot forward like an arrow from a bow, causing the ground beneath his feet to shatter.

Throughout Bingzhou, other figures also rose into the sky, all heading toward the descending spirit light.

Not only Bingzhou, elite practitioners from the other Eight Great Provincial States also reacted swiftly, causing instant turmoil.

Everyone knew that the Heaven's Augury mentioned by Lu Ye had arrived, and it was crucial for them to breakthrough from Divine Sea to Constellation!

In the current Nine Provinces, many cultivators qualified to take this step; at least hundreds of them, a result of many long years of accumulation. Even within Righteous Blood Sect, both the sect master and Yun Xuechu had the qualifications to pursue it.

However, there was an unspoken agreement that only those seniors who used to dwell in the Righteous Blood Sacred Land took action this time.

Even though the sect master, Yun Xuechu, Pang Zhen, and Long Bai were eager, none joined the contention.

Not only because they knew they could not compete with the seniors whose skills had reached perfection but also out of courtesy.

Respecting the elders and caring for the young is a good tradition that must be maintained.

Additionally, the seniors indeed needed to take this step more urgently due to age; people like Granny Jiew would run out of longevity if they failed to ascend, dying of old age in the Nine Provinces.

Within the newly established Righteous Blood Sacred Land, Feng Wujiang looked at the bit of spirit light in the sky without any action. Qiu Min whispered anxiously, "Won't you go?"

Feng Wujiang smiled faintly, gripping her hand firmly, "No, I won't! When the day comes that you need to take this step, I'll snatch two, and we'll have one each!"

Having missed out on decades, it's time to make up for family time, so even though the spirit light tempted him greatly, he remained indifferent. He also possessed great confidence — if he really joined the fight, none of those old friends, apart from those who willingly concede, could be his match.

Qiu Min nestled close to Feng Wujiang's shoulder, eyes full of happiness, smiling sweetly.

Before the spirit light could descend, a fierce battle erupted high in the skies; despite their decades-long companionship, no one was willing to back down or concede on such an opportunity. Since that's the case, they could only compete for it.

No one knew the exact details of the fight; the distance was too far, and the scene was too chaotic — even the Ocular Power of the Divine Sea Realm couldn't clearly perceive it.

In less than one hour, the dust settled; the speed was so swift that the strong practitioners from the other great provincial states hadn't even arrived before it ended.

Wuchang returned, bruised all over, his clothes torn and tattered as though he had sustained sword wounds.

Flying while cursing, he muttered, "Old rascal, Sword Madman, is merciless with the sword; I must have been blind to associate with such people for decades. A sword cultivator deserves a solitary life, without friends or companions!"

Seeing his aggrieved state, Lu Ye knew that the successful one this time was likely Jian Guhong!

As expected, among the senior figures of Bingzhou, if Senior Brother Feng Wujiang did not make a move, Jian Guhong was undoubtedly the strongest. Not to mention Wuchang, who as a ghost cultivator could gain no advantage in a direct confrontation, even someone like Mong Jie, a physique cultivator, had to be wary of his flying sword at all times.

Another day passed, and suddenly from the direction of Mount Tian came an extremely clear and pleasant sword sound, heard clearly by the entire Bingzhou. Immediately afterward, from that direction, a flash of sword light soared into the sky, piercing through the clouds in an instant, ascending straight to the Nine Heavens.

It was truly a cold sword light rising, soaring above ninety thousand miles!

In the current era of the Nine Provinces, the first person to break out of the domain and step into the stellar space has been born, signifying that the long-sealed Nine Provinces is once again stepping onto the vast stage of the stars.

This left those who had competed for that flash of spirit light the day before, with envy beyond measure. History will always remember the first, but no one cares about such vanity; what they care about is not being able to be that first person.

What exactly is the scene of the starry sky, and what is the wonder within? You must see it with your own eyes to know. Jian Guhong took this step, but what about the others?

It seemed to respond to their expectations; above the Nine Heavens, several flashes of spirit light suddenly appeared, just like before, drifting down to the earth.

Gathering such spirit light does indeed consume the foundation of the Nine Provinces. Under normal circumstances, no world would gather them too frequently or densely. However, the Nine Provinces is currently absorbing the foundation of the Blood Refinement World, and the number of cultivators in the Nine Provinces waiting for such opportunities is too many, so there's no need to be too calculative.

After all, it's necessary to give some opportunities to those cultivators who are qualified to take a step.

When the foundation of the Nine Provinces stabilizes in the future, it will not be too late to consider the patterns and regulations for gathering such spirit light, perhaps gathering a certain number of spirit lights every few years, then allowing cultivators to compete vigorously for them.

Initially, those few flashes of spirit light gathered in one place, but as they drifted down, they suddenly exploded, scattering in all directions, landing across various provinces.

On those great provincial states, the top experts immediately engaged in relentless competition. Shortly, some achieved success and laughed heartily, while others sighed in regret.

Though they competed, after all, they had been together for decades, so there was a sense of measure in their clashes. Everyone felt that such opportunities would continue to arise frequently for a time. If they failed this time, there would always be a next time, and if not then, a time after that...

Thus, a relentless pursuit situation would not occur. Typically, when someone succeeded, the others would stop and extend their congratulations.

As time passed, almost every one or two days, spirit lights of varying numbers would suddenly appear, dispersing across various provinces, drawing everyone to scramble for them.

Wuchang made a move four times before finally succeeding. Despite being beaten until his face was bruised and swollen in the competition, he ran back with a look of great pride.

In these kinds of confrontations, it was indeed disadvantageous for someone like him, a ghost cultivator. Among other sects, only healing cultivators were inferior to ghost cultivators in direct combat ability. Combat cultivators, physique cultivators, and magic cultivators all had remarkable abilities.

Returning to the Righteous Blood Sect, he immediately found an unoccupied spirit mountaintop and began closed cultivation.

In less than a day, he emerged from seclusion.

For seniors like them, who have accumulated countless years in the Divine Sea Level 9, the only lack was the key to taking a step forward. The spirit light gathered by Number Nine was that key, so once they succeeded, they could break through quickly, without needing to spend much time.

On Emerald Bamboo Peak, Wuchang found Lu Ye, who was investigating the Talent Tree. When they faced each other, Lu Ye clicked his tongue in wonder.

Because in just one day, Wuchang noticeably looked much younger. If he previously looked like a mortal in his forties, he now looked only in his thirties.

This was a visible change. The less visible change was that Lu Ye sensed an extremely astonishing power contained within Wuchang.

In the past, although Wuchang's strength was stronger than his, Lu Ye could still gauge the disparity. In other words, the gap wasn't too wide.

But after Wuchang's breakthrough, this gap was clearly widened significantly.

"Congratulations, senior, on achieving your wish and advancing to the Constellation Realm!" Lu Ye offered his congratulations.

Wuchang smiled so widely that the corners of his mouth reached behind his ears. As a lone wolf, it would be dull if no one congratulated him after his breakthrough. Showing off in front of Thang Yifeng wasn't ideal since Thang Yifeng hadn't participated in competing for the opportunity, so he came to Lu Ye specifically to flaunt a bit and just wanted to hear some celebratory words to satisfy himself.

