

Humanity 1241

Chapter 1241 - Jade-Eating Ants

Duu Lang once again vigilantly sensed the surroundings, making sure there was no presence of any living being, before descending to take a closer look. Hidden within the lush grass was a dark passageway.

His heart instantly relaxed, it seemed this place hadn't been discovered yet.

Judging this was easy, for if such a Spirit Jade Vein had truly been found, the entrance would certainly have some kind of camouflage, to avoid being noticed by others.

While not everyone was adept at the Array Path, capable of setting up camouflaging arrays, cultivators at the Divine Sea Realm still had some simple means of concealment.

Since there were no traces of concealment at the entrance, it indicated that this place had not been discovered.

This was undoubtedly good news for him, otherwise, he would have to contend with someone—an outcome he least wanted to face. As the saying goes, "the family knows its own affairs", his foundation might not be poor, but it still pales in comparison to those prodigies from top domains; encountering one might truly be a losing battle.

Casually, he strolled into the cave entrance, setting up a simple concealment to obscure the existence of the entrance, and continued to venture further down.

However, he hadn't traveled far before halting, his brow furrowing. He initially thought that no one had discovered this place but found upon entering that someone had already beaten him to it. Spirit force fluctuations emanated from ahead in the passage, someone was evidently mining Spirit Jade.

This was truly bad news!

Yet, upon closer sensing, his curiosity piqued. Judging by the spirit force fluctuations exuded by the other party, this person was merely at Divine Sea Level 8!

Was someone at Divine Sea Level 8 participating in the Divine Sea contention? Duu Lang couldn't believe it. Sensing more closely, the opponent was indeed only at Divine Sea Level 8!

This was truly strange. What domain's mighty figure would be so audacious to bring such a person to partake in this grand event? Was the domain they resided in truly lacking talents, or did this person possess some extraordinary capability?

But even if there was something exceptional about this person, the disparity in cultivation could not be ignored. Normal domains wouldn't let someone at Level 8 come here.

From this perspective, it's more likely that their domain lacks talents, much like his own!

The stellar space is vast, and domains are countless. Some, like the Nine Provinces, are in the throes of burgeoning growth, while others, like Duu Lang's domain, are on the path of decline, with spirit force withering.

Domains, like living beings, have a lifespan; it's just that, comparatively, the life span of a domain is immeasurably long, spanning tens or even hundreds of millions of years...

Upon this contemplation, Duu Lang couldn't help but feel a sense of camaraderie, being in the same plight. Perhaps there was no need for them to trouble each other?

The situation was neither good nor bad for him.

Someone had beaten him to it, but the other party was only at Divine Sea Level 8, leaving him with two choices: engage in a battle with the other party, where the winner stays and the loser dies, or leave him alone and go their separate ways.

Though there was only one passage leading into the vein, there were multiple branching tunnels inside. He only needed to choose another branch tunnel; as long as the other party harbored no ill intent, they wouldn't interfere with each other.

With this thought, Duu Lang made up his mind.

Not bothering to conceal his presence, he headed straight toward the direction of the stranger, yet keeping the necessary vigilance.

Unexpectedly, the other party seemed rather slow to react, only turning hurriedly to look at him when he neared.

The passage was dim, but it did not hinder the Divine Sea Realm's observation. Duu Lang saw a young man, roughly twenty-four or twenty-five years old, with a typical combat cultivator's attire.

"Young fellow, what's going on with you? People say men die for wealth, and birds die for food. Spirit Jades are good, but you shouldn't relax your vigilance."

In Duu Lang's eyes, this fellow looked like a greenhorn just stepping out into the world. Not even bothering to conceal the entrance was one thing, but for someone to walk in and him still being oblivious?

Lucky it was he who arrived; if it had been someone else, they could have cornered him here. Then he truly would have no one to call for, and would perhaps be doomed to perish here.

Of course, Duu Lang also considered whether the other party was nonchalant because of reliance, but even the prodigies from top-notch domains wouldn't act in such a way. Confidence and arrogance are completely different concepts.

Furthermore, the prodigies from top-tier domains wouldn't come to the Taichu Realm to collect Spirit Jades. Their home world produces Spirit Jades; why would they waste time here?

They might casually gather some spirit flowers and rare herbs unavailable elsewhere, but they definitely wouldn't put much effort into Spirit Jades.

Lu Ye nodded at the other party in acknowledgment: "I appreciate the advice, Fellow Daoist. I'm from a small place and haven't seen much of the world, often acting carelessly. Thank you for the pointers."

Duu Lang was very satisfied with his attitude, fearing only those who don't appreciate kind advice. Thus, it seemed this person wasn't difficult to get along with.

Cultivators from small places are generally easy to get along with, just like Duu Lang. Only those guys from the elite regions look down on everyone, as if they walk with their noses in the air.

"I've camouflaged the entrance a bit, so unless someone deliberately checks, they shouldn't find it. Since there's an opportunity in front of us now, let's cherish it well. Even if you can't get into the top hundred in the Divine Sea Contest, gaining some spirit jade isn't bad," Duu Lang said, turning to leave.

