

Humanity 1201

Chapter 1201 Countermeasures

"Did the great cultivators of the Pre-Kyushu Period leave you any trump cards when they crafted you? Do you have any attack capabilities?" Lu Ye suddenly had a fanciful thought.

Lu Ye wasn't quite sure about the level of the Heavenly Machinery Disk, nor did he ask Number Nine about such things. But, after all, it was crafted through the joint effort of many great human cultivators from the Pre-Kyushu Period, even capable of teleporting an entire domain. Clearly, it's not an ordinary treasure. If it had attack capabilities, dealing with a Sun Blaze Realm would be a piece of cake.

Currently, the situation is such that the Nine Provinces human race is powerless against the visitors. The only way to avert disaster is through external force, but what can the Nine Provinces rely on? There's only Number Nine.

Number Nine felt somewhat aggrieved: "My capabilities aren't centered around destruction..."

Lu Ye then knew that he couldn't count on it.

Unlike cultivators, the abilities of treasures are often concentrated in a particular area. For instance, the Boulder Mountain Saber is a weapon of destruction, while the Crimson Dragon Battle Suit is a protective spirit treasure.

The main ability of the Heavenly Augury Compass is teleportation, followed by concealment. Its capabilities don't touch on destruction at all.

"So what you're saying is, we just wash our necks clean and hope for other people's mercy?"

Number Nine's voice was weak: "That's not entirely accurate. We still have a way in the Nine Provinces to deal with him... Well, maybe."

Lu Ye was furious, "If there's a way, just say it. Why the ambiguity and secrecy?" He was anxious, thinking that this time the Nine Provinces was truly in deep trouble.

Number Nine felt even more aggrieved: "It's not that I don't want to say, but the method isn't very reliable. We might hurt ourselves before hurting the enemy."

"Don't worry about hurting the enemy or ourselves; given the current situation, if there's any method, we have to use it to find out who gets hurt. If we don't use it, the entire Nine Provinces will end up in someone else's pocket. That guy might discover your presence and refine you, and you'll be too late to cry."

"Don't scare me!" Number Nine was about to cry.

"Enough with the nonsense, quickly tell me what the method is, and what do I need to do?" Lu Ye urged, sensing that no matter what this method was, he would probably be entangled in it, which was why Number Nine contacted him promptly after that strong individual left.

But he was curious, what on earth could the Nine Provinces do nowadays to resist a Sun Blaze Realm? If not for Number Nine mentioning it, it seemed utterly unreliable.

"Actually, it's not so much a method as it is a very powerful being!"

Lu Ye was startled: "There's a strong being from the Pre-Kyushu Period still hiding in the Nine Provinces?"

"Well, saying that wouldn't necessarily be wrong, but things aren't as you think. Have you forgotten? You have communicated with it, and even made a pact with it."

"I've communicated and made a pact with it?" Lu Ye was baffled. How could I not know about such a thing?

But then he thought about it and realized he had indeed made a pact with a mysterious and powerful being once. The other party seemed to suggest that once he was strong enough and understood the truth of the world, he should come find it.

As Lu Ye's cultivation improved and he encountered more events, he gradually forgot about this, and if not for Number Nine's reminder now, he might have remembered much later.

Suddenly, he understood: "Spirit Stream Battlefield?"

"Yes! It's the Spirit Stream Battlefield!"

The Spirit Stream Battlefield, under Hundred Peaks Mountain lies Dragon Spring, and within Dragon Spring there's a Dragon Shadow!

When Lu Ye was in the Spirit Stream Realm, by chance, he participated in the Dragon Spring Meet, obtaining a piece of dragon scale. Later, in the Cloud River Realm, he ventured into the Spirit Stream Battlefield again, revisited Hundred Peaks Mountain, and got a few more dragon scales from the Dragon Shadow. The pact was made at that time.

You could say, the power that Lu Ye used to initially refine his body when he started cultivating largely came from those dragon scales. Even Amber and those close to him benefited from them.

Through his encounters with the Dragon Shadow, Lu Ye vaguely sensed that for some unknown reason, it was trapped beneath Hundred Peaks Mountain. It likely hoped to entrust its escape to him by offering dragon scales. But back then, Lu Ye's cultivation was too low, and his perspective too shallow, so he could only make a pact.

He knew the Dragon Shadow was strong, but didn't expect it to be this powerful. According to Number Nine, the Dragon Shadow might be capable of opposing a Sun Blaze Realm?

Now understanding the potential of this method, Lu Ye became cautious because this method really wasn't something that could be casually deployed. He feared driving away one danger only to usher in another. In the current Nine Provinces, such chaos couldn't be endured.

"Why is it trapped?" Lu Ye asked.

"It's a long story," Number Nine sighed. "The Dragon Race was once a companion of a certain powerful individual from the Pre-Kyushu Period. This strong individual discovered the being injured while traveling in stellar space and brought it back to the Nine Provinces to recuperate, forming some affection. However, the Dragon Race has a particular trait—it's extremely promiscuous. Apparently, it made some mistakes in this aspect, and was suppressed. Originally, it wasn't meant to be suppressed for so long; maybe just three to five hundred years, a minor punishment to teach a lesson, and then it would be released. But as you might guess, during the Pre-Kyushu Period, they faced invasion from foreign enemies and were forced to craft the Heavenly Augury Compass, relocating the Nine Provinces from its original position. As the world's reserves were severely depleted, no cultivators of a higher tier were left. Thus, there was nobody able to release it, and it's been suppressed to this day."

"Has it been over ten thousand years?" Lu Ye's heart turned cold.

"Almost, I guess." Number Nine felt a twinge of sorrow as well.

A dragon had been suppressed for so long without being able to escape. To say it harbors no resentment is impossible. Under such circumstances, once it's released, the consequences are unpredictable. Even if it might chase away that Yueh Xin, it would likely unleash its fury on the current Nine Provinces, worsening the situation.

Lu Ye couldn't help but rub his temples, a headache, difficult to handle.

"But speaking of which, how do you know about these things?" Lu Ye asked, reasoning that Number Nine shouldn't be aware of these matters because it hadn't been born yet when the dragon was suppressed.

"It told me, you see. It's been asking me to let it out. I didn't dare to agree, of course, I lied and said I couldn't do it." Its tone was filled with satisfaction, making Lu Ye's head throb even more.

It could be certain that a dragon couldn't be fooled by Number Nine; its pure spiritual intelligence is unfooling. Just because the dragon seeks help from Number Nine and doesn't expose it.

Later, when it met Lu Ye, it saw hope in Lu Ye and targeted its attention there.

"My responsibility is to guard the Nine Provinces, protect the human race. Now the human race faces great hardship, with a challenging road ahead. Ultimately, how to decide must be settled by yourselves, humans. If you decide to release the counterpart, I will fully cooperate. If not, then continue to suppress it. All I can do is offer you a method."

"There's a problem; are you sure that dragon can handle a Sun Blaze Realm foe? If freed and still can't defeat it, then it's all for naught."

"That's a dragon, probably... maybe it can?"

Even it hadn't witnessed the dragon's might. Though it often chatted with the one below the Hundred Peaks Mountain, it wasn't aware of the other's true strength.

Since it could team up with a powerhouse from the past Nine Provinces era, its strength likely wouldn't be lacking.

"Yiye, something big has happened!" The sect master suddenly spoke gravely; he had learned the details of the event from various messages. The sudden appearance of a Sun Blaze Realm cultivator greatly impacted the existing system of the Nine Provinces, leaving everyone deeply powerless against the absolute disparity in strength.

"Disciple is aware." Lu Ye nodded; he too, had received much information, mostly from the elders.

The recent collective fight against Yueh Xin nearly ended in a devastating defeat. Fortunately, Yueh Xin didn't strike for the kill, but injuries were inevitable.

Now everyone was agreeing to go to Haotian City, to collectively discuss the next strategy.

Resignation? Naturally impossible, but to resist seemed to have no chance of victory. Time was tight, and even seasoned veterans were momentarily bewildered, not knowing where to go.

They could only discuss.

The reason Lu Ye had received the messages was because everyone thought that if rebellion was planned, Nine Provinces Heaven's Augury's power would be essential, and Lu Ye, as the mediator, was indispensable.

Flying at full speed without stopping.

A few hours later, Lu Ye and the sect master reached Haotian City. Scanning with Mental Consciousness, they immediately sensed many strong yet weak auras within Harmony Light Hall and swiftly altered their course towards it.

Upon arriving, Lu Ye saw that nearly all the cultivators who had ascended to the Constellation were present, almost everyone injured and looking pale.

Only a few were uninjured, mainly those who returned to Nine Provinces later and didn't make it to the battle against Yueh Xin in time. Because they had initially fled further, even receiving the message and returning took them longer.

The atmosphere was silent and oppressive. For these Nine Provinces cultivators, who had just set foot into stellar space, intending to make their mark, the arrival of a Sun Blaze Realm cultivator was an unexpected encounter and blow.

Everyone realized one problem: compared to the vastness of stellar space, they were merely like infants just freeing themselves to toddle.

In the heavy silence, suppressed, more was anger and frustration until Lu Ye walked in, brightening everyone's eyes a little, all looking at him expectantly.

They weren't counting on his own strength but the Nine Provinces Heaven's Augury standing behind him!

Everyone believed that Heaven's Augury must have Insights into the crisis facing Nine Provinces, and if there were any measures and coping strategies, Lu Ye should already have some idea.

In the gaze of all present, Lu Ye walked straight to the top position, cupped his hands, and opened:
"Time is tight, the unwelcome guest may return at any time, I shall take the liberty once. I somewhat understand the current situation, what I have to say is, there exists in Nine Provinces now, a force potentially capable of dealing with that unwelcome guest!"

With these words, everyone's spirits lifted!

Chapter 1202 - Yang Qing

"There's a place on the Spirit Stream Battlefield called Hundred Peaks Mountain. Below it lies a Dragon Spring, where a Dragon Clan has been suppressed for nearly ten thousand years..."

Lu Ye's voice reverberated slowly within the Harmony Light Hall as he calmly recounted everything he knew.

The numerous Constellation Realm cultivators listened in astonishment.

No one expected that such a place on the Spirit Stream Battlefield would have such a powerful entity suppressed, especially for so long. It's known that the Spirit Stream Battlefield is just a place for cultivation at the Spirit Stream Realm in the Nine Provinces, essentially the starting point for the lowest level of cultivators in the Nine Provinces. They have all mingled on the Spirit Stream Battlefield in the past, but those are extremely distant memories now.

"The visitor is a Sun Blaze Realm cultivator. Although it's unclear why he was injured, he is undoubtedly not someone the current Nine Provinces cultivators can contend with. The only power we can rely on is from the Dragon Clan. However, there are two issues at present. First, can the Dragon Clan deal with a Sun Blaze Realm powerhouse? And second, if it can, after driving the enemy away, will it unleash its anger, suppressed for thousands of years, upon the Nine Provinces."

He didn't ponder whether the Dragon Clan would be willing to confront a Sun Blaze Realm powerhouse, as a deal could be brokered in this regard. If the intention is to release it, then the condition must be borrowing its power; if the Dragon Clan disagrees, then it will remain suppressed.

He thought that the Dragon Clan would likely not disagree.

"So now we need to consider these two issues. What are your thoughts, seniors?" Lu Ye looked at everyone.

Without hesitation, Jian Guhong said, "That Yueh Xin is not a benevolent person; his style clearly shows. This time, without issuing a fatal blow, he's likely trying to establish dominance. However, considering his nature, if we slightly disobey in the future, the outcomes might be dire. I suggest calling the Dragon Clan out; even if the enemy vent their anger on the Nine Provinces afterward, it's better to die rather than to live with humiliation and cowardly survival."

For these Constellation Realm cultivators, who have just glimpsed the splendor of cultivating ahead, all have immense expectations for the future and naturally resist being subdued, forced to obey orders.

Better to shatter as jade than intact as a tile—that's the current mindset of many Constellation Realms. Having cultivated for years, they possess the determination at such crucial moments.

Thus, almost nobody hesitated, nodding in agreement.

"Agreed."

"Agreed!"

...