"How does senior feel now?" Lu Ye was also curious about the differences between the Constellation Realm and the Divine Sea Realm.

"Hard to say, but the physical body indeed feels more vibrant. It seems what you mentioned before, that the Constellation Realm corresponds to the essence of a person, is correct. I do feel that cultivation in this realm mainly involves the enhancement of essence. However, as for the limb regeneration you spoke of, that seems unreliable; at the very least, I can't do it yet."

Lu Ye laughed, "That's because senior has just advanced to the Constellation Realm. Once you have more profound cultivation in the future, you'll probably be able to achieve such feats."

Wuchang nodded, "What you say is quite possible."

"Is senior preparing to set off now?"

"Naturally, after so many years of waiting, now that the opportunity has finally come, of course, I must go see the wonders of the starry sky, or else wouldn't I remain a frog in a well?" He leaned closer to Lu Ye, whispering with a mysterious air, "Is there anything you need to advise me on?"

He looked like if Lu Ye had any insider information, he should hurry and share it.

It's not surprising that Wuchang would think this way. Venturing into stellar space is after all a new beginning for the Nine Provinces cultivators, and no one knows what precautions are needed, everyone must figure it out by themselves. But since Lu Ye knows about the upper three realms, he might know things that others are unaware of. Wuchang, being a cautious person, asked one more question just in case.

Chapter 1196 Exploring the Stellar Space

Lu Ye chuckled, "What can this junior advise the senior on? I can only wish the senior a smooth journey ahead and to turn misfortunes into blessings!"

"You're not being honest, kid!" Wuchang looked at him with playful irritation, waved his hand, and said, "Forget it, if you don't want to say, then don't. I will find out about the path ahead myself."

Wuchang left. Recently, the old seniors of the Nine Provinces have been leaving one after another, some going alone, others in groups. Their longing and instinctive desire for the stellar space have made them set out as soon as they achieved advancement.

They are the first pioneers of the current Nine Provinces era, and this journey will surely be fraught with hardships and dangers. However, such is the cultivation journey of a cultivator. Staying confined in one place might be safe, but that is not what their hearts desire.

Lu Ye is not far from taking this step himself. With his current cultivation at Divine Sea Level 7, at his cultivation speed, it won't be long before he can make this leap if he pushes forward.

However, his current focus is not on cultivation but rather on the Talent Tree.

The second metamorphosis of the Talent Tree had just completed, right before Wuchang came to see him. That flame seed had blossomed anew, transforming once again into a grand, burning tree.

From the feel of it, the Talent Tree doesn't seem to have undergone any major changes, but Lu Ye knows that it must have experienced some changes that he hasn't noticed yet. The specifics of these changes would require slow exploration.

It was the same during the first metamorphosis.

After some attempts, Lu Ye confirmed that the range the Talent Tree can now absorb from is significantly more expansive—in other words, the length to which its roots can extend has seen a breakthrough increase.

This is a boon for him because the increased length means enhanced efficiency in absorbing external forces.

The most practical aspect is that if there were deeply buried energy underground in the past, he couldn't absorb it because the Talent Tree's roots couldn't reach that far. But now it's possible. As long as he can detect energy within a certain range, he can devour it to his heart's content with the Talent Tree's might.

He then conjured a doppelganger.

Originally, he thought that after the Talent Tree's second metamorphosis, it might split into two roots, allowing him to form two doppelgangers, but that was not the case.

The Talent Tree can still only split into a single root, but it can no longer be merely called a root: it is another Talent Tree!

It's as if the entire Talent Tree split into two, and during this split, the stored fuel in the Talent Tree was halved!

This inadvertently solved a problem, which was the difficulty of long-term cultivation for the doppelganger.

In the past, because the doppelganger lacked the fuel of the Talent Tree, it could only rely on Spirit Stones to restore itself when its strength was depleted in battle. This method was inefficient compared to the original body, which could quickly replenish by swallowing elixir pills.

But now, with the Talent Tree's second metamorphosis, the doppelganger gains the exact capabilities of the original body. From now on, the doppelganger can also swallow elixir pills to restore itself without the worry of pill poison buildup.

Merely having such a condition may not bring much benefit to Lu Ye.

However, looking at it from another angle, the doppelganger can cultivate, and so can the original body, and when the original body reabsorbs the doppelganger, it can quickly assimilate all energy within the doppelganger.

This means if Lu Ye desires, both the original body and the doppelganger can cultivate together, thereby having double the cultivation efficiency!

This becomes quite terrifying because his efficiency in cultivation is already high enough. Doubling it would likely lead to a sky-breaking level of efficiency.

Of course, for Lu Ye, this change doesn't hold significant meaning. Although cultivators place a premium on efficiency, there is also a limit. Too high efficiency might not be entirely beneficial, as it can lead to an unstable foundation.

Thus, Lu Ye usually controls his cultivation pace, aiming to enhance his cultivation and strength as swiftly as possible without compromising his foundation, rather than endlessly chasing efficiency.

If he truly wanted to pursue efficiency endlessly, he would have already advanced to Divine Sea Level 9; he is quite capable of that.

The changes in the doppelganger have no practical significance for Lu Ye and instead add more risks.

Previously, the doppelganger only housed a segment of the Talent Tree's root. Even if the doppelganger was lost, at most only a root would be forfeited. But now, if the doppelganger is lost, it equates to losing half of the Talent Tree, which is a considerable loss.

The only changes observed are these; there must be other changes yet to be discovered, which will require further investigation and observation.

The metamorphosis of the Talent Tree nearly exhausted the stored fuel, forcing Lu Ye to quickly replenish it.

Fortunately, he still has a substantial surplus of fire spirit stones and doesn't need to worry about this issue for the moment.

Day by day, time passed. In less than a month, within the Nine Provinces, those old seniors who had once served under the Righteous Blood Sacred Land have basically all advanced to the Constellation Realm, stepped out of the Nine Provinces, and entered into the starry space.

The only one left behind was Senior Brother Feng Wujiang.

In terms of age, he was still considered young, so he wasn't particularly eager about advancement. Plus, he wished to make up for the decades of separation from Senior Sister-in-law, so he wasn't in a rush to leave the Nine Provinces.

With the departure of the older generation, the next contenders were the sect master, Pang Zhen, and Long Bai, as well as cultivators at their level.

Although their cultivation in the Divine Sea Realm wasn't as profound as Jian Guhong and others, they were still qualified to take that step.

However, their contention was much more peaceful compared to those like Wuchang. After all, their current relationships were relatively harmonious, so it wouldn't do to fight too fiercely; it was mostly just to the extent of stopping when necessary.

Some could restrain themselves and continue to wait, like Yun Xuechu, who almost showed no intention of participating in the struggle.

Overall, the most significant event in the Nine Provinces currently was centered around that spark of spirit light that allowed cultivators to break through the Divine Sea and advance to the Constellation. Above each provincial state, sounds of conflict frequently echoed, which had become the norm for both mortals and cultivators alike.