He had no intention of having a deep conversation with others. He just came to see Lu Ye, greet him, and inform him that he was also here to mine spirit jade. After this, they would go their separate ways, and they might never meet again, so there was no need for a deep friendship.

After a few steps, Duu Lang said again, "Oh, this place can only last for about twenty more days. When the Taichu Realm shrinks its boundaries for the third time, this location will be excluded."

Lu Ye understood immediately, as it aligned with what he had thought before. He didn't think he could stay there forever, so he nodded, "Thank you, Fellow Daoist, for informing me!"

Watching Duu Lang's departing back, Lu Ye's expression remained calm.

Duu Lang thought he acted carelessly, leaving the entrance uncovered. In fact, it was deliberate. If anyone thought they could ambush him there, they'd be in for a surprise.

Even if things turned dire, he could still escape through the Teleportation Array he had previously set up outside.

He certainly wouldn't let himself be trapped here.

Lu Ye noticed Duu Lang's presence as soon as he arrived, initially thinking he was here to cause trouble. However, Duu Lang had no intention of fighting.

Although he was a Level 9 cultivator and Lu Ye was a Level 8, Duu Lang did not attack first but instead offered a friendly reminder. Lu Ye was not one to confuse right with wrong.

In the Divine Sea Contest, getting rewards was indeed important for final ranking, but Lu Ye wasn't a person who killed indiscriminately. He didn't believe everyone he met should be slain; that was his principle for living, otherwise, he'd become nothing more than a callous walrus.

Quickly, Lu Ye sensed the flow of spirit force in a mining passageway nearby, clearly showing that the other party was mining spirit jade.

Lu Ye gave it some thought and walked over there.

He wanted to see how others mined spirit jade, hoping he could learn something to improve his efficiency.

Duu Lang noticed his arrival and cautiously watched him.

Lu Ye cupped his hands in salute: "I hope you don't mind, Fellow Daoist. It's my first time seeing a spirit jade vein, and I'm quite clumsy with mining, so I thought I'd come to learn."

Duu Lang understood his intention and laughed heartily: "To be honest, this is my first time seeing a spirit jade vein too. Mining spirit jade isn't about tricks; it's painstaking work. However, you can use some special methods. As you've seen, this is my preparation."

Lu Ye did see it. The spirit jade vein in front of Duu Lang was crawling with countless insects that looked like ants but had wings. They covered the vein, constantly making gnawing sounds.

Duu Lang explained: "These are jade-eating ants, used specifically for mining spirit jade. They eat away the binding substances between the jades but can't bite through the hard surface, making them perfect for this place."

Lu Ye understood. The man had come prepared, unlike him who discovered this place by chance and was mining for the first time, which was inevitably a bit rushed.

Watching closely, the sound of gnawing continued from the swarm of jade-eating ants, and soon some spirit jades loosened from the vein and fell away.

All Duu Lang needed to do was collect them.

Lu Ye was extremely envious of such mining efficiency compared to his own time-consuming efforts.

Seeing his expression, Duu Lang understood what Lu Ye was thinking. But since his main purpose in coming to the Taichu Realm was to mine spirit jade, he didn't feel like sharing, even if he understood Lu Ye's thoughts.

Besides, they had no real friendship, only this chance encounter here to recognize each other.

After observing for a while, Lu Ye cupped his fists: "Sorry for disturbing you, Fellow Daoist."

Envy is one thing, but he couldn't replicate it. He couldn't just watch here forever. He'd have to go back and mine slowly. Although his clumsy method was inefficient, it was still better than Jian Guhong and others searching in the stellar space. One shouldn't be greedy and never satisfied.

Seeing him leave looking somewhat forlorn, Duu Lang sighed and gritted his teeth: "Fellow Taoist, hold on. I'll give you some jade-eating ants to use."

All pitiful people; even with treasure mountains before them, they're powerless. Helping a bit costs nothing but some spirit jade, and according to his plan, the remaining time would be enough for him to mine the needed spirit jade, barring any unforeseen events.

With that, he went forward, used his technique to gather a batch of jade-eating ants, just about one-tenth of the total, and stored them in something similar to a spirit beast sack before tossing it to Lu Ye from a distance.

Chapter 1242 - Mining

Lu Ye raised his hand to catch it, feeling a bit surprised.

From the way the other person walked into the mine without planning to ambush him, openly revealing his presence and offering advice, Lu Ye realized that this person was not belligerent, had a good heart, and seemed not to care much about the Divine Sea struggle.

If it were another cultivator eager for the Divine Sea contest, they certainly wouldn't bother to greet him. Instead, they would conceal their aura and initiate a sneak attack, potentially securing a prize.

Especially considering his cultivation level, to any cultivator entering the Taichu Realm, he is indeed a temptation.

Now, he's even voluntarily offering jade-eating ants to him, which is essentially giving away spirit jade!