Lu Ye knew from the start everyone would choose this way and smiled, "If so, then it's settled. Time is of the essence, so I'll set off now. But before that, I'd like to ask for assistance from you seniors."

Mong Jie, pale-faced, said, "You speak."

Lu Ye's expression became solemn, "When the True Dragon emerges, it will be a huge disturbance, possibly causing certain impacts on the Spirit Stream Battlefield. Hence, I'd like to ask you seniors to widely disseminate the message to withdraw Spirit Stream Realm cultivators from the battlefield to avoid unnecessary losses."

This is simple. As long as the message is relayed, it will quickly spread across the Nine Provinces, and with orders from respective sects, Spirit Stream Realm cultivators will naturally withdraw.

Lu Ye exited the Harmony Light Hall, heading straight to the Heaven's Augury Hall at Haotian City.

"Lu Ye, the Dragon Clan is extremely noble and proud. Although it may not bully the weak or exploit its strength unfairly, it's been suppressed for so long. Precaution is necessary, so it's best if it makes a Bloodline Oath to ensure the Nine Provinces' safety," Number Nine's voice sounded nearby.

"Bloodline Oath?"

"Yes, Bloodline Oath!" Number Nine explained, "Like the Blood Race, the Dragon Clan places great importance on their bloodline, even more so. Hence, for such powerful beings, ordinary vows are insufficient to constrain them. Only a Bloodline Oath, if it's willing, can never be violated."

In the Nine Provinces, cultivators are most familiar with the Heaven's Augury Oath, as it's witnessed and supervised by Heaven's Augury, ensuring no one dares to violate it casually. However, the Heaven's Augury Oath doesn't have any binding power over a powerful Dragon Clan; to constrain it, only the Bloodline Oath can suffice.

"I'll discuss first." So far, Lu Ye has contacted that Dragon Clan twice: the first was not a direct encounter, and the second was superficial. He doesn't fully understand the opponent's nature, so demanding a Bloodline Oath while conditionally releasing it seems imprudent.

It might even anger the opponent.

"What's that Dragon Clan's name then? Surely it has a name? How should I communicate?" Lu Ye asked.

"It calls itself Yang Qing! Whether it's its true name is unknown. Generally, such noble beings don't easily disclose their names."

Lu Ye arrived at the Heaven's Augury Hall, pressed his hand on the Heaven's Augury Pillar, with a look of confusion, "Yang Qing?"

A Dragon Clan taking a human name? Couldn't be like the Blood Race, taking the first human name they encounter, right?

The Blood Race has no choice without parental instruction; the Dragon Clan shouldn't be that way.

By the Heaven's Augury Pillar, the void distorted, and Lu Ye's figure vanished.

He reappeared at the Spirit Stream Battlefield.

Normally, at the Spirit Stream Battlefield, at most only a Cloud River Realm cultivator might enter exceptionally, and within they can only exhibit their original Spirit Stream Realm strength. This results from Heaven's Augury suppression.

If one's cultivation level is higher, they cannot step foot into the Spirit Stream Battlefield.

But the rules were set by Number Nine, determining whether a cultivator could enter and how they would be treated upon entry, ultimately depended on its discretion.

Therefore, Lu Ye did not face any suppression upon entering this time and remained at the Divine Sea Level 7 cultivation.

The location where he appeared was precisely at Mount Qingyu's station in the Spirit Stream battlefield.

Near Hundred Peaks Mountain, there were three forces: Mount Qingyu belonged to the Haotian Alliance, while the Tailuo Sect and the Qin family belonged to the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge. The Dragon Spring Meet at that time was a joint event organized by these three powers. During that Dragon Spring Meet, Lu Ye, along with the cultivators from Mount Qingyu, gave the Tailuo Sect and the Qin family a good beating.

Now, time has passed, and the familiar faces from back then are no longer in the Spirit Stream battlefield.

In the Nine Provinces cultivation world, cultivators at the Spirit Stream Realm level sprout up like bamboo shoots after a rain, emerging one crop after another. The entire Spirit Stream battlefield rotates every ten to twenty years, with each cycle being a complete reshuffling.

When Lu Ye appeared, several cultivators inside the Heaven's Augury Hall of Mount Qingyu were linking the Heaven's Augury Pillar, likely trying to purchase something from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault.

The sudden figure startled the Spirit Stream Realm cultivators. One person looked fixedly at Lu Ye and asked curiously, "Why does this senior brother look so unfamiliar?"

Mount Qingyu isn't of high grade, and the number of cultivators within the sect isn't large, so even if they aren't acquainted, most have at least seen each other. Therefore, Lu Ye, clearly a stranger, naturally aroused curiosity.

Lu Ye glanced at him but said nothing further, releasing the pressure of the Divine Sea Realm. In an instant, the little Spirit Stream Realm cultivators shivered with fear, faces showing terror.

The next moment, the entire Mount Qingyu station became lively, as all the cultivators rushed out. Their levels were too low, and they were only familiar with things of the Spirit Stream Realm, so they had no idea what had happened. They only knew that a tremendous oppressive force had descended suddenly.

Lu Ye had already walked out of the Heaven's Augury Hall; as he leapt into the air, his voice echoed over the Mount Qingyu station: "Return to your sect, the Spirit Stream battlefield is about to experience great change!"

A crowd of people gazed blankly at Lu Ye, who disappeared like a shooting star, lost in thought.

To be able to fly through the air, he is at least at the Cloud River Realm. Spirit Stream Realm cultivators do not possess this ability.

Since when did the Spirit Stream battlefield allow a cultivator at least at the Cloud River Realm to walk in unscathed? Moreover, the oppressive power just felt was not something a mere Cloud River Realm could possess.

In other words, this unfamiliar cultivator who suddenly appeared is likely above the Cloud River.

Even though the governor of Mount Qingyu was not highly cultivated, he was decisive, so after thinking briefly, he immediately ordered the sect's cultivators to withdraw from the Spirit Stream battlefield and simultaneously sent messages to recall those who were outside.

In no time, Mount Qingyu station was deserted.

At the same time, messages began to be transmitted from the Nine Provinces to the Spirit Stream battlefield. At the stations of each major sect in the Spirit Stream battlefield, cultivators went to the Heaven's Augury Hall to prepare to retreat to the Nine Provinces.

No one knew what happened, but this order came from their sect.

Lu Ye had arrived at a grand hall in the center of Hundred Peaks Mountain, with the Dragon Spring located beneath this hall.

Originally, to open the Dragon Spring, it required the joint efforts of cultivators from the nearby three powers. After all, the hall's formation was laid down years ago by Cloud River Realm cultivators dispatched by the three powers, which the Spirit Stream Realm cultivators couldn't break.

However, such a formation was almost beneath Lu Ye's notice.

With a casual display of power, he opened the Dragon Spring entrance and leisurely made his way down.

Returning here with a Divine Sea Realm cultivation, things that were once incomprehensible were now crystal clear.

Quickly arriving before two bronze doors, Lu Ye glanced briefly before pushing them open and entering!

Inside was a peculiar small space, with Spiritual Energy lingering. In the center, a spring was emitting a steady crimson glow.

The crimson glow contained a very faint but powerful energy, dissipating the aura of Dragon Blood.

Being suppressed here for nearly ten thousand years, no matter how ingenious the original arrangements were, much has changed over the millennia.

The aura of the Dragon Race had leaked out, though faintly, it was indeed happening. Once accumulated to a certain degree, it can serve to temper the bodies of cultivators within.

This was the true nature of the Dragon Spring Body Tempering.

Lu Ye suddenly realized that this Dragon Race known as Yang Qing, having been suppressed for so long, must be extremely weakened. Otherwise, such a powerful being wouldn't have allowed its aura to leak.

He suddenly doubted whether coming here was the right decision, considering that if Yang Qing was in a weakened state, he might not be a match for Yueh Xin.

But having come this far, and with the current Nine Provinces having no other solution except this place, there was no turning back.

He took a deep breath and respectfully bowed: "Junior Lu Ye, paying respects to Senior Yang Qing!"

Chapter 1203 - Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death

The resounding voice echoed continuously within the small space. Initially, there was nothing unusual, but soon, a thick blood aura began to permeate from Dragon Spring.

Accompanying this was an aura that made Lu Ye's heart tremble.

He hadn't encountered the strong one named Yueh Xin, nor did he know the might of the Sun Blaze Realm, but the powerful aura emanating from Dragon Spring right now was something he couldn't sense in Jian Guhong and others.

Indeed, it was strong. Even if it had been sealed for ten thousand years, even if it was weakened, its intensity far exceeded that of the Constellation.

The blood light scattered, then condensed, forming a Blood Shadow!

The Blood Shadow had no specific form, constantly twisting and changing. It was a Dragon Shadow gathered from the True Dragon's blood Qi. Above the Dragon Shadow were two huge closed eyes!

When those two eyes suddenly opened, Lu Ye felt like he saw two shining suns, piercing his eyes with pain, causing his psyche to tremble.

He quickly averted his gaze.

A heavy, invisible might filled the small space, making Lu Ye feel as if he was bearing a mountain on his back, growing heavier and heavier!

Until after a moment, his entire body started to creak under the pressure.

Yet he still stood straight without any hunching, knowing well that the fury of the noble Dragon Race suppressed for ten thousand years was starting to pour out.

And he was the first to bear the brunt!

In such a situation, bowing and bending was not the best response. Even though he did not know what kind of temperament this Dragon Race had, strong ones would never look favorably upon those of weak resolve.

So he too had to show his own toughness! Even if all his bones shattered, he would stand here!

The might grew fiercer, the pressure greater, and just as Lu Ye was about to hold on no longer, the tremendous pressure suddenly vanished.

The disappearance of the great pressure caused a reverse impact that set his chest's blood Qi tumbling, almost making him spit out a mouthful of blood.

He quickly took a few deep breaths to suppress the turbulent blood Qi.

Looking up directly at the two enormous dragon eyes, he wondered if it was an illusion; he actually saw a trace of amusement in those eyes.

A hint of a smile after a little trick succeeded...

This Dragon Race... doesn't seem so hard to approach? Lu Ye thought to himself, and from the current situation, the other party didn't seem too difficult to deal with.

Anyway, the opening was quite good.

"I greet Senior Yang Qing," Lu Ye spoke again, still respectful. The gap in age and strength was evident; the one before him was truly an ancient senior, and it was understandable to have a little jest with him.

"Divine Sea Level 7? Kid, your cultivation has progressed rapidly, impressive talent." The Dragon Shadow had no mouth, yet its resounding voice reverberated in the small space.

Lu Ye was very honest: "In the journey of cultivation, many opportunities arose, unrelated to talent."

Back when his talent was assessed, he got a "Yiye" score, and thus the name Lu Yiye spread. Who would have thought back then that he had good talent?

"Since you know of my name, it seems you know the truth of this world?"

"I have some knowledge, but the era is distant, hard to fathom completely."

The voice of the Dragon Shadow suddenly became somewhat wistful: "Yes, time is distant, ten thousand years... even for the Dragon Race, it is not a short time! Then you should know, how I've lived through these ten thousand years."

Lu Ye expressed regret: "Past affairs of the previous dynasty, this junior won't comment. Senior's experiences, this junior holds close to heart, yet can do nothing."

The Dragon Shadow snorted lightly, "Crafty kid!"

"Just stating the facts. This junior is only twenty-four, and hasn't fully understood contemporary matters. How could I have spare energy to trace the past? Moreover, what has happened, no one has the power to change it."

The underlying meaning was that your suppression was from the previous Nine Provinces period. If you want revenge or to vent, you should seek the formidable powers of the past Nine Provinces. The current Nine Provinces have little of the seniors' legacy and naturally shouldn't bear the grudges of the seniors.

It's just that some words can't be stated too clearly, but I trust the Dragon Shadow understood.

The Dragon Shadow was silent for a moment before continuing: "Then, are the juniors of the Nine Provinces now unable to cope with the sudden disaster, and want me to come out to handle it?"

Lu Ye was taken aback, surprised that this Dragon Race member, despite being suppressed here, could know about the Nine Provinces' plight. However, upon careful thought, it wasn't hard to understand that such a powerful being could perceive some external situations, especially since Yueh Xin didn't conceal himself in the slightest.