The Nine Provinces was bustling with activity, and the area beyond it was beginning to liven up as well.

Since the great cultivators of the former Nine Provinces period refined the Heaven's Augury Compass and used its power to teleport the Nine Provinces to the present stellar region, there had hardly been any prior visits by cultivators.

With countless years of accumulation, the cultivation resources in this stellar region were still very abundant. The drifting meteorites, the dead star near the Nine Provinces, and even within the Void, one could find spirit jade formed from condensed stellar space energy.

It's safe to say that this stellar region was a completely undeveloped wilderness. As the first group to leave the Nine Provinces and enter this stellar region, each of those elder cultivators had considerable gains.

Everyone knew that spirit jade was a resource needed by Constellation cultivators, so naturally, they hurried to seek and gather it. At present, they were almost in an environment where treasures were plentiful at every turn.

This was also why so many people left, yet none returned to the Nine Provinces.

They weren't very far from the Nine Provinces; if they truly wished to return, it wouldn't take much time. However, now was an excellent time to seek cultivation resources, so who would waste time traveling back to the Nine Provinces?

The first group of cultivators who left the Nine Provinces undoubtedly gained the most advantage because they drank the first sip of soup. When more and more cultivators left the Nine Provinces in the future, finding spirit jade in this stellar region would become difficult, and they would inevitably be pushed to venture further away.

Almost every large domain's cultivators had similar experiences. As they searched for spirit jade, they explored more and more places, and their range expanded widely.

Recently, quite a few cultivators left the Nine Provinces, but looking at the stellar space, it was like a drop of water falling into the ocean, so it was rare for cultivators to encounter one another in the stellar space. They mostly acted alone, and even if they did meet, they would quickly part ways, as treasure hunting was not suited for group actions; if one were found, whose would it be?

In a star region near the Nine Provinces, on a massive, desolate meteorite, a figure was meticulously searching.

Finding spirit jade wasn't an easy task. Though it emitted some energy waves, they were extremely faint, so if one wasn't close enough, it was hard to detect it.

So even though these elder cultivators of the Nine Provinces had advanced to the Constellation, greatly increasing their Mental Consciousness, it wasn't as if a sweep of their consciousness could detect anything interesting. To find spirit jade, they needed to carefully investigate.

However, because there was quite a bit of spirit jade in the star region near the Nine Provinces, everyone was able to gain something.

Such a massive meteorite, drifting from who knows where, had crossed the stellar space for countless years. With accumulated stellar space energy, it was easy for spirit jade to be born—this was a known fact, and Zhao Shoumu had benefited nicely using this method in recent days.

Among the numerous elder cultivators, his strength was not the strongest, but not weak either; he was of medium level, but that was before. Now that everyone had just advanced to the Constellation, the differences had essentially evened out. Who would go further and become stronger in the future depended on one's own luck.

As the most important cultivation resource, spirit jade was certainly indispensable.

After some searching, he indeed made a discovery. In a crevice of the meteorite, three pieces of spirit jade were neatly aligned. He joyfully collected them.

Following this crevice forward, he unexpectedly found another piece of spirit jade.

Continuing forward, there was even more...

Such good fortune made him unbelievably happy. Previously, in his searches, even if he found something, it was generally just one or two pieces of spirit jade. Never had he found this many at once.

He marveled at his good luck that such a treasure location hadn't been discovered by anyone else.

Just as he reached the end of the crevice and collected the last newly discovered piece of spirit jade, Zhao Shoumu's body suddenly stiffened.

He stared fixedly at the spot directly in front of him, his body suddenly freezing cold, scalp tingling.

Chapter 1197 Soul Search

Not far in front of him sat a figure quietly. The person looked quite young, just over twenty, with a slightly youthful face, dressed in a magnificent robe.

This was an incredibly unbelievable thing. One must understand that Zhao Shoumu had just advanced to the Constellation, significantly increasing his strength. Not to mention seeing someone in front of him, even an ant crawling by wouldn't escape his perception.

Yet, before he saw this person, he had no inkling whatsoever.

For such a situation to occur, either the other person's cultivation exceeded his by far, so he couldn't sense it, or the person was dead, a lifeless entity with no aura to reveal.

The reason Zhao Shoumu felt his scalp tingle was mainly that he immediately saw that the young man in front of him was still alive...

He just didn't know what method the other used to completely restrain their aura, so even when so close, Zhao Shoumu hadn't noticed.

Only at that instant did he realize why so many spirit jades had formed on this meteorite; it was clearly no coincidence but because of this young man.

The formation of spirit jades is directly related to the gathering and condensing of stellar space energy. Normal meteorites could not possibly have such abundant stellar space energy gathering; the presence of this young man was the key! As for what connections there were, he couldn't figure it out just yet.

Who was this person? What level of cultivation? Zhao Shoumu didn't know any of it, but he knew there was definitely a great disparity in their cultivation realms, so he absolutely couldn't disturb the other person.

Without being able to judge the stranger's nature, he naturally dared not take risks.

So after standing rigidly for a moment, he retreated silently!

However, at that very moment, the young man who had been sitting still, seemingly truly dead, suddenly opened his eyes.

The moment their eyes met, Zhao Shoumu showed the decisiveness cultivated over years of practice, immediately activating his best Escape Technique, fleeing madly backward.

The young man remained seated, his eyes flickering with a trace of bewilderment.

He had been on this meteorite for over a hundred years, in a state akin to suspended animation, both to heal and to avoid being hunted by an enemy.

A hundred years passed in the blink of an eye. Now awoken from a long dream, even with his formidable cultivation, he was momentarily bewildered.

The abundance of spirit jades on this meteorite was entirely due to him healing; during this healing process, stellar space energy gathered at his location, mostly being absorbed and refined by him, while the small unrefined portion congregated, gradually forming into spirit jades.

The bewilderment faded quickly, and he recovered swiftly. Although he confirmed he had basically escaped pursuit, he still found it unwise to expose himself.

Pointing towards Zhao Shoumu's retreating direction, he extended one hand from afar. With a grasp in the Void, instantly, the surrounding stars dimmed slightly.

At the same time, Zhao Shoumu, desperately escaping, found in despair that though he was rapidly retreating forward, he inexplicably began to move backward.

Completely unaware of what befell him, he nonetheless understood this strange situation involved that mysterious young man, and felt utterly bitter inside. Sure enough, just as he'd guessed, the disparity in their cultivation was too vast. Therefore, before seeing that young man, he hadn't sensed the presence at all, and thus, he had no idea how the other had intervened.

The faster he fled earlier, the faster he returned now. In just a few short breaths, he was involuntarily back to his original spot, his back to the young man, his body rigid, not daring to move.

Yet his mind was working swiftly.

Now at Constellation Realm, even if the other's cultivation was a whole major realm higher, it probably couldn't execute such a wondrous method. Thus, the other's cultivation was highly likely much more than a single major realm above his.