Of course, he didn't know that Duu Lang initially regarded him as someone similar to himself, feeling a sense of shared fate.

In such an environment, offering a helping hand to those with shared fate subconsciously evokes a hope that someone might extend a helping hand during one's own time of adversity, though Duu Lang hasn't realized this subtle mindset.

Lu Ye wasn't the type to be pretentious. The item that was given to him was precisely what he needed, so he had no reason to refuse. However, he still wanted to reciprocate, thinking for a moment and saying, "Thank you, Fellow Daoist. Consider this as a gift in return, and please don't refuse!"

He had a few treasures he could offer, one of which was the Void Beast Core obtained from the Insect Race Tree World, but this wasn't suitable for showing due to its ties to the Insect Emperor World. Giving it away could be misinterpreted as preparing for a funeral.

Additionally, there were two short maces from the Loathesome Aphid and the treasure fan from the fat magic cultivator, both spoils from enemy confrontations with decent quality, probably worth some spirit jade if sold.

Lu Ye chose to offer the treasure fan.

He wanted to keep the short maces for later forging of the Boulder Mountain Saber, and the treasure fan was more suited for a magic cultivator, not something he would use. He certainly wouldn't pretend to be a magic cultivator.

With a slight spirit force push, the treasure fan floated towards Duu Lang.

Duu Lang caught it casually, chuckling, thinking Lu Ye was quite a character. As with cultivators from small places like them, there's often a common trait: strong self-respect despite being friendly, leading them to reciprocate when accepting kindness from others.

He wasn't particularly worried. What could a Divine Sea Level 8 cultivator possibly offer?

However, upon closer inspection, he was surprised to find that the quality of the treasure fan was exceptional, suitable for both Divine Sea and Constellation Realm cultivators.

Such an item, if sold lightly, could fetch a considerable amount of spirit jade. As for the exact price, Duu Lang wasn't sure. He was only a Divine Sea cultivator and hadn't ventured into stellar space, so understanding stellar market prices was beyond him.

A perplexing thought flashed across his mind.

Why does a combat cultivator possess an item evidently meant for magic cultivators?

Lu Ye returned to his own pathway with the bag of jade-eating ants, releasing them without needing control. The ants quickly spread over the abundant spirit jade, the sounds of their munching were delightfully pleasant.

Lu Ye didn't idle aimlessly. The ants were fewer in number, meaning the yield of spirit jade would be limited over the twenty or so days available, thus he couldn't waste time. As the jade-eating ants helped gather spirit jade, he continued actively collecting it with his previous methods.

Time passed within the spirit jade vein, two diverging paths, two cultivators from different domains busily attending their own matters, without interfering.

During the excavation, Lu Ye gradually discovered something special.

Among the spirit jade in this mine, something similar yet distinct from spirit jade was present, with deeper hue and more solid texture, containing noticeably richer and purer energy.

Even though Lu Ye had never encountered this before, he recognized what it was.

Spirit Crystal!

Spirit Stone's range includes upper, middle, and lower grades. Spirit jade is ungraded, but above spirit jade lies something superior—spirit crystals, which are more valuable but scarce, almost never seen in stellar space.

The collected spirit jade by Jian Guhong and others totaled nearly ten thousand pieces, but only a few spirit crystals were found, all by chance.

Since this place is a spirit jade vein, the emergence of spirit crystals is expected, and their proportion isn't trivial—an unexpected bounty.

Days swept by again, and while Lu Ye was mining spirit jade, he suddenly felt a perception shift, followed by a resounding hum as if muffled thunder roamed the skies.

In the next moment, Lu Ye sensed a faint force of repulsion from a certain direction.

He realized—this was the shrinking range of the Taichu Realm. Calculating the time, today marked the tenth day since its opening.

If the Taichu Realm were seen as a vast circle, its covered area would gradually shrink with time, eventually confining to a territory roughly a thousand miles in radius—the final grounds for the ultimate confrontation of the remaining domain prodigies.

The intervals of range reduction seem to occur every ten days.

The reason for feeling a slight repulsion is due to the shrinking boundaries. Following the direction of the repulsive force leads toward the center.

Currently, this slight repulsive force is very weak because the shrinking boundaries haven't enveloped the area where this Spirit Jade Vein is located. Once the shrinking boundaries cover this place, the repulsion will become immense, and cultivators won't be able to stay, being pushed forward instead.

Therefore, the area where this Spirit Jade Vein is will be the region covered by the third-time shrinking boundaries of the Taichu Realm!

This was also why Duu Lang previously reminded Lu Ye about only being able to stay here for twenty days or so.

The boundaries have shrunk partially, so the cultivators are naturally more concentrated. However, the area still active in the Taichu Realm is quite large, just slightly better than before.

The doppelganger wandering outside finally made a new discovery two days after the first boundary shrinkage in the Taichu Realm.

Following the sounds of battle, he quickly saw two figures entangled together: a horned Demon Race and a human physique cultivator with vigorous blood Qi, engaged in a fierce battle with a grand scene.