It saved him the trouble of explaining.

"Indeed, so does Senior have the ability to deal with that person?" He didn't ask if the other party was willing to come out but changed his wording, a small trick of sorts.

The dragon eye suddenly showed a hint of anger, and its voice grew louder: "Boy, you know nothing of the Dragon Race's power! That mere Sun Blaze Realm, if I were to go out, I could crush him with a single claw!"

Lu Ye immediately flattered: "Senior is formidable, senior is mighty..."

The Dragon Shadow promptly interrupted his flattery, the dragon eye narrowed: "But why should I leave the mountain for the Nine Provinces? Give me a reason."

Lu Ye retorted, "Senior has been trapped for ten thousand years, don't you wish to leave here and regain freedom?"

The Dragon Shadow laughed loudly, "I used to want to, but now I suddenly don't want to! Being suppressed here and slumbering peacefully seems not too bad after all."

Lu Ye sighed, "Please state your conditions, whatever the Nine Provinces can fulfill, we will not hesitate, as long as Senior can resolve this calamity for the Nine Provinces!"

Being in need, he had to lower his posture, and Lu Ye had already mentally prepared for this.

The Dragon Shadow suddenly approached him by a few yards, the massive dragon eye hovering in front of him, as if it wanted to swallow him, and said through gritted teeth: "I want the Nine Provinces human race to serve me as their lord in the future, never to resist through generations, can you agree to this?"

Lu Ye shook his head resolutely, "This cannot be fulfilled. Frankly speaking, the reason I represent the Nine Provinces to ask Senior to come out of the mountain is because that Sun Blaze Realm called Yueh Xin wants to enslave the Nine Provinces. If such a condition is proposed, then we shall not discuss it further. In return, the Nine Provinces cultivators will fight Yueh Xin to the death. Even though it is likely to lead to the total destruction of the Nine Provinces cultivators, even in death, we will not be slaves. This is the bottom line of the Nine Provinces."

"Hmph, a group of ants, yet they talk of bottom lines?" the Dragon Shadow scoffed, "Haven't you heard it's better to live disgracefully than die honorably?"

"In life, some actions are to be taken and some not. Since Senior could become a partner of a Nine Provinces strongman, you should have some understanding of the human race and naturally should agree with certain human persistence!"

"Human race..." The Dragon Shadow recalled something, fell silent for a moment, then said, "In that case, let's change the condition."

"Please speak, Senior!"

"I want the lives of half the Nine Provinces cultivators! As compensation for being sealed for ten thousand years!"

Lu Ye shook his head, "This condition, Junior cannot agree to either. Senior, please change it again."

The Dragon Shadow was furious, "This won't do, that won't do, boy, you came to me, yet I see no sincerity in you at all!"

Lu Ye said, "To restore Senior's freedom is the greatest sincerity."

The Dragon Shadow sneered, "The Sealing Power has weakened over ten thousand years; even without any external force, I could be free within a millennium, why would I need others' help?"

"I see..." Lu Ye wasn't aware of this fact; if it was indeed as the Dragon Shadow said, then his urgency for freedom might not be as pressing, having already endured ten thousand years, would he care about another thousand? No wonder he held an air of confidence, always making unrealistic demands.

However, on second thought, Lu Ye quickly realized something was amiss, "Perhaps you could free yourself in a millennium, but if the Nine Provinces truly fall to that Yueh Xin, he would undoubtedly discover your existence, and what he intends for you is beyond anything Junior could predict. So I believe it would be best for Senior to free yourself sooner rather than later."

The dragon eye narrowed again, "Are you threatening me, boy?"

With that, Lu Ye immediately deduced his speculation was correct, Yueh Xin posed a colossal, insurmountable threat to the Nine Provinces, but was he not also a threat to the Dragon Shadow?

What it had just claimed about crushing the adversary with one claw was surely an exaggeration; a Sun Blaze Realm strongman is not so easily killed.

Moreover, the Dragon Shadow, suppressed for ten thousand years, had long been enfeebled, with uncertain strength left to display. In this situation, being targeted by Yueh Xin wouldn't likely end well.

In essence, the Dragon Shadow truly hoped for liberation, especially under the current circumstances!

Thinking of this, Lu Ye's heart settled, he said leisurely, "Senior, now the Nine Provinces have two paths. One is to fiercely clash with Yueh Xin and die with clarity, the other is to seek Senior's help to navigate this calamity; regardless of the path chosen, the Nine Provinces cultivation world will not submit. Should Senior be willing to assist, we will forever be grateful and repay the favor someday. If truly unwilling, there's no remedy; we cultivators do not impose our will upon others, nor will we bind others against their will. Senior, time is of the essence; please contemplate swiftly, as Junior must leave shortly! After all, being somewhat young, Junior still has affairs to attend to after death."

The Dragon Shadow couldn't help but doubt, "Do you truly have the will to fight to the death with such a strong adversary?"

Lu Ye chuckled, "Without freedom, better to die!"

Staring at the somewhat youthful face, the Dragon Shadow was slightly lost, recalling the times from ten thousand years ago.

Back then, the Nine Provinces cultivators made countless enemies, eventually provoking a coalition attack from the major races. Although they managed to forge the Heaven's Augury Compass to teleport the Nine Provinces away, preserving their homeland, the cultivators of any significant stature stayed behind.

Could they not have departed with the Nine Provinces? Clearly, they could have, but none did. They stayed to wage a final battle with their enemies, knowing the hope was slim, death almost certain, yet with unwavering resolve!

Chapter 1204 - Breaking Free

The final outcome of that battle, the Dragon Shadow was unaware, as it was in a state of suppression and was teleported along with the Nine Provinces.

But one would think those Nine Provinces cultivators left behind must have met with misfortune.

Ten thousand years have passed, and the Nine Provinces cultivators have long inherited through countless generations, unaware of the brilliance of the former Nine Provinces era. Yet, in the face of crisis, they still demonstrated the same courage and decisiveness as the cultivators of that ancient time.

Two eras separated by a vast expanse of millennia, with equally vast differences in cultivation level, yet identical choices.

The Dragon Shadow somewhat doubted, could such traits be inherited?

Or is this a characteristic rooted deep within the spirit of the human race?

It had felt the great battle of that time, once struggling to break free, wishing to aid the cultivators of the former Nine Provinces era, but ultimately did not succeed.

Its struggles were surely noticed by the powerful beings of the ancient Nine Provinces, especially by the companion who sealed it, but the other had no intention of releasing it, because both understood that once released, it would inevitably make the same choice.

The human race could fight to the death without retreat, hence why shouldn't the noble Dragon Race do the same?

Therefore, it was teleported along with the Nine Provinces, and that companion left it with Nine Provinces, both a protection and a trust!

The teleported Nine Provinces was entrusted to it, nobody told it this, but it understood its companion's intentions.

After ten thousand years and numerous reflections, it also noticed some doubts, even questioned the peculiarities behind its sealing, because the mistake it made back then was minor, but that companion insisted on sealing it.

Perhaps at that time, the cultivators of the former Nine Provinces era had already realized a great crisis was imminent, a disaster caused by the former Nine Provinces human race which naturally needed to be resolved by them, nobody wished to involve an innocent Dragon Race.

Sealing it in advance was to completely sever any intention of it participating in battle.

How could a supreme treasure like the Heaven's Augury Compass be refined in a single day? No matter how powerful the cultivators of the former Nine Provinces era were, refining it required a lot of time, so when it was sealed, those people had already begun the crafting of the Heaven's Augury Compass!

Many things gradually became clear afterward, which is why in the latter Nine Provinces era, it was willing to engage with Number Nine, though the Artifact Spirit seemed quite defensive against it, hence it was never released.

This was normal, its power was still too overwhelming for this world.

"Senior, if you truly wish to break free, this is your only chance, seize the opportunity now or never. If you really don't wish it, then this junior will take his leave." Lu Ye couldn't help but urge as he saw no response from the Dragon Shadow.

Despite somewhat understanding what lay in the Dragon Shadow's heart, Lu Ye was clueless about what decision the other would ultimately make, nor was it appropriate for him to interfere.

But just as he had said before, Nine Provinces has only two paths to take right now, and if the Dragon Shadow doesn't agree, then Nine Provinces can only exhaust everything to fight Yueh Xin.

It would inevitably be a most tragic outcome, yet no one would retreat because of it, at least the current Constellation Realm cultivators would not!

"Kid, are you thinking I'm a sure bet?" The dragon eye looked at Lu Ye somewhat unkindly.

"Not necessarily, just laying out the facts and reasoning with Senior." Lu Ye gazed at it with a sincere expression.

"Aren't you afraid that once I'm free, I might wreak havoc in the Nine Provinces?"

"What's the use of fear? The Nine Provinces is already in a grim situation as it is, so things won't get worse no matter what! Of course, if Senior is willing to take a bloodline oath before breaking free, that would be even more appreciated; as a representative of the Nine Provinces human race, I would offer my thanks here.

The Dragon Shadow laughed heartily, "A bloodline oath! You and that Heaven's Augury Compass have some guts, truly daring to make such plans!"

With laughter gone, it spoke gravely, "Then hurry and help me break free!"

Lu Ye immediately understood, it was settled.

Although Number Nine had previously advised him to have this Dragon Race powerhouse take a bloodline oath, the current situation showed that was simply unrealistic. After all, Nine Provinces was the one in need. Swiftly releasing one might induce reciprocal goodwill, whereas negotiating would only leave a bad taste.

As for what the other might do to Nine Provinces after being free... it's beyond care now, a gamble must be taken.

Since it was a companion of a great figure in the former Nine Provinces era, it likely wouldn't go too far even if venting its anger.

Lu Ye does not need to do anything regarding freeing Yang Qing, as it is all handled by Number Nine, who always had the ability to release the other, just never did.

Had a Sun Blaze Realm not suddenly barged into the Nine Provinces this time, Number Nine wouldn't have revealed Yang Qing's existence. To the current Nine Provinces, both Yueh Xin and Yang Qing are too dangerous as presences.

Lu Ye exited Dragon Spring and soared into the sky.

Moments later, the Spiritual Energy of heaven and earth from all directions surged towards this place, pouring deeply underground.

Hundred Peaks Mountain began to tremble, the earth cracked, and tens of thousands of miles around descended into chaos. Buildings collapsed in the territories of Mount Qingyu, Tailuo Sect, and the Qin family, leaving ruins scattered everywhere.

The tremor spread to distant lands, soon affecting the entire Spirit Stream battlefield.

The mighty scene made Lu Ye's heart race, thankful for evacuating the Spirit Stream Realm cultivators beforehand, avoiding potential fatalities from this upheaval.

The magnificent commotion lasted a full hour, with Hundred Peaks Mountain rising and falling as if a True Dragon was indeed moving underground, each rise followed by a heavy drop.

Until an hour passed, a resounding Dragon's Wail echoed through the heavens and earth, and the spirit mountaintop at the center of Hundred Peaks Mountain suddenly shattered, a cyan light and shadow darting out from within.

Lu Ye widened his eyes to see.

The Dragon Race, huh? I've never seen them before, and I wonder what kind of majestic presence they have.

But to his disappointment, the cyan light shadow wasn't some Dragon Race, but a human silhouette!

The silhouette flickered in mid-air and appeared three zhang in front of him without any warning. At this moment, Lu Ye distinctly felt an extremely profound wave of power.

This method of teleportation is truly miraculous!

The figure standing in front of him was unexpectedly young, looking even a few years younger than him based solely on appearance!

The face was exceedingly handsome, the posture remarkably upright, and there was an indescribably noble aura. Such a figure would be worthy of the title of a young hero anywhere in the Nine Provinces.

But...

Why does it seem a bit different from what I imagined?

Lu Ye was puzzled in his heart but reacted promptly, hastily saluting: "Congratulations to the senior on escaping the cage and regaining freedom!"

Inevitably beginning to feel nervous, although the previous conversation went fairly well, the true attitude of this Yang Qing, a Dragon Race powerhouse, towards the Nine Provinces will soon be revealed.