This person... is at least a Sun Blaze Realm cultivator!

Zhao Shoumu couldn't decide whether to laugh or cry. Though he'd cultivated for nearly a thousand years, at this moment, his mind was a chaotic mess.

What virtue or ability did he possess, having just left Nine Provinces, only to encounter such a Great Cultivator so quickly! Was this fortune or misfortune?

With a slight sigh, he obediently turned around, bowed, and greeted, "Greetings to this senior!"

At this point, he was rather straightforward about the situation, acknowledging the immense difference in cultivation. Being honest didn't seem wrong at all.

A quick glance, and Zhao Shoumu was once more astonished, because the young man before him looked noticeably paler than before, seemingly due to deploying that miraculous method earlier.

This person... is seriously injured! He immediately concluded, yet there was not a hint of ulterior motives in his heart. Even gravely wounded, a cultivator at Sun Blaze Realm was no target for his schemes.

An injured lion is still a lion, not someone a mere bunny can challenge.

The young man looked at him with a half-smile and gently said, "Not running away anymore?"

Zhao Shoumu, extremely earnest, replied, "Forgive me for the display, senior, there's no escaping, so I won't."

The young man nodded, "A wise man recognizes and accepts his circumstances. You're decent. So... where are we?"

Zhao Shoumu was a bit taken aback, "Senior doesn't know where this is?"

The young man flicked his finger, and Zhao Shoumu involuntarily groaned, feeling as if he had been punched hard in the face, leaving him dizzy and disoriented.

The young man's cold voice rang out: "Answer whatever I ask you."

He truly didn't know where this place was. A hundred years ago, he had hidden in a crack of this meteorite to heal his wounds, shrinking away as the meteorite drifted through space. A century has passed, who knows where it has drifted? The speed of meteors in stellar space is incredibly fast.

Zhao Shoumu's heart tightened, understanding that this person wasn't of good temperament. This was just a slight lesson; who knows what will happen next? He immediately said, "I don't know either, I have just stepped into the stellar space and am unfamiliar with the nearby stellar region."

He was speaking the truth. The cultivators from the Nine Provinces didn't know where this was, and they didn't have any stellar maps to reference. They had yet to formally interact with the stellar space in any substantive way and were still in a phase of exploration.

"What? Didn't your elders tell you anything?" the young man asked.

Zhao Shoumu shook his head: "Never."

In the Nine Provinces, they were actually the elders themselves.

"How troublesome!" The young man looked impatient, "I'll see for myself!"

With that said, he reached out to grab Zhao Shoumu. Although the action was not fast and Zhao Shoumu saw it clearly, he could not evade it at all.

His body involuntarily bent over, and the young man grabbed his head.

With mysterious power cascading down, Zhao Shoumu trembled like a willow, his eyes vibrantly shaking. He knew something was wrong, yet he couldn't resist at all. All he felt was his psyche defense being penetrated, his Divine Sea churning unsettled, and a sudden sensation of being exposed from inside out.

He understood what was happening to him, this was undoubtedly a Soul Search!

His heart was filled with despair, knowing his life would most probably end here, with much regret...

He had just ascended to the Constellation Realm, stepped into stellar space, and encountered such misfortune—it seemed heaven had no eyes.

But even though he was unwilling, he was powerless.

The degree of being explored grew deeper, and his psyche fractured more and more. Such a violent Soul Search rarely gleaned much information; mostly just fragments of memories, but it caused indelible damage to the person being searched.

Moments later, light flashed in the young man's eyes as he withdrew his hand.

Zhao Shoumu collapsed limply like a puddle of mud.

The moment he exposed the young man's presence, his death was certain. The other party would never allow him to continue living to prevent exposure of their whereabouts. Although it seemed that enemies might have given up on hunting him, such things are uncertain. For people of their realm, a chase could last hundreds of years and not be unusual.

The information obtained from the Soul Search wasn't complete but was still considerable. At least he had grasped what was necessary.

"Nine Provinces?" The young man murmured with a frown, feeling like he had heard of this domain's name somewhere, and soon his expression brightened, "Could it be that domain?"

He vaguely thought of a domain, a realm in legend, once prolific with Great Cultivators, a domain that, due to its strength, was exterminated by the collective forces of various races!

He had lived long enough to know some ancient secrets of stellar space. If this Nine Provinces was truly the legendary Nine Provinces, it would be too extraordinary.

After all, according to legend, that famous stellar space domain had been completely obliterated.

Perhaps it was just the same name?

Moreover, based on the intelligence gathered from the Soul Search, the overall level of this Nine Provinces had only just reached the point of venturing into stellar space, and from his perspective as a powerful cultivator, such a domain was not noteworthy at all.

His mind settled, and it seemed the name was merely coincidental.

The stellar space is vast, with countless human race domains, and identical names were not unusual.

If this Nine Provinces was indeed the fabled Nine Provinces and he had slain its people, it would spell trouble; presently, he only faced a group of cultivators of at most Constellation level and had no fear.

With a sweep of his Mental Consciousness, he quickly detected the presence of the Nine Provinces. He had little interest in domains of such caliber; once the Cultivation Realm reached a certain level, even with volatile emotions and violent temper, one wouldn't take pleasure in bullying the weak unless provoked.

Such a mindset is like adults not bullying children without cause; it holds no substantial benefit and only adds to karma.

Initially, he was simply surveying but then noticed something intriguing!

He immediately raised his eyes, fully energized his Ocular Power, and gazed in the direction of the Nine Provinces, his eyes marveling: "Is this... a growth-oriented domain?"

Though the current Nine Provinces wouldn't pique his interest, its current state caught his attention because he saw at a glance that it was devouring the essence of the Blood Refinement World, rapidly and significantly enhancing itself.

Chapter 1198 Why Am I So Unlucky

Normally, all domains where living beings exist are domains that can grow. These domains stretch across the stellar space, gathering and absorbing the omnipresent stellar space energy, expanding themselves, and gradually enhancing the foundation and level of their world.

However, this process is quite slow. Each time the world's level is raised, it can take hundreds of thousands to millions of years, and the higher the world's level, the slower the progression.

Yet the vastness of stellar space contains many wonders, and there are always a few special domains in this world that can devour the depth of other domains to enhance themselves. These domains are called growth-type domains.

They possess abilities that ordinary domains do not have.

In the currently expansive stellar space, the most powerful domains, nine out of ten, are such growth-type domains.

Because they are special, they are also rare. Although the domain from which the young man hails is sufficiently powerful, it is not a growth-type domain. Having wandered across the stellar space for so many years, he had seen numerous domains, but this was the first time he encountered a growth-type domain.

Such a domain is extremely precious because once it grows to a certain extent, it can even reach the level where spirit jade is born within the domain!

The reason why those top-tier domains can continuously birth more powerful cultivators is that they are not lacking cultivation resources. Ordinary cultivators need to search for spirit jade in stellar space, which is time-consuming, labor-intensive, and full of dangers. But cultivators from those big domains have enough spirit jade veins within their own domains to satisfy their cultivation needs.