It was apparent that these two had already ignited true fire, adopting a life-and-death stance. Due to their fighting style, every punch connected fiercely and intensely.

The doppelganger concealed his presence and aura, silently observing from the sidelines. But the more he watched, the more he felt something was amiss, as their battlefield rapidly shifted toward his hiding spot.

Had he been exposed?

Lu Ye couldn't understand how he got revealed, since his concealment skills were quite profound, being almost impossible to detect in the Nine Provinces. Yet these prodigious beings from different domains had unexpected abilities beyond common sense.

Lu Ye didn't know who discovered his trail, but now these two evenly matched beings have apparently reached a consensus—to first deal with the sneaky spectator!

This explained why their battlefield subtly shifted toward him.

Being decisive by nature, once knowing he was exposed, there was no need to hide. The sword gourd vibrated, and a torrent of Sword Qi turned into a long river rushing toward the duo.

The physique cultivator and the Demon Race didn't expect Lu Ye to be so bold, but at this point, retreat was not an option. With mutual understanding, they split apart and each mobilized their power, rushing out of the sword stream from the left and right to attack the doppelganger.

At the first exchange, Lu Ye realized these two had substantial foundations. No ordinary Divine Sea Realm could easily break through his sword stream blockade. While partly due to their tough skin, it also showcased their strength.

One-on-one, the doppelganger had confidence in taking down either one.

However, one-on-two proved a bit troublesome. Even unleashing the Blood River might not resolve the battle quickly. The doppelganger, not being the main body, couldn't compare to those Insect Race bodyguards in the hive.

Each of these two was a top-tier Divine Sea Realm from their respective domains.

Of course, the level of cooperation these two, who were just in a life-and-death fight, might achieve together was uncertain. They would certainly guard against each other.

Realizing the troublesome nature of these two, the doppelganger turned and fled.

The physique cultivator and the Demon Race pursued relentlessly, with three figures—one in front, two behind—swiftly traversing the air.

During the pursuit, even as the physique cultivator and Demon Race continually deflected the Sword Qi's harassment, their speed showed no delay at all.

Just when the Demon Race, making a booming show, blocked numerous Sword Qi, a peculiar energy surge suddenly appeared from behind, followed by a formidable aura.

Startled, the Demon Race turned to find an additional figure behind, whose face was eerily similar to the escapee ahead but with a different outfit.

The fugitive was evidently a sword cultivator, but this sudden appearance was a combat cultivator!

They both shared the same cultivation, only at Divine Sea Level 8.

Twins? The Demon Race was confused, but it shouldn't be. Generally, major domains would only have one spot in the Taichu Realm, with two or three spots reserved for top domains. But why would a top domain allow a Divine Sea Level 8 to participate?

No time for more contemplation, as the combat cultivator suddenly appeared, wielding a long saber with Sharpness, cleaving down fiercely.

The Demon Race raised its arms, blood Qi surging for protection!

This slash caused the Demon Race's body to dip sharply but was otherwise unharmed, highlighting its robust defense.

Lu Ye was dissatisfied, thinking that if Lü Yingying were released to bless him, this slash might have achieved something. Even if merely scratching the skin, the Soul Severing Saber's power could have blossomed.

However, without Lü Yingying's blessing aid, relying solely on his Sharpness spirit runes, the performance was disappointing.

The opponents in the Taichu Realm were, after all, not ordinary Divine Sea Realm.

Chapter 1243 - Did Someone Break In?

Lu Ye felt that his slash was just satisfactory, yet the physique cultivator was extremely shocked, for the violent force transmitted from the opponent's long blade left him feeling inadequate.

What kind of combat cultivator is this? It's not wrong to say he is a physique cultivator.

He was even more astounded when, as the combat cultivator slashed down, a burst of blood light erupted behind him, rolling like rivers in reverse, sweeping towards him!

For a moment, the physique cultivator couldn't figure out what kind of path this guy was on.

Judging by the attire, he was definitely a combat cultivator, but from the force, he had the essence of a physique cultivator, and from the blood light, it was obviously a Blood Technique, with traces of a magic cultivator...

A combination of combat, physique, and magic cultivation? What kind of freak is this?

When the physique cultivator was ambushed, the Demon Race noticed but didn't care because they were competitors anyway, and who would mind the life and death of another? It wasn't him being ambushed, so he just focused on chasing the escaping figure ahead.

However, the sword cultivator unexpectedly didn't run, not only did he not run, but he turned around, holding a longsword in his hand from nowhere, flying straight towards him.

A sword cultivator not using a flying sword, but daring to engage in close combat? What kind of sword cultivator is this?

The Demon Race uttered a cow's moo, and as the blood Qi surged, his body seemed to inflate a circle, ready to teach the sword cultivator a lesson, but then the blood light behind the opponent suddenly intensified and spread out.

From afar, one could see Lu Ye and his doppelganger standing on either side, enclosing the physique cultivator and the Demon Race between them, each urging the Blood Sea Technique. The vast scale of the blood red quickly enveloped and spread towards the center.