If he still harbors a grudge against the Nine Provinces, then today, this would be the burial site of Lu Yiye!

If he is willing to lend some support to the Nine Provinces human race, then I should be able to return to the Nine Provinces safely.

Yang Qing quietly looked at him, a faint smile playing at the corner of his mouth. Given his cultivation level, how could he not know what Lu Ye was thinking at the moment?

Precisely because he knew, he couldn't help but feel emotional.

At twenty-four, with a cultivation of Divine Sea Level 7, such talent was impressive, even in the current Nine Provinces era.

The Nine Provinces remains the place where extraordinary people emerge, unchanged by a single teleportation.

Given time, this domain will surely be able to restore the glory of the ancestors.

The human race is indeed a remarkable race!

He didn't speak, and Lu Ye didn't know what to say either, but undoubtedly, the most dangerous moment had already passed, because if Yang Qing really intended to kill him, he wouldn't still be standing here.

As Lu Ye was pondering whether to say something, his shoulder suddenly felt a weight, and the next moment he was soaring into the sky.

It was Yang Qing who had lifted his hand to grasp Lu Ye's shoulder.

The speed was so fast that Lu Ye's entire face began to twist and deform, being whipped by the reverse wind, and he hurriedly shouted: "Senior, where are we going?"

Yang Qing replied with a smile: "Naturally, returning to the Nine Provinces!"

Images of the Nine Provinces that flashed in Lu Ye's mind when his spirit was uplifted surfaced again, and he suddenly had a bad feeling, quickly speaking: "Senior, I can use the Heaven's Augury Pillar..."

But before he could finish his sentence, he shut his mouth because the scene he used to see only with an elevated spirit was now vividly before his eyes.

Yang Qing had evidently taken him out of the miniature world of the Spirit Stream battlefield, and they were now in the stellar space, rapidly heading toward the Nine Provinces World.

This was undoubtedly an extremely rare experience because a cultivator whose strength hadn't reached the Constellation Realm couldn't physically traverse the stellar space; the ever-present stellar space energy was beneficial to those at the Constellation Realm as it can enhance their nature's spiritual energy, but below that realm, it was deadly poison.

He turned around to look, seeing everything he'd once sensed with his spirit, now more intuitively, more shockingly. All those miniature worlds and world fragments outside the Nine Provinces World were the waste collected by Number Nine over nearly ten thousand years.

There was even a colossal entity spanning the stellar space not far from the Nine Provinces.

That was the Blood Refinement World!

Yang Qing glanced at the Blood Refinement World, seemingly seeing through its essence at a glance and couldn't help but mutter: "Such a large fellow, fighting it must be quite thrilling!"

Unfortunately, who knows what existence had slashed it!

His speed was exceedingly fast, surpassing Lu Ye's comprehension, leaving little time to truly appreciate the scenery of the stellar space before they plunged into the Nine Provinces, breaking through thick cloud layers.

In a moment, heaven and earth shook!

This was the world's instinctive reaction.

Yang Qing looked up at the sky, gave a light snort: "I'll sort you out eventually!"

Then he asked Lu Ye: "Where to?"

Lu Ye hadn't fully recovered from his recent experience. After hearing the question, he paused, then took out the ten-part map to check his location: "Bingzhou, Haotian City."

Currently, all the Constellation Realm experts are gathered in Bingzhou, awaiting his news.

Chapter 1205 - Bring Something to Eat

As soon as Lu Ye finished speaking, he felt a dizzying sensation, the surrounding scenery twisted and shifted, and when he came to his senses again, he was astonished to find himself standing before a somewhat familiar grand hall.

He looked up to see a plaque hanging high above with the large characters "Harmony Light" inscribed on it!

He almost doubted his own eyes.

Within the Nine Provinces, there is only one Harmony Light Hall, which is in Haotian City in Bingzhou, and nowhere else.

Instinctively, he expanded his Mental Consciousness, probed around, and discovered that he was indeed in front of the Harmony Light Hall in Haotian City, Bingzhou.

How... was this done? Lu Ye was truly shocked. Just moments ago, when he was checking the ten-part map, he was still somewhere in Cangzhou, and in the blink of an eye, he found himself in Bingzhou! The distance between them was more than just a hundred thousand miles!

To be teleported from Cangzhou to this place in an instant, without the slightest error, what mysterious method was this?

Yang Qing, however, no longer bothered with him, placing his hands behind his back as he casually walked into the hall.

Lu Ye, feeling somewhat dizzy, followed him in.

The number of cultivators inside the Harmony Light Hall had noticeably increased, all being Divine Sea Level 9 cultivators who had rushed over after receiving the news, along with the previous Constellation Realm cultivators who had been waiting for news about Lu Ye all this time.

When Yang Qing walked in, everyone naturally saw him and immediately noticed Lu Ye, who appeared somewhat mentally unsettled, following behind.

Despite the large crowd in the grand hall, it was so silent that one could hear a pin drop, and many pairs of eyes looked questioningly at Lu Ye, who nodded slightly.

In the exchange of glances, everyone now knew the true identity of this young man clad in green, who was exceptionally youthful.

No one understood why a member of the Dragon Race maintained a human form, but since demon beasts have the path of shape-changing, it stands to reason that the Azure Dragon, leader of the Four Auspicious Sacred Beasts, would possess such an ability.

Some bold individuals activated their Mental Consciousness to probe Yang Qing's reality, but soon their expressions turned solemn.

Because, in the exploration of their Mental Consciousness, where Yang Qing was seemed to be an empty void; one might not even detect his presence if not using the naked eye.

This singular fact alone made those probing realize that this mythical Dragon Race entity is at least on the same level as Yueh Xin, an existence that cannot be contended with in the current Nine Provinces phase!

Under everyone's watchful gaze, Yang Qing, as if there were no others around, walked straight to the main seat, sat down with a plop, put his legs up on the desk, crossed his left leg over his right, folded his hands over his stomach, and opened his mouth: "Bring some food!"

No one expected that the first words from such a powerful figure upon arriving here would be this, leaving everyone momentarily at a loss.

Jian Guhong and others repeatedly cast glances at Lu Ye.

In the current situation, only Lu Ye had contact with Yang Qing, so if any requests needed to be met, it would be most appropriate for Lu Ye to handle them; others should refrain from meddling.

Lu Ye got the hint, stepped forward from the crowd, and said aloud, "Let me introduce to everyone: this is Senior Yang Qing. Senior Yang has been in the Nine Provinces for ten thousand years, although he has rarely appeared, he is one of us."

Yang Qing gave Lu Ye a meaningful look, realizing that no matter the era, the human race always had the most cunning individuals. Having been suppressed for ten thousand years clearly sounded more pleasant the way Lu Ye put it.

And now he's one of them!

Everyone paid their respects with a respectful attitude. They had no choice but to be respectful; not to mention they needed something from him, even if they didn't, his power and age were evident. The oldest among them was Granny Jiew, only two thousand years old, hardly a fraction of his age.

Lu Ye then looked at Yang Qing: "I wonder what Senior would like to eat? The Nine Provinces are vast and abundant in resources; Haotian City also boasts the best chefs. Whatever Senior wishes to eat, I will have it prepared now."

He was a bit apprehensive, fearing that Yang Qing might request human food, which would be difficult to handle.

Yang Qing replied leisurely, "Do you have any spirit jade or spirit crystal?"

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief at his words, initially worrying he truly meant to eat, only to find out he wanted spirit jade or spirit crystal.

In recent times, Constellation Realm cultivators who ventured into the stellar space all had some gains. Because the Nine Provinces had been sealed for many years, the nearby stellar space remained unexplored and naturally had a considerable accumulation of spirit jade, and even spirit crystals, which were more advanced and typically only condensed in areas rich in stellar space energy.

Is it a case of taking money to avert disaster? This thought crossed everyone's mind as they willingly stepped forward to offer the gains from their time in the stellar space.

There wasn't much, the most anyone had was just over a hundred pieces of spirit jade, while the least was just a few pieces.

However, when gathered together, they amounted to over a thousand pieces.

After the last Constellation Realm cultivator took out their spirit jade, Yang Qing suddenly opened his mouth wide and took a deep breath.

The thousand-plus pieces of spirit jade on the desk before him were all sucked into his mouth, whereupon a chewing sound, crunch, crunch, was heard, leaving the group of Constellation Realm cultivators dumbfounded.

They clearly understood the sheer magnitude of energy contained within a single piece of spirit jade. To be honest, any random piece of spirit jade in their hands would suffice for several days of their cultivation needs.

Spirit crystals could last even longer due to their higher quality.

Over a thousand pieces of spirit jade, including some spirit crystals. Not to mention a Constellation Realm cultivator, even a Moon Jade Realm cultivator would likely explode and die under such a massive surge of energy!

Yet Yang Qing merely chewed casually a few times before swallowing it whole, showing no sign of discomfort.

This instilled some confidence in those unaware of Yang Qing's true strength; with the power he displayed, surely he could handle a Sun Blaze Realm...right?

"Is there any more?" Yang Qing patted his belly, seemingly unsatisfied.

"That's all there is," Lu Ye replied. At such a time, it's impossible for anyone to hold back; all the spirit jades and spirit crystals collected by the Constellation Realm cultivators lately would inevitably have been brought forth.

"Never mind, I shall seek more myself!" Yang Qing said, and his figure suddenly blurred, disappearing from sight.

Lu Ye was astonished and hurriedly called out, "Senior, leave us a way to contact you! What if that villain returns, how can we reach you?"

This Dragon Race couldn't possibly have just eaten and ran, could it? It's possible, but it doesn't seem very likely.

Though Yang Qing was gone, his voice resonated faintly from the void: "Just stall him with false pretenses, safeguard yourselves and the Nine Provinces, and wait for my return to deal with him!"

In the Harmony Light Hall, a silence prevailed.

After a long time, someone finally spoke: "What do we do now?"

The situation had become incredibly bizarre.

That fellow, Yueh Xin, had appeared in the Nine Provinces showing his extraordinary strength, injured a group of Constellation Realm cultivators, and then vanished without a trace. Lu Ye had called upon a Dragon from the Dragon Race, who devoured a meal of spirit jade and spirit crystals and then also disappeared, leaving the cultivators of the Nine Provinces to stare at each other in bewilderment.

It was certain that Yueh Xin would return, but no one knew what he was currently up to!

What was uncertain was whether Yang Qing would come back, which makes it awkward.

"Having been sealed for millennia, even if his power was immense, he must be incredibly weakened now. We should be thankful Yueh Xin is not in the Nine Provinces at this moment, or else Senior Yang Qing might not prevail if they faced off," Lu Ye began to speak slowly, "That's why he asked us for spirit jade, so he could go to the stellar space to restore himself. Mm, he will be back."

This was to comfort everyone, and also to comfort himself.

Simultaneously, he called out to Number Nine: "The Dragon Race didn't just run away, did they?"

Number Nine's voice sounded by his ear: "Rest assured, the Dragon Race, being a Sacred Beast, will keep their word as long as they agree to something, unless they never agreed to anything in the first place."

"The key is, he never promised me anything from the start."

"Didn't he tell you to stall him with false pretenses? Just follow that." At this point, Number Nine sighed slightly: "Life might get tough for Number Nine in the future. Lu Ye, you can't leave me in the lurch!"

"He'll give you trouble?" Lu Ye asked.

"Certainly! He always wanted me to release him, but I pretended it couldn't be done. Now that I've let him out, he'll definitely want revenge. I'm telling you, Lu Ye, the Dragon Race are extraordinarily petty; you mustn't offend him in your future dealings."

Lu Ye said, "How foolish would I have to be to offend a Dragon? Speaking of which, what's the situation at the Spirit Stream battlefield?"

"There's some turmoil. Once it stabilizes, it should be fine, with no major impact."

"That's good."

The Spirit Stream battlefield is the training ground for the most basic cultivation forces in the Nine Provinces cultivation world and is of great significance to the entire Nine Provinces. If any problem arose in the Spirit Stream battlefield, future cultivation for Spirit Stream Realm cultivators would undoubtedly become difficult.

With Yueh Xin gone, and Yang Qing as well, everyone was left waiting in an anxious unease.