Of course, the domain called Nine Provinces at present is far from reaching such a level. But since it is a growth-type domain, as long as there are enough supplies, it will eventually reach that level.

Such a domain is extremely precious to a cultivator like him.

Especially since the domain called Nine Provinces currently has no strong cultivators guarding it, only a group of Constellation cultivators who are just stepping into the stellar space. Once he descends, he will undoubtedly reign supreme, beyond the capability of resistance!

The young man couldn't help but laugh. Indeed, there is fortune in misfortune. A hundred years ago, he was hunted down to the brink of death and forced to hide in a meteorite crevice, feigning death to heal. Upon waking up, he unexpectedly discovered such a treasure domain. Time and fate, who can tell them apart?

He spread his form, soaring into the air, and headed in the direction of Nine Provinces.

This time he didn't care about exposing his whereabouts. Since he intended to seize a domain, his movements couldn't stay hidden. Compared to the benefits he could gain in the future, taking some risks was justified.

The meteorite he hid in exploded with a thunderous sound, and Zhao Shoumu's corpse was instantly reduced to ash.

His form transformed into a streak of rainbow radiance, imposing and majestic.

Near the Nine Provinces stellar space, several newly ascended Constellation Realm powerhouses were searching for spirit jade. From afar, they saw this rainbow radiance streaking towards Nine Provinces, all amazed because the speed was too fast, beyond their understanding.

No one knew what happened, nor did anyone know the essence of the rainbow radiance. They strained their eyes to observe, but in the next instant, each of them trembled in shock, their eyes pained as if they witnessed something they shouldn't have seen. For those close by, crimson blood even seeped from their eyes.

Thus, they realized that the essence of the rainbow radiance was a person—a supremely powerful cultivator who didn't belong to Nine Provinces!

This was naturally the young man's subtle warning. The cultivation world is layered with ranks and barriers, especially when traversing stellar space. To rashly spy on someone else's movements or origins

inherently conveys hostility, which the young man couldn't tolerate, even if the Nine Provinces cultivators were doing it instinctively.

Consider his former mindset; those cultivators spying on his whereabouts would have been instantly killed to teach them the price of defiance. But now, having developed an interest in Nine Provinces, he couldn't bear to annihilate them completely. These Constellation cultivators might become his servants in the future, so sparing their lives could prove useful.

The rainbow radiance rapidly approached Nine Provinces, causing all the Constellation Realm cultivators there to pale with shock. They had just begun stepping into the stellar space, yet a powerful figure had already set sights on their domain?

How could they endure this?

And so, several individuals, separated by a short distance, exchanged Mental Consciousness and swiftly turned back towards Nine Provinces homeland, while one swept outward—not to flee, but to alert other Constellation Realms.

With an unwelcome guest at the door, it was natural to rally together for defense, whether or not they were a match would be determined in battle!

Within Bingzhou, Long Bai recently had a stroke of fortune, seizing a bit of spirit light. Within a day, he had ascended to Constellation, and upon leaving seclusion, his laughter shook the heavens and earth, ostentatiously soaring skyward towards the Nine Heavens.

Yet before he could burst out, the world suddenly trembled, and an unseen immense pressure descended from above, subtly distorting the Void throughout the Nine Provinces domain.

Long Bai felt as though he collided with an invisible wall, and immediately a powerful force pressed down from above.

He only had time for a startled cry before his form wavered, crashing downwards and landing headfirst on a barren mountain, embedding deep into the ground with only half his body exposed, covered in dust and looking quite disheveled.

Thankfully, he was a physique cultivator with a robust body, and having just ascended to Constellation, he remained unscathed. Had he been a magic cultivator, he might have truly been in trouble.

He spat out a few mouthfuls of dust, cursing, "What the hell is going on?"

Previously, he had personally witnessed others exiting Nine Provinces and entering stellar space. He thought he could follow in their footsteps, yet inexplicably, he crashed down. What was happening?

If everyone else could ascend, why couldn't he?

After swearing, he couldn't help but be stunned, because right in front of him, not far away, stood a person, a young man who looked just over twenty, with a pale face!

Long Bai couldn't figure out the situation at the moment and didn't think much of this young man, only assuming he was originally there, so he beckoned amiably: "Hey, boy, did I scare you? Come over and give me a hand!"

The young man merely looked at him with an indifferent expression, his demeanor condescending as if he were looking at an ant.

Then he slowly opened his mouth: "My name is Yueh Xin. From today, the Nine Provinces... belong to me!"

Long Bai almost thought he misheard, staring blankly at Yueh Xin, propping himself up on the ground with his hands, leaping to his feet, laughing as he approached Yueh Xin and said: "Kid, did you just say something outrageous? I fell from the sky and got a bit deaf, didn't hear it clearly, can you say it again?"

As he approached, his fists and palms rubbed together, his knuckles cracking noisily.

Young people these days were becoming more and more unruly. Even someone as renowned as Lu Yiye wouldn't dare boast so grandly. This young man in front of him, perhaps his brain went wrong, dared to speak so shamelessly.

He ought to teach him a good lesson, to let him know the dangers of the human world!

Three breaths later, Long Bai was held in the air by Yueh Xin, gripping him by the neck with one hand, his arms twisted unnaturally, the pain causing sweat to appear on his forehead, yet he didn't utter a sound.

Just like Zhao Shoumu when he saw Yueh Xin, Long Bai's heart and mind went cold!

Because he had already realized one thing; this Yueh Xin, perhaps, wasn't from Nine Provinces, but a powerful person from stellar space!

Why am I so unlucky?

It wasn't really his misfortune, but after Yueh Xin broke into the Nine Provinces, a scan with his Mental Consciousness revealed that at this moment, Long Bai was the strongest in this domain, and naturally, he came to find him.

To gain control over a domain, it is most effective to start from the top level. As long as the uppermost power is controlled, it is equivalent to controlling all.

"Didn't hear it clearly?" Yueh Xin looked at Long Bai indifferently, the murderous intent in his eyes unveiled.

Long Bai instantly understood that if he uttered a single negative word, he probably wouldn't see the sun tomorrow. He was always someone who could bend and stretch, immediately nodding like pounding garlic: "Heard it clearly!"

Yueh Xin flung Long Bai aside as if throwing a rag, raising his head to look towards the sky. With his strength, he could naturally sense that there were several Constellation Realm cultivators swiftly moving from outside the stars, likely those who had been observing him from afar earlier.

He was fully aware of these people's intentions, so he stood quietly with his hands behind his back, waiting here.

He knew there was no need to deliberately search for anything. As long as he stood here, the top experts of this domain would come to him, ready to be dealt with together!

At the Righteous Blood Sect headquarters, on Emerald Bamboo Peak, Lu Ye was sitting cross-legged, a golden spirit force vortex rotating endlessly in front of him, the roots of the Talent Tree probing into it, frantically devouring the pure energy within.

He was in a state of cultivation.

However, his cultivation had always been multitasking, so besides cultivating, he was also observing the Talent Tree at this moment.