In an instant, a huge Blood Orb appeared in the sky, and the four figures all disappeared simultaneously.

The Demon Race enveloped within was utterly unafraid, charging forward with his head down, the horns on both sides of his head flickering with inexplicable light, conveying the momentum that he would even smash a mountain if it stood in his way.

This was a unique combat technique of his, not just a simple charge. During the charge, his blood Qi and spirit force vibrated in a very regular way, sending a huge dragging force to a fan-shaped area ahead. If the enemy was in this area, they would be trapped as if in a quagmire, and delaying even half a breath would be enough to pierce them through.

However, there was a drawback to using this move; one had to open up some distance. During the earlier battle with the physique cultivator, there was simply no opportunity, but now he could set an example with this oblivious sword cultivator.

The collision was indeed earth-shattering, and even the thick power of the Blood Sea couldn't stop him in the slightest. Yet he was stunned because he hit nothing; his Mental Consciousness had clearly locked onto the sword cultivator charging towards him, but the opponent suddenly vanished inexplicably.

From behind came the sounds of fierce fighting, mixed with the angry shouts of the physique cultivator.

The expression of the Demon Race darkened. He immediately realized where the sword cultivator had gone, obviously teaming with the ambusher to deal with the physique cultivator.

Even though he was of the Demon Race, he knew this Blood Sea was not a place to linger. So after a slight hesitation, he continued to charge forward without looking back.

That physique cultivator might be in grave danger, but while the opponent was tangled, he could completely escape without a trace.

This sword cultivator and ambusher emerged from nowhere, cooperating intimately, and the Divine Sea Level 8 cultivation was very deceptive. Now it seemed clear that they must have some ability to have reached the Taichu Realm; anyone encountered here could not simply be evaluated based on cultivation level for strength and weakness.

He hadn't thought of turning to rescue the physique cultivator, neither having the heart nor the necessity, being competitors after all, and even if saved, the other wouldn't be grateful.

He thought the physique cultivator could buy a lot of time, knowing the other's strength from their earlier exchange.

Yet he had only run a few steps, and the physique cultivator's angry roar turned into a scream, each scream more piercing than the last, as if undergoing inhuman torture.

The Demon Race was terrified!

He didn't know what the situation was behind him, but given the physique cultivator's strength, which was on par with his own, things were going badly, and it hadn't been long. From when the opponent's Blood Sea unfurled, only two or three breaths in total. In other words, if he had been the target, wouldn't he face the same fate?

He indeed needed to leave here quickly!

The viscosity and restraints of the Blood Sea did not affect him much, yet after plowing blindly forward for a long time, he still couldn't break through the coverage of the Blood Sea.

If such a situation occurred, it meant either the Blood Sea's coverage was much larger than he imagined, or the opponents used techniques to affect his perception, causing directional errors. So he felt he was charging forward while actually turning circles within the Blood Sea!

Yet, how far could a blood technique from a Divine Sea Level 8 extend?

On the other hand, claiming the opponent's technique affected his perception seemed unlikely, as blood techniques were not known to have such mysterious abilities!

He thought correctly, Lu Ye's Blood Sea Technique indeed didn't affect perception, but the Formation could achieve that.

The coverage of the Blood Sea Technique was merely an external manifestation of the fusion and extension of his blood Qi and spirit force.

Therefore, he could construct Void Spirit Runes anywhere in the Blood Sea, achieving short-distance teleportation for himself and his doppelganger.

Since he could construct Void Spirit Runes, naturally, he could construct other spirit runes, and do an array setup based on the Blood Sea!

This idea just came into being recently, and it's the first time Lu Ye tried to apply it. As for the effect... not bad.

The demon bull foolishly charged forward, thinking it could rush out of the blood sea in one go, but actually fell into an illusion array, dizzy and unaware.

This method can only deal with a demon race. If faced with a human race magic cultivator or other races skilled in magic and spells, they could easily spot some flaws and counter the attack. After all, setting up

an array in the blood sea has the disadvantage of instability because there is no solid foundation for any formation.

The advantage, however, is that it can be repaired and adjusted at any time.

So, everything has its pros and cons, depending on the angle you view it from.

The demon bull may appear foolish, but its potential is evident. It won't take long before it realizes something is amiss, then it will be difficult to trap it.

However, there's no need to deceive it for too long...

The demon bull indeed quickly noticed some clues. As its eyes closed and then opened, a flash of brilliance appeared in its pupils, quickly discerning red lines around its surrounding blood sea more intense than the surrounding blood Qi, interconnecting in what was clearly an elaborate big array!

There is a rumor on earth that the cow's eyes can see things that ordinary people can't. If a mortal's eyes are smeared with cow tears, they will also temporarily possess such ability.

Many mortal rumors are groundless, but some have a factual basis.

This demon bull's race clearly possesses some extraordinary pupillary power.

Having seen clearly, breaking it becomes simple. The demon bull, with towering rage and surging demonic power, set out to destroy the formation trapping it, yet the moment its thought moved, it felt a chill in its heart.