The feeling of having no control over life and death is undoubtedly dreadful. One would think that with the world level of the Nine Provinces ascending, cultivators would have a path to the upper realm, and life would steadily improve. Yet, just as things were beginning, calamity struck, proving the unpredictability of the world.

All Constellation Realm cultivators gathered in Haotian City. During this period, numerous Divine Sea Realm cultivators arrived upon hearing the news, and for a time, the number of strong individuals in Haotian City continued to grow.

However, the dissemination of information regarding these events was restricted to certain levels, with cultivators below the Divine Sea Realm generally unaware of these happenings.

For them to know would be futile, merely causing unnecessary turmoil within their minds.

After some exchange with Lu Ye, Number Nine also hid itself away, for it did not know when Yueh Xin might return. If Yueh Xin discovered the existence of the Heaven's Augury Compass, it would spell true disaster for the Nine Provinces.

At present, Yueh Xin only thinks of occupying the Nine Provinces. But if he realizes the existence of the Heaven's Augury Compass, he will certainly attempt to refine it. Once he succeeds, the very roots of the Nine Provinces would fall under foreign enslavement.

Lu Ye was accelerating his cultivation speed.

Originally, he wasn't very urgent about cultivation matters, as his unique cultivation method made advancing his cultivation not particularly difficult. However, one must not solely pursue ascension in realm levels.

But now it seems, he must first advance to the Constellation Realm, at the very least gain the ability to set foot in stellar space, to talk about the future.

Chapter 1206 - Mysterious Array Diagram

The construction and deduction of Void Spirit Runes did not cease in the midst of cultivation.

The Talent Tree after its second metamorphosis seemed to possess a peculiar power, allowing Lu Ye to spark numerous incredible inspirations and wild ideas when constructing spirit runes on the leaves of the Talent Tree, thus enabling deduction.

This was not entirely the ability of the Talent Tree; it merely played a guiding role. The true efficacy during the deduction process came from Lu Ye's own foundation in the Path of Spirit Runes. The two complemented each other, making it possible to improve an existing spirit rune.

Time flew by, and a month passed in a blur after Yang Qing left the Nine Provinces without a trace.

During this period, all Constellation Realm cultivators waited in Haotian City. Lu Ye also did not leave, residing in his small courtyard.

On this day, as he was cultivating, Number Nine's voice abruptly sounded in his ear: "He's back!"

Lu Ye was just about to ask who had returned when Number Nine fell silent, and a tremendous oppressive force descended from the sky.

He instantly understood that Yueh Xin had returned.

This was undoubtedly the scenario that Nine Provinces cultivators least wished to see. Two powerful figures left the Nine Provinces in succession, Yang Qing was now lost, yet Yueh Xin returned first.

This meant that the Nine Provinces cultivators had to deal with him first, not knowing how long this would last!

Yueh Xin's return was without any concealment. In such a domain, he had no need to hide himself.

All over Haotian City, figures converged towards the place where he manifested, Lu Ye among them. In no time, hundreds had gathered.

Among those present, besides over a hundred Constellation Realm cultivators, the rest were Divine Sea Realm cultivators who hurried there upon hearing the news.

It was the first time Lu Ye saw Yueh Xin, who appeared as youthful as Yang Qing. If compared, Yueh Xin might seem a few years older facially, but not by much, provoking Lu Ye's suspicion that perhaps when cultivators reach a certain level, they all rejuvenate? Otherwise, how could the faces of these two powerful beings look so youthful?

However, comparatively, Yueh Xin's aura was undoubtedly more violent. Yang Qing, when facing Nine Provinces cultivators, never showcased his formidable presence, always maintaining a peaceful demeanor.

Yueh Xin swept his gaze over them, letting out a light snort, his eyes revealing an undeniable contempt. He naturally saw the discontent of these Nine Provinces cultivators, but in the cultivation world, the strong have always been revered. Especially in stellar space, higher cultivation and realm bring absolute

authority and initiative. What did discontent matter? Last time, he had merely displayed a bit of his formidable strength, injuring a group of Constellation Realm cultivators. If anyone dared to step out now, he wouldn't mind killing a few as a warning to others.

What disappointed him, however, was the silence of the hundreds of Nine Provinces cultivators; they stood quietly, seemingly awaiting his instructions.

This made him feel somewhat bored as he turned his gaze to Jian Guhong: "What's your name?"

The reason his attention fell on Jian Guhong was due to his detection during the last confrontation that this person's strength was the most powerful among the Nine Provinces cultivators.

What he intended to do next required a leader from the Nine Provinces side, and naturally, he chose the strongest.

Jian Guhong hesitated briefly, then stepped forward, clasped his fist, and said, "Mount Tian, Jian Guhong!"

Yueh Xin flicked a jade slip over: "I have an array diagram here. Regardless of what method you use, set up this formation within three months. If it's overdue, I will kill one of you for each day exceeded, and ten if it exceeds ten days, until you complete the array setup thoroughly."

Jian Guhong received the jade slip, glanced through it with his Mental Consciousness, and indeed saw an extremely complex array diagram.

However, he was not proficient in the Array Path, so he couldn't immediately discern the purpose of the formation and asked: "May I ask, Senior, this formation..."

"No need to ask more, just do it. In three months, I will return to inspect," he coldly left a remark before soaring into the sky, turning into a stream of light and disappearing up into the Nine Heavens.

For someone of his strength, there was little interest in staying within a domain like the Nine Provinces. As his injury wasn't healed, staying in the Nine Provinces did him no good. To heal, he needed to enter stellar space.

But this was a piece of good news for the Nine Provinces because, without facing this man's terror directly, they faced fewer troubles and crises.

Some even secretly hoped that this guy would encounter Yang Qing in the stellar space and be finished by him.

Such an event could indeed happen; though stellar space is boundless, if they both had a common destination, meeting would be easy.

Of course, if he did encounter Yang Qing, who would end up finishing whom was still unknown.

Yueh Xin returned and quickly left, leaving behind an array diagram.

The group's gaze turned to Jian Guhong. Someone asked, "Fellow Daoist Jian, what kind of array diagram did he leave behind?"

Jian Guhong shook his head: "I'm not sure; have a look yourselves."

With these words, he infused his spirit force into the jade slip, activating the array diagram imprinted within and projecting it into everyone's sight.

The group focused their gaze, and immediately, their brows furrowed, feeling dizzy and overwhelmed.

Merely because the array diagram was overly vast and complex, with various big arrays nested within smaller ones, and even smaller formations within those, like such a complex array diagram far exceeded the existing formation system of the Nine Provinces.

Just understanding it would take quite a bit of time, let alone setting it up.

However, it's undeniable that such an array diagram is definitely a coveted treasure for those array cultivators. If they can comprehend the mechanism of this array diagram, it will surely enhance their array path proficiency significantly.

Among the several hundred people, many are proficient in formations. The array cultivators are a given, but those ghost cultivators also possess great knowledge of formations.

Wuchang scratched his head and asked, "What's this thing? What's its purpose?"

Jian Guhong chuckled, "Within the Nine Provinces, your array path proficiency may not be the highest, but it's certainly top-notch. If even you can't understand it, whom can you ask?"

Lu Ye was also observing, and he immediately noticed that the array diagram contained many Void Spirit Runes. Yet, spotting the spirit runes is one thing, understanding the purpose of the formation is another.

Besides the Void Spirit Runes, he also saw some familiar spirit runes, but they all had slight differences from the ones he knew.

This is normal.

The same spirit runes can have many different construction methods. Yueh Xin comes from some unknown part of stellar space, and the spirit runes he knows may not align with the Nine Provinces' system, naturally leading to some differences.

But despite the differences, the effects should be the same; it's merely a difference in construction method.

"What do you think? This guy ran out with injuries for over a month and suddenly returns to have us set up such a big array. What's he up to?" Someone expressed confusion, as Yueh Xin's actions are indeed perplexing.

Bold speculation arose: "Might this array diagram be related to his healing? Could he be planning to devour the essence of the Nine Provinces to restore himself?"

Upon this suggestion, everyone was taken aback. This hypothesis, though a bit far-fetched, is not entirely impossible.

The essence of the world can be mutually devoured, so there's no reason cultivators can't devour the world's essence.

For a moment, everyone fell silent. If that's truly the case, should this big array be set up?

If they don't set it up, Yueh Xin will undoubtedly start killing in three months, and by then, there won't be enough people in the Nine Provinces for him to kill.

But setting it up would mean the future loss of the Nine Provinces' essence, and this group of people would inevitably go down in history as criminals!

Wuchang also chimed in, "This big array does have a hint of devouring in it, perhaps he truly intends to do just that."

The array diagram does contain traces of devour spirit runes, and Lu Ye also noticed this. However, what puzzled him was, if it's truly to devour the Nine Provinces' essence, then how do the Void and other spirit runes in the array diagram fit in?

Not to mention all the various spirit runes, the primary function of the Void Spirit Runes is teleportation. What's teleportation's relation to devouring the Nine Provinces' essence?

The crowd couldn't help but worry, "What do we do now?"

No one knew what to do. Before the function of this big array is determined, it's indeed not good to set it up rashly. But their fists can't compare to others, and they can't rebel, which is worrying.

Everyone turned their gaze towards Feng Wujiang.

Although Senior Brother Wujiang hasn't yet ascended to the Constellation Realm and his strength level has fallen behind many, the numerous constellations present have long been accustomed to taking orders from him over the years.

Feng Wujiang pondered briefly, "Let's set it up then. We can't resist anyway, and hasn't he given a three-month deadline? Before the deadline, find a way to understand the function of the array diagram and make a final decision then. Setting up a formation is difficult, but destroying it is very easy. Senior Yang Qing also advised before departing for us to feign cooperation. Maybe before the deadline, Senior Yang Qing resolves him, and the situation isn't as bad."

This is also the only option that the Nine Provinces have at this stage.

The crowd had no objections. Immediately, those with array path cultivation copied the array diagram for thorough research, while messages were being sent out to all parties simultaneously.

Such a complex and large array diagram isn't easy to set up. At this stage, it requires the joint efforts of the entire Nine Provinces.

All cultivators proficient in the array path were gathered, and a vast amount of materials was requisitioned.

For a time, the entire Nine Provinces were mobilized.

Since they were going to set up a formation, they needed to choose a location for it.

This big array will cover quite a considerable area. If the area is too small, it simply can't be set up, so a wide and flat expanse is required.

After some deliberation, they chose Liyuan as the location, the broad plain behind the Ten Thousand Demons Ridge defense line in Bingzhou.

The choice was considered carefully. Before understanding this formation's specific function, it's really not suitable to set it up in inhabited areas.

Liyuan is vast, sparsely populated, and flat, making it very suitable for setting up a formation.

Lu Ye and other array cultivators and ghost cultivators started analyzing the array diagram. To set up a formation, a setup plan must be determined. This isn't something that can be completed by one person; it requires layered, staged cooperation. You set up one area, I set up another area, only then is there a possibility of fully setting up this array diagram within three months.

Chapter 1207 - Commencing Work

This setup method has its benefits, because it is individually apportioned, the efficiency will be very high, and the three-month time limit should be sufficient. However, it also has drawbacks, as the attainment in the Array Path differs among individuals. This may result in uneven quality in the set-up regions, potentially affecting the overall operation of the big array.

Moreover, if the regions cannot be seamlessly aligned with each other after the setup is completed, it will have to be rearranged, which is cumbersome and labor-intensive.

Hence, this matter requires someone to oversee and control the entire project, distributing the tasks of each formation region to each participating array cultivator or ghost cultivator.

As for the choice of overseer, Wuchang is undoubtedly the candidate, possessing both the qualifications and the attainment needed.

Eligible array cultivators and ghost cultivators to contribute to such a grand project gathered at Haotian City, with more and more assembling, regardless of their cultivation level. Even a Cloud River Realm cultivator can participate, as there are numerous mundane tasks during the array setup requiring manpower, which is the time for Cloud River Realm cultivators to contribute.

Thus, in such a grand project, the more manpower available, the better.