Through the time of absorbing the power of the fire spirit stone, many new leaves on the Talent Tree had ignited and burned fiercely.

Yet what astonished him was that when he immersed his mind into these newly burning leaves, he did not gain anything.

This was something that had never happened before.

Each time new leaves burned previously, he would either acquire new spirit runes or gain many insights into the Path of Spirit Runes.

Receiving nothing was a first.

The newly burning leaves were like blank sheets of paper, leaving him utterly baffled.

He initially thought there must be some mysterious aspect he hadn't comprehended contained within them, but after several investigations, he finally confirmed that indeed, these leaves bore nothing.

This was indeed peculiar.

However, Lu Ye vaguely felt a peculiar sensation, as if he could construct spirit runes on these blank leaves, even infusing his insights into the Path of Spirit Runes into them.

A sudden realization dawned upon him: could it be that the various spirit runes on the Talent Tree and the insights into the Path of Spirit Runes came about in this manner?

From what he learned from Number Nine, the Talent Tree did not belong to him alone. Before him, several people had acquired the Talent Tree, but they all died prematurely. Moreover, the one who brought the Talent Tree to Nine Provinces was a mighty strongman who died from injuries. After that person's death, the Talent Tree's legacy remained in Nine Provinces.

Chapter 1199 Deduction

The many spirit patterns and various insights into the Path of Spirit Runes carried by the leaves of the Talent Tree, Lu Ye actually had long speculated about their origins.

Not to mention the spirit patterns themselves, just speaking of those insights.

Since they are insights, naturally they are related to cultivators and spirit runes masters.

It must be that spirit runes masters who once possessed the Talent Tree injected their own insights into it, thereby benefiting subsequent generations, the so-called planting trees for later generations to enjoy the shade, is this principle.

That's why those many insights are extremely profound, allowing Lu Ye to progress smoothly on the Path of Spirit Runes.

However, not all leaves of the Talent Tree carry insights; many are blank leaves, or perhaps they once carried insights, but due to the passage of time, they gradually disappeared.

Since obtaining the Talent Tree, Lu Ye has been playing the role of someone enjoying the shade, benefiting from the legacy left by predecessors, but now with the second metamorphosis of the Talent Tree, does he also have to start planting trees?

In other words, if he can construct spirit patterns on these blank leaves, he can later use them as he wishes.

If that is truly the case, then it's not a bad thing for him, but rather a great boon.

Because although the number and types of spirit patterns carried by the Talent Tree are numerous, they are still quite limited; some spirit patterns Lu Ye learned from books are not carried by the Talent Tree.

For example, the Void Spirit Runes he has been longing for!

He originally thought that certain leaves on the Talent Tree must carry this pattern, requiring only himself to continually let the Talent Tree absorb fire-type energy, and sooner or later, he could obtain the Void Spirit Runes.

But now it seems, the situation is not as he imagined.

If things are truly as he thought, then he can completely construct the void on the Talent Tree, thereby mastering it thoroughly, and use this spirit pattern freely in battle.

Previously, the spirit patterns on the Talent Tree were passively accepted, Lu Ye had no choice, but now can he actively choose?

Many thoughts surged in his mind, the more Lu Ye thought, the more he felt it was possible.

If that is truly the case, then the benefits brought to him by the second metamorphosis of the Talent Tree would be immense.

As for whether it is true or not, trying it out will reveal the answer!

Lu Ye immersed his mind and began constructing the Void Spirit Runes on those blank leaves.

The Void Spirit Runes are complex, with thousands of changes in Yin-Yang Dual Origins, not something a single leaf can bear, Lu Ye estimated it would take at least a dozen leaves.

Fortunately, the number of new leaves burning this time is sufficient to meet the needs of constructing the void.

To him, this isn't a difficult task, because he has always had a high success rate in constructing the void, rarely failing, but this construction, even if quick, requires a certain amount of time, so he cannot use it in battle.

On the first leaf, many Yin-Yang Dual Origins spread and linked, interlocking with each other, suddenly Lu Ye entered a state of emptiness, where numerous inspirations in his mind continuously emerged, as if the entire world became a world of Yin-Yang Dual Origins, these two basic elements constantly transforming in various combinations, unexpectedly allowing him to glimpse countless changes and possibilities.

The first leaf quickly spread full of Yin-Yang Dual Origins, followed by the second leaf, the third leaf...

Lu Ye completely forgot himself, fully immersed in it, unable to extricate himself, completely unaware of the changes in himself, like the saying goes, unaware of the affairs outside the window, this is probably the best portrayal of him at this moment.

During the opening process of the leaves of the Talent Tree, Lu Ye obtained many insights and wonderful uses of the Path of Spirit Runes, he thought he had thoroughly absorbed these insights and uses, but in reality, he only tasted the tip, after all, those were the lingering shadows left by predecessors, no matter how deeply he understood them, they remained someone else's things.

But at this moment, these insights and uses once obtained truly transformed into his own foundation, and it was precisely in this state of complete self-forgetfulness, his understanding of the Path of Spirit Runes ascended another level, causing numerous inspirations in his mind to conflict and explode.

The spread of Yin-Yang Dual Origins did not continue endlessly, but under Lu Ye's control, sometimes growing, sometimes fading.

At this moment, he seemed to be painting on the leaves of the Talent Tree, erasing and repainting unsatisfactory parts, striving for perfection.

During this process of erasing and modifying, Lu Ye suddenly felt a pain in his mind, suddenly freeing himself from that state of emptiness.

Without his manipulation, the unfinished Void Spirit Runes on the Talent Tree leaves could not continue, at this moment, the Void Spirit Runes were just a semi-finished product.

Lu Ye dazedly opened his eyes, only to see stars dancing before them, and within his body, there was an unprecedented sense of weakness, as if his entire being had been hollowed out.

With a turn of thought, he immediately understood what had happened.

His Divine Sea, surprisingly, was on the verge of drying up!

In other words, his Divine Soul Power was severely depleted, almost to the point of overdraft.

Lu Ye was shocked, knowing that his current Divine Sea Level 7 cultivation, coupled with consuming many Soul Cleansing Waters, meant that in terms of Divine Soul Power alone, he was not inferior to any elder in the Nine Provinces.

Even so, within this short period of less than half a day, his Divine Soul Power was on the verge of overdraft, indicating the terrifying consumption during the construction of spirit patterns on the Talent Tree leaves.

Simple construction wouldn't have such high consumption; the key is in that mysterious state during spirit pattern construction.

He quickly took out a drop of Soul Cleansing Water and swallowed it, closing his eyes to concentrate, carefully contemplating all that had just happened.

The state he was in just now was clearly abnormal. When constructing the spirit runes, the Talent Tree that had undergone its second metamorphosis seemed to play a kind of miraculous guiding role, leading him to deduce and comprehend the path of variation in spirit runes.

The Path of Spirit Runes is unpredictable. Even the same spirit rune does not have only one way of construction. Some methods require more Yin-Yang Dual Origins, some less, some are quicker, and some have stronger effects. It can be said, in the process of constructing, any casual change of a basic element may entirely alter a spirit rune, or perhaps greatly enhance its effect.