Because it distinctly sensed that the aura of the physique cultivator in the blood sea had disappeared!

The next instant, two sharp auras attacked it from both sides.

It was horrified. How long has it been? Was it even ten breaths time? A physique cultivator, whose strength matched its own, was slain? Even with the inconvenience of the blood sea, it shouldn't perish so quickly.

The strength of the latter attacker, how strong precisely is it?

The physique cultivator persisted not even ten breaths; how long can I withstand?

Daring not to hesitate, it immediately broke out of the array, fleeing forward. Taking the previous example to heart, it doesn't want to follow in the physique cultivator's footsteps. If it wants to survive now, it must quickly escape the blood sea!

Before coming here, its elders warned it not to underestimate others just because it excels in its home domain; many in other domains are much stronger, and each race typically possesses its unique abilities.

It remembered this warning, but upon entering the Taichu realm and encountering several opponents, this caution gradually faded because it found most of its opponents were inferior, with only the previous physique cultivator matched in strength.

So... are the elders from other domains also advising their young to beware, perhaps it belongs to the stronger group?

Previously, it was quite proud.

Yet this pride turned into a bubble now, leaving only panic.

At the edge of the enormous blood orb in the sky, a head with bull horns emerged, the joy on its face not ready to spread, turned into terror, and then it uncontrollably shrank its head back as if someone pulled it from behind.

The blood orb shrank rapidly, becoming more condensed, internal strife noises came forth.

But soon it quieted down.

When the blood orb dispersed, only the doppelganger Li Taibai's figure remained at the spot, with the true body already gone, even the corpses of two slain cultivators within were obliterated.

The doppelganger swiftly flew toward the distance, found a place to rest briefly, and prepared to continue wandering.

Lu Ye, on the other hand, returned to the Spirit Jade Vein through the teleportation array previously set.

His comings and goings inherently trigger some spirit force fluctuations, possibly making the neighboring Fellow Daoist suspicious, but he had been consistently utilizing spirit force to gather spirit jade during this period, so unless one is particularly attentive, they might not notice the situation on his side.

After all, his departure wasn't too lengthy.

Upon returning, Lu Ye immediately sensed fierce spirit force fluctuations from the adjacent mine tunnel.

Is it... someone infiltrating?

But Lu Ye quickly realized something was wrong, because within his mental consciousness, there was no sign of anyone else, only that Fellow Daoist remained.

Not knowing what the other party was up to with such fervent activity, curiosity piqued, Lu Ye decided to head over to investigate.

Chapter 1244 - Duu Lang's Dilemma

Lu Ye suppressed his aura and rushed to the adjacent mine tunnel. He saw that the Fellow Daoist was brimming with spirit force, chasing a shimmering light orb in a small area, jumping up and down.

The light orb seemed to have no signs of life, yet its speed was unbelievably fast. Despite the man's quick movements, he couldn't catch it.

The light orb repeatedly attempted to break through in the direction of the Spirit Jade Vein but was intercepted each time.

After observing for a moment, Lu Ye understood that an array had been set up here. However, the person who set it up wasn't too skilled, leaving some errors, and the flawed position was in the direction of the Spirit Jade Vein.

This was also why the light orb tried to break through in this direction; it evidently sensed that this was the gateway to escape.

After observing a while longer, Lu Ye realized that relying on this Fellow Daoist's methods, capturing this light orb would be difficult. Continuing like this, if not careful, the light orb might break free from the array's coverage, and then it would surely escape.

With a thought, his form dashed forward, and before he arrived, several array banners were already thrown out.

They landed instantly at the flawed parts of the array, with spirit force surging around and spreading in all directions.

Brother Duu wasn't too surprised to see him arrive. After all, they were not far apart, and any commotion here would easily be sensed by Lu Ye.

Seeing Lu Ye's actions, he immediately understood his intentions and promptly activated his spirit force to link with his own array setup.

Without any verbal communication, they weren't even familiar with each other, yet there was a certain level of tacit understanding formed.

Lu Ye gained control over Brother Duu's not-so-perfect array and complemented it with his own array banners placed earlier, along with his setup adjustments. The array quickly became more complete and gained a certain binding effect.

When he activated the power of the array, an invisible and intangible binding force descended from the sky, and the rapidly moving light orb noticeably slowed down.

Brother Duu was overjoyed, hurriedly advanced, and opened a bag he was holding, quickly enveloping the light orb and sealing the bag with delight.

Lu Ye simultaneously dissipated the big array's power, withdrew from its control center, and raised his hand to reclaim his array banners.

Brother Duu laughed heartily, "Thank you, Brother Lu. Without your help, it might have really escaped this time."

Feeling grateful, he thought, indeed, being kind to others is being kind to oneself. Last time he shared some jade-eating ants with Lu Ye, and in just a few days, Lu Ye returned the favor tenfold with his assistance. This gain far exceeded the spirit jade they could collect with the ants.