Not only due to the pressure of the three-month deadline, but for ghost cultivators and array cultivators, such an array diagram from a Sun Blaze Realm expert is also a rare treasure. It is extremely helpful for them to enhance their own Array Path attainment.

No one imagined that array-cultivating cultivators from the Nine Provinces would gather in this way, on the plaza where the celebratory banquet was previously held, congregating to study the array diagram and discuss intensely.

Lu Ye was also among them.

Like others, he was very curious about the specific function of this array diagram and wanted to gain answers through research and discussion, but unfortunately did not yield any significant results.

While the array cultivators in Haotian City studied the array diagram and assigned tasks, other Constellation Realm cultivators had gone ahead.

Although Liyuan has been chosen as the setup location, it is too vast and still requires finding a suitable area within it.

Moreover, setting up a big array of this scale requires adequate preliminary preparations.

Just like building a house, one must first compact the foundation; the more solid the foundation, the more stable the constructed house will be.

The same principle applies to array setup, especially with such a large-scale array. Having a good foundation facilitates later array setups while maximizing the array's effectiveness.

Once the decision to set up the array is made, no one will slack off.

Yueh Xin set a three-month deadline, but no one knows if he will return halfway to supervise the progress. If he finds that people from the Nine Provinces have cut corners and only gone through the motions, no one can endure his wrath if he gets angry.

Thus, they can only dedicate themselves, striving for perfection and extremity at this stage!

A massive amount of resources has already been dispatched in advance, with contributions from various minor sects, but most coming from the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union.

The Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union is an enterprise secretly supported by Number Nine, who even holds the title of Store Manager, although no one has ever seen the true face of the Store Manager from time immemorial.

This big array matter concerns the entire Nine Provinces, and the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union cannot stay aloof. Thus, under the secret dispatch of Number Nine, the resources stored within the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union significantly dwindled overnight.

Thus, ten days later, a vast stream of light departed from Haotian City.

The preliminary preparations have already been completed, and next, it is time to proceed with the array setup, naturally involving these array cultivators and ghost cultivators.

Those with high cultivation levels first flew to Liyuan. For those with insufficient cultivation, slow flying speed, a few treasure ships were deployed from Haotian City to transport them, which wouldn't delay more than a day or two.

Atop Liyuan, under the leadership of Wuchang, Lu Ye, along with a group of ghost cultivators and array cultivators, arrived early. Overlooking from high above, they all remained silent.

In ten days, the foundation for setting up the big array has been prepared; it is an area covering about 30 miles in circumference.

Now what the array-cultivating cultivators must do is lay out the entire array diagram over this foundation.

This is certainly an immensely grand undertaking, and it is definitely not something a single cultivator can complete alone. Although this is an action taken under external coercion by a formidable outsider, it is also a grand feast.

After a long while, Wuchang finally said, "Everyone, I leave the rest in your capable hands!" As he spoke, he waved his hand grandly: "Begin!"

Behind him, one figure after another turned into streams of light, falling into different positions as previously assigned.

Although the number of array cultivators and ghost cultivators from the Nine Provinces is quite a lot, in such an environment, only cultivators above the Divine Sea Realm can exert their strength. All ghost cultivators and array cultivators below the Divine Sea Realm can only assist since they are too slow. Once they arrive, Wuchang will assign them to various regions to assist the Divine Sea Realm cultivators with array setup.

A range of hundreds of miles is enormous, and there are barely five hundred Divine Sea Realm array cultivators and ghost cultivators available from the Nine Provinces to exert their efforts. Averaged out, almost each one has to be responsible for an area of about 30 miles.

The amount of resources consumed is undoubtedly beyond estimation, and the time consumed is also bound to be exceedingly long.

Three months may seem like a lot, but if any mistakes occur in between, it might truly be insufficient.

Lu Ye's assigned area is in the upper left corner of the array diagram, and the personnel to assist him have not arrived yet, so he can only be self-reliant for now.

Such a massive formation is completely different from the ones he set up before. The construction of all the formation patterns requires refining various materials into them, and different positions require different materials. It's not something that can be casually constructed just by channeling spirit force, hence it is very troublesome.

He worked tirelessly here for an entire day, only completing a formation map area the size of a tabletop, which shows the complexity involved.

Luckily, at this time, the array cultivators and ghost cultivators below the Divine Sea Realm arrived and, under Wuchang's assignments, each headed to different areas to lend a hand.

Ying Wuji was among them. As per Wuchang's assignment, he came to the upper left corner of the foundation, and with a glance, he nearly turned and left.

It's not fair. Of all the Divine Sea Realm array cultivators and ghost cultivators present, why was he specifically assigned to Lu Yiye?

When he saw Lu Ye, Lu Ye naturally saw him too.

They looked at each other, Lu Ye smiled slightly, and Ying Wuji was full of embarrassment.

Throughout the entire Nine Provinces, out of billions of cultivators, Lu Ye was the last person he wanted to see. He had been tormented quite a bit before and now he wasn't tormented anymore, but meeting still inevitably led to feeling inferior!

Ying Wuji considered himself a dragon among men, a genius with a talent as high as sixty-three leaves, but compared to this guy Lu Yiye, he was simply a bit revolting.

When he was in the Cloud River Realm, his cultivation was a bit higher than Lu Ye's. But by the Early Stage of the True Lake Realm, his cultivation began to lag behind, and now it's even more outrageous. He is still only in the True Lake Realm, while Lu Yiye has already reached Divine Sea Level 7!

The disparity is so vast, it's simply heartbreaking.

Ying Wuji just couldn't understand what on earth Lu Yiye had consumed to boost his cultivation to such an illogical extent.

Of course, he knew cultivators shouldn't compare themselves to others. He envied Lu Yiye, and many more people would envy him.

But knowing is one thing, it's hard to avoid having all sorts of thoughts, which made him feel that his character and cultivation were lacking!

He straightened his back, took a step forward, thinking that since fate decreed he had to face Lu Yiye, he should make good use of this opportunity to overcome this inner demon!

"Little Ying, go over there and fetch some supplies, we're running low." Lu Ye pointed to a spot where people from Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union were guarding the supplies, available for use as needed, and could be replenished at any time, making it quite convenient.

Ying Wuji instinctively responded, "Oh, okay!" But after a few steps, he suddenly turned to glare angrily at Lu Ye: "Don't call me Little Ying!"

Shouting as if we are so familiar with each other.

Lu Ye didn't bother with courtesy: "Less nonsense, hurry up!"

Ying Wuji instantly became dispirited, thinking that the days of working under Lu Ye would be truly hard to endure.

Fortunately, more people soon joined in, and under Wuchang's directives, each Divine Sea Realm cultivator had several people assisting, relieving some of Ying Wuji's embarrassment.

On Liyuan, it was a bustling scene, with Wuchang patrolling back and forth, occasionally stopping to discuss and study with a Divine Sea Realm cultivator.

On the massive foundation, in the patches of areas, the formation's patterns began to expand and extend. Judging by the current progress, although the three-month deadline was tight, at least it could barely suffice.

Setting up a formation is a very troublesome task. Activating spirit force to set up a formation before was simple but those formations generally didn't last long. To maintain it truly for long, it required the consumption of a lot of manpower and resources, just like what's happening now.

In the process of setting up the formation, whether for a Divine Sea Realm cultivator like Lu Ye or someone like Ying Wuji who assisted him, both gained a lot.

With increased contact, Ying Wuji found that surprisingly, Lu Yiye didn't seem to have much intention of tormenting him, be it due to his cultivation improvement or a more open mind, which allowed Ying Wuji to ease his mind.

When assisting Lu Ye with others, he sometimes raised some questions, and Lu Ye tried his best to answer them.

Lu Ye never intended to torment him, not before and even less now.

As his cultivation increased, he gradually discovered a problem, which was that his cultivation speed was too fast, so fast that his companions and friends couldn't keep up.

It was the same for his companions and friends before, and the same for his past enemies.

This meant he would spend less and less time with his companions and friends, inevitably meeting new friends and enemies, and the past would eventually turn into memories.

This left him feeling melancholy often.

Amber and Yiyi clearly realized this issue too, so even lazy Amber has been working hard in cultivation lately. But no matter how hard they try, they have just been promoted to Divine Sea, and the cultivation gap with Lu Ye is still significant.

Soon, they will have to face a very real situation. Lu Ye will be the first to ascend to the Constellation Realm, leave the Nine Provinces, and step into the stellar space, and then separation will be inevitable.

Chapter 1208 - The Fight Has Begun

Every day, a large number of cultivators come and go over Liyuan. On the array base radiating hundreds of miles around, new array runes are added every day.

If at the beginning the array cultivators and ghost cultivators of Nine Provinces were forced into this grand task unwillingly, after some time, their attitude shifted from passive to active.

Everyone wants to know what such an enormous formation is ultimately being used for.

Originally, the plan of Nine Provinces was to find an opportunity to question Yueh Xin before the deadline, but since this guy left that day, he has never been seen again.

It's been almost two months now, and there's still no news. It seems he really intends to wait until the three-month deadline to come back and check. By then, if Nine Provinces has completed the task he left behind, everyone will be happy. If not, a massacre is inevitable.

In two months, the area Lu Ye is responsible for is almost complete. Among all the array cultivators, his progress is relatively fast, which astounds Wuchang, who never expected Lu Ye to have such high attainments in the Array Path.

There are a few others with similar progress, but more are still busy, though from the current situation, completing the setup of this big array before the deadline is not an issue. There is even plenty of time to make corrections, so any part that's not coordinated, any misplacement, can be adjusted.

On this day, Lu Ye was still busy with the assistance of Ying Wuji and others. According to his plan, it would take less than three days to complete the area he's responsible for.

Personally involved in setting up such a big array, even though he was only responsible for a small area, Lu Ye had a clearer understanding of the formation.

Though he didn't know its specific use, it's clear that this formation has both teleportation and devour functions.

This is very strange. Teleportation and devour have always been unrelated functions. If it only had the devour function, it could be understood as Yueh Xin devouring the world's foundation of Nine Provinces for his recovery, but what's the purpose of teleportation?

It can only be speculated when the big array is complete and truly operational.

Suddenly, there was a disturbance beside him. Lu Ye looked up and saw many Constellation Realm cultivators, for some reason, taking to the sky, heading outward at incredible speed. Those like Jian Guhong flashed away like a sword light, and even the slower ones left traces.

Wuchang was about to take off too, and Lu Ye quickly asked, "Senior, what's happening?"

Wuchang was a bit excited, "They're fighting!"

Ying Wuji looked bewildered, "Who's fighting?"

Wuchang had no time to respond and quickly disappeared.

This left Ying Wuji puzzled, seeking explanation from Lu Ye.

Lu Ye was putting all his effort into sensing but couldn't feel anything, yet he knew what Wuchang meant.

Outside the Nine Provinces planet, there was a battle! Although it was still far away, the Constellation Realm cultivators had already sensed it, so they couldn't hold back and went to watch the battle.

At this time, the only ones who could battle outside Nine Provinces were probably Yueh Xin and Yang Qing.

Finally, at this moment!

How the fight started, no one knew, but as long as Yang Qing was still willing to keep his previous promise, he would surely return to Nine Provinces, and there would definitely be a battle between him and Yueh Xin.

Who would win? Lu Ye didn't know. From the standpoint of Nine Provinces, he naturally hoped Yang Qing would win. But this Dragon Race powerful being had been suppressed for ten thousand years and had become weak. Otherwise, he wouldn't have sought spirit jade and spirit crystal from Nine Provinces' Constellation Realm cultivators first, and then gone into stellar space himself.

Ten thousand years of suppression had taken a great toll on him. Within just three months, who knew how much strength he had recovered?

Fortunately, Yueh Xin also seemed to be injured, so from this perspective, these two strong beings were evenly matched, neither having an advantage over the other.

"Number Nine, I want to go watch too!" Lu Ye hurriedly called out.

Waiting here passively was truly torturous. He wanted to witness the battle, but he couldn't physically traverse the Void on his own, so he had to ask Number Nine for help.

Whether Number Nine could help in matters like these, Lu Ye did not know.

"What's there to see?" Number Nine was also anxious. When two tigers fight, one must get hurt. But no matter who wins, it's in a bind.