Deriving new spirit runes is what spirit runes masters who have reached a certain level of accomplishment love to do the most. His master, Yun Xuechu, often deduces spirit runes during retreats.

It is precisely because of the relentless research and deduction by numerous spirit runes masters that the cultivation world today can have such a wide variety of spirit runes available.

However, the birth of a new spirit rune is not an easy matter. For any spirit runes master, deriving a new spirit rune within their lifetime would be enough to secure their place in history.

Lu Ye never thought about deriving a new spirit rune. It is too laborious and time-consuming. He is a combat cultivator, and cultivation ultimately focuses on one's own self, while the Path of Spirit Runes is just an aid.

Perhaps one day when his cultivation reaches extraordinary accomplishments, he might have the leisure to do this, but now what he should be doing the most is to quickly enhance his cultivation strength, rather than spending time on the Path of Spirit Runes.

He never thought about doing this, yet just now, he did it unconsciously!

Obviously, it was not due to him, so there was only one possible reason, the Talent Tree that had undergone the second metamorphosis! He felt this clearly. Perhaps he couldn't perceive it at the time because his mind was ethereal, but looking back, everything was crystal clear.

When constructing spirit runes on the blank leaves, the Talent Tree miraculously guided him to begin many Mental Consciousness-expensive deductions...

In that state, his mind was instantly filled with countless thoughts and possibilities, which was why there was a great expenditure of Divine Soul Power.

In such a state, he would instinctively choose a more precise and efficient way to build the Yin-Yang Dual Origins, to simplify a complex spirit rune and enhance its effect.

The most direct evidence is the half-finished Void Spirit Rune on the Talent Tree today.

This spirit rune was not completed, but Lu Ye observed the constructed part and could clearly identify many subtle differences from the Void Spirit Rune he had learned from books before.

For now, it seems to have become more concise, lacking at least a hundred basic elements, as for the effect... since it was not completed, there's no way to compare.

A spirit rune passed down through ages, reduced by over a hundred basic elements in one deduction, is an incredibly terrifying achievement, implying progress in spirit runes. If Lu Ye is willing to promote the completed rune, then in the future, spirit runes masters will find constructing voids much simpler.

Could the Talent Tree have such a miraculous effect?

Lu Ye clicked his tongue in wonder.

Originally, when the Talent Tree completed its second metamorphosis, he thought the change wasn't significant, little did he expect, the Talent Tree would undergo such an astounding change.

And this is just a half-finished product, what would happen if the deduction were completed?

If the Void could be like this, what about other spirit runes?

Suddenly Lu Ye felt as if he had opened the door to a new world.

For now, the change in the Talent Tree doesn't seem to bring any substantial benefit, but if viewed in the long run, it could greatly enhance his Path of Spirit Runes.

He was eager to once again enter that state and complete the deduction construction of the void.

But no matter the Soul Cleansing Water he took, with his current strong psyche, it wasn't an easy matter to fully recover.

He could only wait.

At this moment, suddenly a thunderous noise came from a certain direction, accompanied by the turmoil of the entire world.

Lu Ye was startled, he flashed out and hovered in the sky, looking into the distance.

He saw nothing, for the sound must have come from far away, but it felt as if someone over there was engaged in a fierce battle.

This left him puzzled, as the Nine Provinces were relatively peaceful now, the elders had ascended to Constellation, exploring stellar space, like Sect Master Long Bai of that level, they were leaving one after another.

Who was fighting over there, and why was the disturbance so immense?

When in doubt, ask Number Nine!

Lu Ye immediately raised his hand to tap on the battlefield marking, softly calling: "Number Nine!"

In the past, every time he called, Number Nine would always respond immediately.

But to Lu Ye's surprise, this time Number Nine gave no response.

Lu Ye called several times, finally realizing something was amiss.

Chapter 1200 - The Arrival of a Malicious Guest

Number Nine is the celestial mechanism of the Nine Provinces, omnipresent, as long as Lu Ye is within the Nine Provinces, he can contact it anytime and anywhere.

But at this moment, Number Nine has no response!

The loss of contact with the celestial mechanism is quite absurd.

Lu Ye does not know what has happened on Number Nine's side. Right now, the Nine Provinces is in the process of devouring the Blood Refinement World's essence to enhance itself. Perhaps something went wrong during this process?

This inevitably makes Lu Ye slightly worried. If something indeed happened due to devouring the Blood Refinement World's essence, the impact on the Nine Provinces would undoubtedly be huge.

There's nothing he can do to help with such matters, nor does he know how to help, so he can only wait for Number Nine to contact him.

As for who is currently fighting within the Nine Provinces, causing such a huge commotion, he can only go and see for himself.

As he rises into the air, the sect master's figure from Righteous Peak also rushes out simultaneously. Upon seeing each other, both knowingly nod and continue flying forward.

Not long after they took off, Lu Ye's battlefield marking suddenly emitted a commotion. At the same time, the sect master was investigating his battlefield marking, obviously being messaged by someone.

Before Lu Ye could figure it out, Number Nine's voice rang in his ears with a hint of panic: "Lu Ye, Lu Ye, there's trouble!"

Since contacting Number Nine, the feeling it always gave him was confident and composed. Never once had it been so panicked like it encountered something extremely daunting.

"What happened?" Lu Ye asked.

"A very powerful figure has arrived in the Nine Provinces. He seems to have taken a liking to it and wants to claim this domain as his own!"

Lu Ye's face turned serious: "How strong?"

"He's likely a Sun Blaze Realm cultivator."

Lu Ye's body stumbled, nearly falling from the sky.

"A Sun Blaze Realm? Are you sure you're not mistaken?"

"It's impossible to be mistaken. I sensed him the moment he arrived in the Nine Provinces," Number Nine vowed confidently.

Lu Ye immediately understood; this could be troublesome. The Nine Provinces' cultivators have just been promoted to Constellation and stepped into stellar space. Above Constellation is Moon Jade, then comes Sun Blaze, a gap of two entire realms!

It's known that the higher the cultivation realm, the more difficult it becomes, and the larger the gap grows.

The gap between Constellation and Sun Blaze is greater than that between Cloud River and Divine Sea! A Divine Sea Realm cultivator can easily eliminate countless Cloud River Realm cultivators. If a Sun Blaze

Realm expert is willing, the newborn Constellation Realm cultivators of the Nine Provinces might not have one left alive.

How could such a thing happen?

Though Lu Ye knew the stellar space was full of dangers and mighty figures, the Nine Provinces had just connected with stellar space. How could they have already provoked such a strong figure?

Isn't this luck a bit too bad?

He slowly realized: "Was the previous battle between him and the Constellation Realm cultivators?"

Number Nine said: "Rather than a battle, it was more of a one-sided crush. Except for a negligible few who ran far away, most of the previously departed Constellation Realm cultivators returned, but even with dozens joining forces, they were shattered by that person with just one palm!"