Lu Ye nodded slightly without asking further questions, turning and returning to his tunnel to continue being a miner.

With each passing day, within the Spirit Jade Vein, the two worked independently, striving to mine spirit jade.

The doppelganger continued to wander outside, but even with the Taichu Realm having shrunk once, finding something amidst the search was not easy. Moreover, because the doppelganger and the main body couldn't be too far apart, they had to stay within the teleportation range to ensure the main body's timely support. This undoubtedly greatly limited the range the doppelganger could operate.

So, there was basically no gain.

Another ten days passed, and the heavens again resonated with a humming sound. At the same time, Lu Ye felt a substantial increase in the repulsion force coming from a certain direction.

Moreover, this repulsion force was growing increasingly stronger over time.

So he knew that he couldn't stay here much longer. The changes in the Taichu Realm were urging the cultivators within this range to converge inward. When the repulsion force reached a certain level, they would have no choice but to leave.

Lu Ye decided to leave here the day before the Taichu Realm shrank for the third time.

A few days later, Brother Duu came over from his mine with a few jugs of wine.

He came to express his gratitude. Previously, Lu Ye had lent him a helping hand, but he hadn't shown much appreciation. At the time, they were both immersed in the joy of mining spirit jade and couldn't afford to waste too much time.

Now, with time running out and enough gains obtained, he was completely relaxed.

With such a display of generosity, Lu Ye naturally couldn't refuse, so he joined him for some drinks and casual conversation.

It was only then that they exchanged names.

In their leisure talk, Lu Ye learned that Brother Duu hailed from a domain called Red Sky Continent. Unlike the rejuvenated Nine Provinces, the Red Sky Continent had started to decline a thousand years ago.

The most obvious change was the depletion of the world's essence. Originally, although not a top-tier domain, Red Sky Continent was a rather good large domain, with many Constellation Realm cultivators emerging at regular intervals. However, since a thousand years ago, the number of Constellation Realm cultivators the Red Sky Continent could produce dwindled, and in the last century, there were hardly any.

This was a result of the world essence depletion and gradual level decline.

According to Yang Qing, when a domain's essence is sufficiently strong, Heaven and Earth's Will will instinctively respond to the cultivators' desire for ascension, thus creating spirit light from the heavens, enabling Divine Sea Realm cultivators to connect with stellar space and advance to Constellation.

Of course, in the Nine Provinces, Number Nine consciously does this proactively.

But if the world's level declines, then Heaven and Earth's Will will instinctively protect itself, making it difficult to satisfy the cultivators' desires.

Because every ounce of power that can allow a cultivator to ascend to the Constellation Realm consumes a significant amount of the world's essence.

It is foreseeable that if this situation continues, in a few years, the Red Sky Continent might fall to the level of the previous Nine Provinces and become increasingly frail.

Therefore, the Red Sky Continent urgently needs a considerable amount of spirit jade, as the experts of the Red Sky Continent hope to slow down the aging of their home world by dispersing the energy from spirit jade.

This is just a concept, and no one knows if it will work, but it must be tried.

Currently, there are not many cultivators above the Constellation Realm in the Red Sky Continent, even if they search for spirit jade in the stellar space, their findings are limited.

So Duu Lang wants to contribute his part! Luckily, he has an ancestral map of the home world, and after entering the Taichu Realm, he has been searching for this Spirit Jade Vein, and the results... are naturally not bad.

Especially the other day when Lu Ye helped him capture that cluster of spirit light, he was not sure if the dispersal of the spirit jade's energy could slow down the aging of the home world, but according to the elders, the spirit light definitely can, although it is extremely rare and hard to find.

So in a sense, Lu Ye's actions back then helped him a lot.

"So Brother Duu is not going to participate in the upcoming Divine Sea Contest?" Lu Ye realized.

Duu Lang's main purpose for coming here was to mine spirit jade; now that he has reaped some harvest, the rest is irrelevant.

Duu Lang smiled: "I would like to participate, but the risk is too great, to be honest, I have some confidence in my own strength, but compared to those top domain guys, there is still a gap, the Divine Sea Contest is too perilous, if I accidentally fall, then this month's efforts would be in vain, it's not that I, Duu Lang, am afraid of death."

Lu Ye nodded in understanding.

He suddenly understood why the other party didn't strike when they first met because his goal wasn't the Divine Sea Contest, so whether to kill or not didn't affect him.

After all, this Spirit Jade Vein is so large, whether one person mines it or two, even if more people come, it won't affect his gains.

Of course, this may also have something to do with his character; from the few encounters, Duu Lang seems decent and not someone who bullies the weak, even willing to share his jade-eating ants.

"My situation is special, Brother Lu, you don't have to take me as the standard; if you think you have a chance, you should fight, though your cultivation... is indeed a weakness, if revealed, it could easily make you a target."

Everyone knows that soft targets are the ones to pick on, and with Level 8 cultivation standing out in this place, I'm afraid every living thing wants to try and squeeze it.