If Yang Qing wins, he'll surely settle scores with it later, and its life won't be easy.

If Yueh Xin wins, it will have to hide continuously, which is still not safe. If Yueh Xin stays too long in Nine Provinces, he might discover the secret of the Heaven's Augury Compass.

Personally, like Lu Ye, it hoped Yang Qing would win, or at the very least, drive Yueh Xin away.

Although it feared Yang Qing would settle scores with it later, Number Nine wasn't so malicious as to hope they both perished.

Despite saying this, Number Nine still fulfilled Lu Ye's wish.

From deep within, abundant and dense spirit force suddenly emerged, gathering in the sky. The density of Spiritual Energy was such that it condensed into liquid, and for a moment, it seemed a mirror was laid across the sky.

A giant mirror formed by pure Spiritual Energy.

Everyone involuntarily gazed towards the mirror, and what they saw drew gasps of astonishment.

Because after a slight tremor and distortion, the mirror reflected a vast, deep stellar space, and in the scenes within the mirror, there were many familiar figures, appearing to be Jian Guhong and others who had left before.

This scene was like an invisible vision hovering beyond the Nine Provinces, transmitting the view beyond the Nine Provinces planet back here.

Undoubtedly, it was Number Nine's handiwork.

Unable to put Lu Ye's physical body into the stellar space, it resorted to this method to satisfy him.

This immediately caused an uproar, making many cultivators left here feel as if Heaven's Augury had manifested...

Lu Ye thanked him silently, observing quietly. He saw deep in the stellar space, enormous flashes of light continuously flickering, with two vague figures tangling and maneuvering amidst them. However, because the movements of these two figures were incredibly fast and the mirrored perspective was too distant, although the battle there could be seen, the situation remained unclear.

A high-pitched Dragon's Wail transmitted from within the mirrored space, just like the one Lu Ye had heard on the Spirit Stream battlefield.

The battle erupted fiercely, and where the two figures passed, meteors shattered one after another, as if the entire Void were trembling.

But in just a moment, the two figures gradually moved away, soon disappearing out of sight.

The outcome was already determined! For the scene clearly showed one pursuing and the other fleeing, yet nobody knew who was chasing and who was escaping.

Lu Ye, itching with curiosity, couldn't help but ask, "Number Nine, who is stronger?"

Number Nine lazily responded, "You'll know in a moment."

Feeling its tone, Lu Ye realized, the stronger one was Yang Qing!

If Yueh Xin were stronger, Number Nine surely wouldn't speak in such a tone.

Lu Ye was astonished. He originally thought that even if Yang Qing were somewhat stronger, it would be limited, considering he had been suppressed for thousands of years. But now, it seemed Yang Qing's words were no exaggeration.

Back then, when Lu Ye asked if he could take down a Sun Blaze Realm opponent, Yang Qing disdainfully stated he could crush them with just one claw.

Now it seemed, could what he said actually be true?

Such a short time to determine the victor indicated a vast difference in power, and Yang Qing must still be in a weakened state. How strong would he be if he were in his prime?

As for Yueh Xin, who always acted arrogantly before the Nine Provinces cultivators, how utterly distressed he must be now.

The two figures, in their chase and flight, had already gone far, and Jian Guhong and others seemed intent on pursuing to see the outcome. But considering the vast difference in power, they remained quietly in place, as pursuing would be futile and no use wasting energy.

Yet, judging by the expressions on their faces, it seemed they too hadn't grasped the shift in the battle's situation nor understood who was stronger.

They could only wait anxiously.

This is the sorrow of the weak.

After a short while, the Void before Jian Guhong and others twisted slightly, and a young man in green abruptly appeared.

From his appearance, there wasn't a hint of injury, looking casual and calm, as if the fierce battle just now was merely a leisurely stroll after a satisfying meal.

But considering what he held in his hand, the matter wasn't as simple as a stroll.

At this moment, he held a bloody head, eyes wide open, unwilling to rest in peace, even filled with terror and astonishment in the eyes. It seemed as if, before dying, he couldn't understand how he ended up so unlucky to encounter a Dragon Race in such a remote stellar space!

Yueh Xin, who regarded Nine Provinces cultivators as mere straw dogs, was dead just like that!

Jian Guhong and others were visibly shaken to a great extent.

Numerous cultivators on Liyuan of Nine Provinces, witnessing this scene, also exclaimed in shock.

"Can't look anymore, can't look anymore!" Number Nine's voice sounded by Lu Ye's ear, and then the mirrored scene in the sky began to collapse.

But just before collapsing, everyone clearly saw Yang Qing throwing Yueh Xin's head to Jian Guhong, who hastily caught it.

The cheering on Liyuan continued, like ocean waves, one higher than the last.

Cultivators who came here, regardless of their cultivation level, already knew about Yueh Xin through different channels, as well as knowing that this big array was his arrangement.

To the Nine Provinces, Yueh Xin was a veritable invader, and no one wanted to be ruled by someone like him. Now that he's dead, they no longer need to worry about this matter in the future.

As for Yang Qing... although not many had seen him, being able to kill Yueh Xin meant he stood on the side of Nine Provinces, naturally gaining the closeness of Nine Provinces cultivators.

Only Lu Ye was filled with worry.

The fierce wolf was dead, but the household had gained a tiger; what path should Nine Provinces take in the future? Yang Qing was willing to kill Yueh Xin, partly as a price for his release, and partly because two tigers cannot share one mountain.

But what might Yang Qing's attitude towards the Nine Provinces be? No one knows, and no one dares to guarantee he wouldn't become a second Yueh Xin.

Especially considering he knows about the Heaven's Augury Compass.

Chapter 1209: A Grand Gift?

A stream of light from beyond the heavens pierced through the clouds, revealing over a hundred figures led by Jian Guhong, a group of Constellation Realm cultivators. In his hand, he held the lifeless head of Yueh Xin.

Initially, he probably intended to use Yueh Xin's head to announce the end of the crisis, but upon seeing the state of the cultivators here, he realized everyone was already aware of the outcome of the previous battle.

There was no need for further words. He urged his spirit force, causing the sword light to swirl, and the bloody head turned to dust.

The body of a Sun Blaze Realm cultivator is indeed durable, but without the support from the spirit after death, it is merely tougher than usual, not beyond Jian Guhong's ability to destroy.

Yang Qing was nowhere to be seen.

In fact, none of the Constellation Realm cultivators knew where Yang Qing had gone. On their way back to the Nine Provinces, Yang Qing's figure merely flickered and then disappeared, and no one saw where he went.

The only thing certain was that he was still within the Nine Provinces. Such a powerful being, if he truly did not wish to be found, no one in the Nine Provinces could track him down.

The question facing everyone was one.

This Formation... should it continue being set up?

This mysterious big array had begun to be set up under the directive of Yueh Xin, and the array diagram was also provided by him. Now two months had passed, the Nine Provinces had invested a lot of manpower and resources, and the big array was nearly complete. If they abandoned it now, all previous investments would go down the drain.

On a subconscious level, all cultivators involved in the array setup wanted to complete it because everyone was curious to know what such a massive Formation was meant for.

Those who embark on a journey of a hundred miles are halfway at ninety; having gone ninety, would they hesitate over the last ten miles?

But to complete it rashly without understanding its exact effects seemed unwise.

This was difficult to handle, but to be safe, after some discussion, the Constellation Realm cultivators finally decided to halt the setup of the big array.

It was a waste, but it was better than igniting unnecessary risks.

Lu Ye did not participate in the discussion, only quietly listening from the side, mainly wanting to know the outcome of the Constellation Realm cultivators' deliberation. For him, he could accept whatever choice they made.

If they decided to continue with the setup, he would put in the effort; if not, then they would disperse and go home.

He was concerned about Yang Qing matters, as this Dragon Race power was released by him. Though it temporarily mitigated a great crisis for the Nine Provinces, determining Yang Qing's attitude towards the Nine Provinces was crucial.

Otherwise, having an unclear and formidable entity at home would be nerve-wracking.

Now the problem was that nobody knew where Yang Qing had gone, nor how to find him. Perhaps he could ask Number Nine? But Number Nine also showed no reaction, and Lu Ye guessed it was playing hide-and-seek with Yang Qing.

This was quite frustrating.

"Why not accept such a generous gift left by others? First, get this Formation properly set up, and later, I will tell you its wonderful uses!" Suddenly, Yang Qing's voice came to Lu Ye's ear.

Lu Ye looked up in astonishment, then glanced at the other Constellation Realm cultivators, who showed no reaction, indicating that the audio transmission was targeted solely at him.

After a brief contemplation, he stepped forward and relayed Yang Qing's words to the gathering of Constellation Realm cultivators.

Everyone was puzzled—what kind of generous gift was this?

But since it was said by Yang Qing, it naturally wasn't wrong. No one on the Nine Provinces' side could understand the mechanism and function of this Formation, but from Yang Qing's perspective, it should be clear at a glance. Since he called it a gift, they would treat it as such!

There was no need to hesitate; the array setup continued.

Jian Guhong discreetly sent an audio transmission to Lu Ye: "It's best to find this Senior Yang and understand the function of the big array. Also, gauge his attitude towards the Nine Provinces."

The issues worrying Lu Ye were equally concerning for the Constellation Realm cultivators.

Everyone knew Yang Qing had been suppressed for ten thousand years and was a noble Dragon Race member. Such suppression couldn't have left him without some resentment. Should such a powerful being release even a bit of anger within the Nine Provinces, no one could withstand it.

As of now, there was at least a favor between Lu Ye and Yang Qing, so having Lu Ye take the lead in this was best.

Lu Ye silently nodded.

With Yueh Xin dead, the group no longer felt pressured, and the Formation setup was not as urgent. However, the mysterious big array was nearly complete, so within less than ten days, it was finished. All area array runes and diagrams seamlessly connected without error. In theory, this big array could be activated, but nobody knew what would happen upon activation.

The moment the Formation setup completed, Yang Qing abruptly appeared. He was always so elusive; no one sensed his presence before he showed up, but in a blink, he appeared as if he had been standing there all along.

Everyone promptly paid their respects.

Simultaneously, his eyes curiously focused on the object in his hand—a rabbit, completely snow-white, its fur immaculate, appearing harmless to humans and animals alike.

When Lu Ye's gaze met the rabbit's large watery eyes, he couldn't help but twitch at the corner of his eye.

If he wasn't mistaken, this rabbit... is Number Nine!

The first time he formally met Number Nine, Number Nine had said that it could take any shape Lu Ye desired. Therefore, theoretically speaking, Number Nine, this Artifact Spirit, could transform into anything with extreme realism.

However, usually, it prefers to stay behind the scenes, never showing itself.

To think it would transform into such a harmless-looking little white rabbit now.

It seems... like it was caught playing hide-and-seek.

The little white rabbit stared at Lu Ye, its watery eyes conveying a very clear message: Save me!

Lu Ye looked regretful and expressed that he was powerless to help.

Others were unaware of this rabbit's true nature, and they were curious why Yang Qing, a Dragon Race member, would capture such a white rabbit. Could it be to roast it for a snack?

Jian Guhong stepped forward: "Senior Yang, the Formation here is already arranged. Could you tell us about the gift you mentioned earlier?"

Yang Qing smiled, casually tossing the white rabbit to Lu Ye, who was standing by, and then walking towards the big array.

Lu Ye caught the rabbit, and immediately Number Nine's voice sounded by his ear: "Heartless! Leaving me to die here!"

Lu Ye replied via audio transmission: "How could I save you? I can't do it! But speaking of which, this Dragon Race member seems genuinely not hostile towards the Nine Provinces?"

If there was hostility, it would have shown long ago. When the power gap reaches a certain level, there's no need for any schemes or plots. Even if Yang Qing were to raise his arm this moment and claim that the Nine Provinces should submit to him in the future, no one would be able to oppose him.

But as Number Nine said, the Dragon Race is a petty race, and Lu Ye certainly experienced that.

Just look at how Yang Qing, after slaying Yueh Xin and returning to the Nine Provinces, did nothing but focus on Number Nine. Since Number Nine clearly had the ability to let him out but never did, he resorted to targeting Number Nine, even forcing it to transform into a white rabbit to protect itself.