If the opponent were a Moon Jade Realm cultivator, with a gap of one realm, perhaps they could still rely on numbers to maneuver, but the gap of two realms is worlds apart.

"Did anyone die?"

"No, there were no deaths. Since seeing the Nine Provinces, this person wouldn't incur needless slaughter. He merely showed a bit of his strength so those Constellation Realm cultivators would recognize the reality." Number Nine paused, then continued: "This person is injured. Previously, he hid on a meteorite to heal, drifting with it. Then he was awakened by someone named Zhao Shoumu, and as a result, discovered the Nine Provinces."

Zhao Shoumu... Lu Ye had some impression. When he ascended to Divine Sea in the Blood Refinement World, dozens of seniors took turns training him, Zhao Shoumu being one of them.

"How is Senior Zhao?"

"He's dead! After being subjected to the Soul Searching Technique by that person, he died."

Lu Ye's mood sank heavily.

These seniors of the Nine Provinces were fortunate to live in this era, finally awaiting the world's elevation, seizing the opportunity to ascend to Constellation and enter stellar space. Yet now, some haven't gone far from the Nine Provinces but have been killed.

The Soul Searching Technique, Lu Ye had heard of it, but within the Nine Provinces, no one seemed to know this evil skill, possibly due to insufficient cultivation realm. However, Lu Ye understood that the soul-searched persons surely endure tremendous horror and torment before dying.

"Why would a Sun Blaze Realm expert take interest in the Nine Provinces?" Lu Ye was extremely puzzled. Logically, such a strong person shouldn't have his sights set on the Nine Provinces. There's nothing here to tempt him unless he's inherently vicious, delighted in slaughter.

However, from the intelligence available, it seems this isn't the case, because if he wished, those Constellation Realm entities returning from stellar space would all have to die.

"It seems that the potential of the Blood Refinement World being devoured by the Nine Provinces caught his attention, making him realize that the Nine Provinces is a domain capable of rapid growth, thus prompting his interest."

"How so?" Lu Ye was somewhat confused.

"I have mentioned to you before, some domains when developed to a certain extent, will birth spirit jade veins. Although he is in the Sun Blaze Realm, he also needs spirit jade. Instead of slowly searching the vast stellar space, which is laborious, why not occupy a domain and wait for it to develop to a point where spirit jade veins can be easily harvested."

"How long will that take?" Lu Ye couldn't fathom what such a powerful figure was thinking.

"He, being in the Sun Blaze Realm, can afford to wait. Moreover, a rapidly developing domain like the Nine Provinces naturally holds great allure for someone like him. He could entirely use the Nine Provinces as a foundation to establish a world of his own, developing his own influence. However it may be, he hasn't taken his eyes off the Nine Provinces and won't leave easily."

That's why Number Nine warned of impending disaster.

The Nine Provinces is indeed unfortunate.

If it were just a few years later, the meteorite where Yueh Xin hid might have drifted away from the Nine Provinces and nobody would have found it, thus not alerting him.

Ironically, at this time, the world's level of the Nine Provinces improved, and someone ascended to the Constellation Realm. At such a time, the meteorite where he hid was destined to be discovered by someone in the Constellation Realm from the Nine Provinces, if not Zhao Shoumu, then someone else.

"Where is that person now?"

"He left. After showcasing his absolute strength, he suddenly departed, but he will definitely return. I don't really know what he went to do."

Lu Ye was suddenly enlightened: "Did you hide yourself before?"

No wonder he couldn't contact Number Nine; it must have sensed something amiss and hid its presence. Then it proactively contacted Lu Ye after that powerful figure left.

"His fixation on the Nine Provinces is driven by desire. If he discovers my true form, he would surely try to refine it, and that would cause turbulence at the very foundation of the Nine Provinces, so no matter what, I cannot be detected by him."

Should Yueh Xin discover the presence of the Heaven's Augury Compass, it would certainly mean disaster for the Nine Provinces, because Number Nine is the fusion of the Artifact Spirit of the Heaven's Augury Compass and the Heaven and Earth's Will of the Nine Provinces. If refined by Yueh Xin, the Nine

Provinces would suffer great losses in potential, losing the possibility for further growth, possibly even dropping from its current world level.

Thankfully, Number Nine never showed itself to anyone. If the truth about Heaven's Augury were known to the Nine Provinces cultivators, Yueh Xin would undoubtedly glean some insight under a Soul Search.

Currently, aside from Lu Ye, only the City Lord of Xianyuan City knows the true nature of Number Nine, so this secret won't be leaked for now, and Number Nine is temporarily safe.

Lu Ye suddenly remembered something: "When he intruded into the Nine Provinces, why didn't you bring down Heavenly Punishment on him?"

Back when he invaded the Blood Refinement World, the Heavenly Punishment descended immediately, and if not for his quick thinking of entering the Blood Sea to refine its energy, he would have turned to ash under its power.

Number Nine's voice sounded a bit troubled: "You think I didn't want to? It's just impossible. The potency of Heavenly Punishment is directly linked to the world's level. If an outsider of the Constellation Realm were to intrude into the Nine Provinces now, there would be no chance under Heavenly Punishment. But he is in the Sun Blaze Realm, and the Nine Provinces' Heavenly Punishment is nothing to him, easily deflected. If Heavenly Punishment were really called down, he might even trace it back to find my origin."

Every world has its limits of containment; currently, the Nine Provinces' limit is the Constellation Realm, so under Heavenly Punishment, the Constellation Realm cannot withstand it. Even outsiders of the Moon Jade Realm face some suppression and threat due to the world's might, but the Sun Blaze Realm far exceeds the suppression and threat limits of the Nine Provinces.

In the cultivator community, whenever individual power surpasses certain limits, it cannot be said to be almighty, but in specific environments, it is beyond restraint.

There is something more to worry about: the exposure of the Nine Provinces due to Yueh Xin. The previous era's Nine Provinces cultivators were strong enough to make numerous enemies while traversing stellar space, ultimately being besieged and forced to teleport to avoid disaster.

If the existence of the Nine Provinces gets exposed, it might attract more enemies.

Though the events of that time were thousands of years ago, enmity is not diminished by the passage of time.

For now, this issue isn't significant; since Yueh Xin has an interest in the Nine Provinces, he won't be publicizing it but will surely act in secret.

He probably fears that the information leaking could bring strong adversaries to compete with him.

The potential scenarios of the Nine Provinces engaging with stellar space had been considered by Number Nine and Lu Ye, but they can't lock themselves away over concerns. Cultivators need opportunities to enter the upper realm, and the Nine Provinces needs to grow, which means breaking barriers.

What was unexpected was how quickly trouble arrived and how strong the visitor would be.

"That person left, and you have no idea what he's doing?"

"I don't know."

"What should be done now?"

When the gap between their powers is this vast, any plan seems futile. Even if Lu Ye were to ascend to the Constellation Realm, he likely couldn't withstand a single blow from such a figure.

The current situation of the Nine Provinces seems utterly helpless.