Number Nine felt quite helpless. It wasn't that it didn't want to let Yang Qing out; the foundation of the post-nine-provinces era simply couldn't withstand the havoc of such a formidable entity—it dared not let him out casually. Thus, now faced with his resentment, it wasn't something Number Nine desired.

Number Nine sighed deeply: "My life is over! Lu Ye, you must cultivate well. And in the future, when you can defeat that guy, remember to rescue me!"

Lu Ye nodded repeatedly: "Don't worry, I'll shield you then!"

While the man and spirit communicated, Yang Qing stood at a corner of the big array. In comparison to the massive Formation, Yang Qing seemed very small, but as he channeled power into the array, the entire Formation began to hum.

His voice rang out: "As for the Array Path, I am not particularly proficient. I don't even know the name of this Formation, but previously, when I was wandering near the stellar space of the Nine Provinces, I discovered some setups left on nearby celestial bodies, which could also be considered as nodes of Formations. Sometimes, when the distance is too far, two Formations can't resonate with each other, so they need these nodes as transit points. By following these setups, I found the existence of another domain. Coincidentally, there are some setups in that domain as well. So, the situation became clear: the basic purpose of this big array is likely for teleportation!"

With his words, the massive Formation began to operate, and a pillar of light shot into the sky from its center, with a glow swiftly spreading throughout the array.

Soon, the glow began to collapse towards the center, and in a blink of an eye, a slowly rotating dark vortex appeared in the middle of the big array, as if leading to some deep and unknown place.

The group watched, dumbfounded. No one expected that the purpose of such a large-scale Formation was teleportation, and not just ordinary teleportation—it was capable of enabling travel between domains!

This was truly bizarre.

Though everyone present had experienced teleportation before, especially during the expedition to the Blood Refinement World, where they used the Heaven's Augury Pillar, using a Formation was an entirely different concept.

How mysterious must this Formation be to enable travel between two domains?

Lu Ye was deeply shaken. He could set up teleportation arrays himself, but his arrays could at most cover three to four thousand miles. The distance between two domains is so vast that his teleportation arrays simply couldn't bridge it.

No wonder the scale is so large, and its setup so intricate—it takes such dimensions to accomplish teleportation over such distances.

Just then, Number Nine's voice sounded by Lu Ye's ear: "I can feel it!"

"Feel what?" Lu Ye quickly asked.

"The existence of another domain! And it seems I can even absorb the foundation of that domain through this Formation!"

Lu Ye was astonished: "Really?"

"Indeed, if I choose to, I can simultaneously absorb the foundation of that domain!"

Chapter 1210: Choices

Lu Ye's mind was filled with countless thoughts, combining the words of Number Nine and Yang Qing, he slowly gained insight into the truth of the matter.

The reason Yueh Xin wanted to occupy the Nine Provinces is that he perceived it as a domain capable of rapid growth, so he developed the idea of claiming it as his own. However, the current Nine Provinces cannot meet his requirements. Even if it devours the foundation of the Blood Refinement World, the Nine Provinces cannot grow to the extent he needs. To accelerate its growth, assistance must be provided!

Devouring the foundations of more domains is the method Yueh Xin devised.

After injuring a group of Constellation Realm cultivators, he left for a month. No one knew where he went. Now, it seems that he was obviously searching for another domain, and he actually found one! Then he started to make arrangements in secret.

However, because the two domains are quite far apart and cannot coordinate with each other, he could only leave some nodes on celestial bodies between the two domains to serve as relay points.

While Yang Qing was traveling through stellar space to recover himself, he discovered the arrangements left by Yueh Xin, and by following the clues, found the domain and gained insight into Yueh Xin's intentions!

So even though he wasn't very proficient in the Array Path, he roughly understood the function of this Formation.

But there was one point he hadn't noticed, which was that this Formation not only had the effect of Teleportation but also endowed Number Nine with the ability to devour.

This kind of devouring was different from devouring the foundation of the Blood Refinement World. In the Blood Refinement World, there now stood many Heaven's Augury Pillars. Its devouring of the Blood Refinement World's foundation primarily relied on these Heaven's Augury Pillars, which are more or less like straws inserted into the Blood Refinement World. So even though the Nine Provinces and the Blood Refinement World had no substantive connection, it could still devour.

With the feeling of this Formation, there was ultimately a layer of separation, not as swift and convenient as using the Heaven's Augury Pillars, but it was still possible to devour.

This was truly a huge gift!

Yueh Xin probably never imagined that all his planning and scheming would ultimately clothe the Nine Provinces in wedding garments!

The main issue was that he didn't know the Nine Provinces concealed a Dragon Race capable of easily killing him. So, his death was truly suffocating.

Lu Ye only understood at this moment the roles of the many Void and devouring spirit runes contained within the Formation, which aligned with his previous conjectures. This Formation had the effect of both Teleportation and devouring.

If one were to carefully calculate, devouring was indeed the primary aspect, and the purpose of Teleportation was merely to transfer the opposing domain's foundation, rather than for sending people!

"Doesn't this mean the foundation of the Nine Provinces can grow even faster?" Lu Ye couldn't help but feel excited. The current world's level of the Nine Provinces had already been elevated, able to give birth to Constellation Realm cultivators. If previously the Nine Provinces, when viewed in stellar space, were just a medium domain, at this moment, the Nine Provinces could certainly be considered a large domain.

Medium and large referred not to volume but to foundation. Only a domain capable of producing Constellation Realm cultivators had the qualification to be called a large domain, because only such a domain could connect with stellar space.

Above large domains, there were top-tier domains, those that could produce Spirit Jade Veins within. Nine Provinces had not reached this level yet, but it was the direction Number Nine was striving for. In the era before the current Nine Provinces, it was on a top-tier domain level.

The foundation of one Blood Refinement World is insufficient to elevate the Nine Provinces' foundation to the level of a top-tier domain, nor would another suffice, but such matters require gradual accumulation.

If there were no other domain foundations to devour, the growth of the Nine Provinces would not be too fast.

Number Nine said, "It's impossible. The current foundation of the Blood Refinement World has not been fully devoured; this will take at least hundreds of years to consume. Before the Blood Refinement World's foundation is fully devoured, I can't devour more."

You can only eat as much as your stomach can hold. You can't expect to become fat in a single bite. The speed at which the Nine Provinces could devour other world's foundations also had limits. It's not as if it could devour as it pleased.

So, even if the Nine Provinces could devour the foundation of that unknown domain, Number Nine wouldn't be able to do that yet; it must first digest the Blood Refinement World.

"Moreover, who knows what the situation is in that domain? If humans live there, it wouldn't be right to devour it thoughtlessly and destroy their home!"

Number Nine's core philosophy was simply twofold: to protect the Nine Provinces and the human race. Therefore, if the unknown domain was a human-inhabited one, Number Nine wouldn't destroy it under any circumstances.

Devouring the Blood Refinement World didn't pose any moral burden because it was the Blood Race's domain, and devouring its foundation wouldn't impact the survival of the humans within.

Currently, each big sect has established branch sects in the Blood Refinement World. Those with cultivation aptitude are sent to the Nine Provinces, while those without remain living in the Blood Refinement World, unimpeded, since the two domains are currently close enough, so that the cost of Teleportation is minimal.

"Senior Yang, since you've been to that domain, do you know what kind of situation is on the other side's domain?" Jian Guhong asked.

Outside the Nine Provinces, there are other domains. This was no longer news. Originally, the two domains were located in different positions in stellar space, unaffected by one another, minding their own business. But now, with such a Formation connecting the two domains, the Nine Provinces cannot afford to treat it lightly.

At the very least, we need to figure out the situation at that boundary domain, whether they are enemies or allies.

Yang Qing was disinclined to elaborate on the matter; he was still upset with the Nine Provinces. Offering a pointer was already at his limit, there was no way he could take care of everything for them. So he bluntly said, "If you want to know the situation, go and see for yourself."

As he said this, he lifted his hand, and the white rabbit in Lu Ye's arms involuntarily flew towards him. Once he grabbed its long ears, the next instant, Yang Qing, along with the white rabbit, vanished without a trace.

Leaving a group of Nine Provinces cultivators looking at each other.

The Formation was already activated, and the teleportation channel had been open all along. At this point, the crowd had two choices: one was to destroy the Formation, which would naturally close the teleportation channel; the other was to step inside and explore the truth.

Yet another choice lay before the Nine Provinces cultivators.

"Yueh Xin is undoubtedly a Sun Blaze Realm cultivator. We can't fathom how fast he is, but within a month, not only did he find a domain, but he also made arrangements. This assures us that, even if the opposing domain isn't incredibly close to the Nine Provinces, it certainly isn't far!" Jian Guhong spoke slowly, and everyone nodded in agreement. It was a logical deduction.

"So I think we should explore and see what's on the other side. Given that we're not too far apart, there might be interactions later on. Gathering more intelligence is always beneficial. Does anyone have any objections?"

No one had any objections; they were probably all thinking the same.

Even though the Nine Provinces cultivators had just advanced to the Constellation Realm and had set foot in stellar space, they were not afraid of problems. It made no sense to evade a problem that lay before them instead of solving it.

As Jian Guhong said, there might be interactions later. If they could be friends, it would be the best outcome, but if not, they needed to know themselves and their opponents.

"I have a question," Lu Ye spoke up, "Does the opposing domain have Heavenly Punishment!"

He was once bitten, twice shy. The second time he descended into the Blood Refinement World, he was nearly harmed by Heavenly Punishment. So when it came to infiltrating other domains, this was his primary concern.

Heavenly Punishment in a domain is not easy to withstand. Take the current Heavenly Punishment in the Nine Provinces. If a Constellation Realm enemy intrudes and is targeted by Heavenly Punishment, they'll die with no burial ground. Even a Moon Jade Realm would face tremendous pressure.

Only Sun Blaze Realm cultivators are immune to the Nine Provinces' Heavenly Punishment. This was the reason why Yueh Xin went into hiding when he descended.

Thus, the power of Heavenly Punishment is directly related to the world's level. It can easily annihilate cultivators of equal world level and suppress beings slightly higher than the current world level.

Lu Ye had talked to Number Nine about these matters, so he was naturally aware.

However, not every domain has Heavenly Punishment. It's related to the world's will. If the world's will is clear enough, there will surely be Heavenly Punishment; if not, there won't be any.

Essentially, the proportion of domains with Heavenly Punishment is small, about one or two out of ten.

"The Nine Provinces is not far from the opposing domain. If there were Constellation Realm on the other side, they would have discovered the Nine Provinces long ago. Thus, the other side is likely just a medium-sized domain, so if there is Heavenly Punishment, its power won't be too great. I'll go and check the situation. At the very worst, I can escape." Jian Guhong spoke, confident in his abilities.

The crowd didn't contest him. Having made a decision, there was no hesitation.

Under the watchful eyes of all, Jian Guhong darted towards the whirlpool at the center of the big array.

The others waited quietly, not particularly worried about his safety since what Jian Guhong said was logical; the other side was likely a medium-sized domain, and even with Heavenly Punishment, it wouldn't pose any fatal threat to him.

Lu Ye was secretly contacting Number Nine, "Does such teleportation significantly deplete the Nine Provinces' foundation?"

Teleportation, in such matters, consumes energy related directly to two factors: the distance and the cultivation level of the transporter.

Teleporting between domains undoubtedly covers a vast distance, and Jian Guhong, being a Constellation Realm cultivator, represents the most potent force of the Nine Provinces. Such a teleportation vividly demonstrates the issue of consumption.

"It shouldn't have much depletion, as it doesn't utilize the Heaven's Augury Pillar for teleportation. Although this Formation is arranged within the Nine Provinces, it actually consumes different power. Didn't Yang Qing just mention, Yueh Xin has left nodes arranged in stars between the two domains. These nodes not only serve as guides but also gather stellar space energy. He wants to enhance the Nine Provinces' foundation swiftly, so he won't do anything that would cause it to drain."

Lu Ye understood. Despite Yueh Xin's misfortune, his considerations were indeed thorough.