Duu Lang did not persuade Lu Ye further, as in cultivation, it is taboo to speak deeply with an acquaintance; they are both in the Divine Sea Realm, so they are clear about what they want to do, and Lu Ye dared to come here with Level 8 cultivation, he must have some backing, taking care of his own people should be sufficient, there's no need to worry about others.

The time for the third contraction of the Taichu Realm is approaching, the most noticeable effect is the increasing repulsive force, so strong that cultivators have to stimulate their spirit force to resist, or else they will be pushed away.

Lu Ye stood up: "Brother Duu, I should be on my way."

Duu Lang nodded, cupping his fists: "Then I wish you a smooth journey and success in your endeavors."

"Thanks for the good wishes!" Lu Ye turned his head to look aside: "These jade-eating ants..."

Duu Lang waved his hand: "Since they were given to you, there's no reason to take them back. They're not hard to raise, just feed them Spirit Stones."

There are still many jade-eating ants over on the Red Sky Continent; if he needs more, he can get some upon return, but Lu Ye doesn't have that convenience.

Lu Ye thanked him, moved to the side, collected the jade-eating ants, along with the Spirit Jade they mined, and then dashed out.

There's no need to deliberately determine a direction; just follow the repulsive force, as the doppelganger has already set off earlier.

In the pitch-black mine tunnel, only Duu Lang was left to drown his sorrows with wine.

Once every hundred years, a grand opportunity of the Divine Sea Realm, what a fortune to participate in, yet unable to persist to the end due to certain special reasons, for someone like him, it must be a significant regret.

Missing this event means no next time in this lifetime.

Though he spoke casually with Lu Ye, only he knows his inner bitterness.

On one side is his own opportunity, on the other, a possibility concerning the future of the home world; even though he had already made up his mind, at this critical moment, he couldn't help but waver.

Chapter 1245 - That Shouldn't Be Possible

Lu Ye had already left, and in the mine tunnel, Duu Lang was left alone.

Only after a long while did a hint of determination emerge on his face as he softly murmured, "I withdraw!"

As he finished speaking, a gentle power arose out of thin air, enveloping him. This power was like a gentle breeze, swirling around him, and as it swirled, the space he was in began to distort.

It took a full dozen breaths before his figure disappeared.

In the end, he didn't dare to take the risk. Compared to his own opportunities, the future of the home domain was far more important. Even though no one knew whether the plan could succeed, it still had to be tried.

Almost simultaneously with Duu Lang's disappearance, a massive repulsive force surged from afar, quickly spreading throughout the Taichu Realm.

The first month of the Divine Sea contest had passed!

Exiting the Taichu Realm, Duu Lang immediately appeared on the previous enormous platform. An elder with snow-white hair saw him return safely and couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. Although he knew Duu Lang would likely return with some gains at this time, he couldn't resist asking, "How did it go?"

Duu Lang responded solemnly, "Mission accomplished!"

The elder was greatly relieved, nodding continuously, "Good, good, good!" He then showed a look of apology, "It must have been tough on you..."

Duu Lang shook his head, "The ancestral land gave birth to me and raised me, the sect taught and nurtured me. In this time of the ancestral land's rise and decline, it is my honor as a disciple to contribute."

The elder was more than gratified, "It's best that you think this way, let's go."

The purpose of bringing Duu Lang here was achieved, so there was no need to stay longer. The wonders of other domains were ultimately just that of others. The most outstanding Divine Sea Realm of this generation on the Red Sky Continent forsook his own opportunities for the future of the ancestral land. Whether it would be a blessing or a curse was yet to be known, but staying here would only disturb the mind unnecessarily.

Duu Lang followed the elder out, but in the end, couldn't help but look back at the direction of the Taichu Realm's portal.

The portal always existed, with two huge pillars standing on each side. On the left pillar, there were almost but not quite two thousand names, while the right one had a hundred.

Compared to the beginning of the Divine Sea contest, the names on the two pillars had decreased by about five hundred. Most of these people had died in the Taichu Realm, with only a quite lucky few managing to walk out alive.

Now, with a month passed, the list of the current top hundred rankings was freshly announced.

Duu Lang couldn't help but be stunned for a moment, his body halted!

The elder noticed and looked back, "What's wrong?"

Duu Lang looked astonished, "I see a friend's name."

The elder, upon hearing this, smiled, "Oh? You have friends in there?"

Duu Lang wasn't sure if they counted as friends, maybe they did. Even though they hadn't known each other for a full month, they had assisted each other during this time and even shared drinks at the end, which could be considered a friendship.

"Is that person on the right pillar?" the elder asked. Merely seeing a friend's name wouldn't evoke such a significant reaction from Duu Lang; it must be because the name appeared on the right pillar that moved him so.

Duu Lang nodded.

"Which one? What rank?" the elder became interested. To be temporarily listed on the right pillar doesn't mean they'll always stay there, but it does show those people have the capital to vie for opportunities, and being currently on the right pillar means they already have gains in hand.

Monstrous talents from various domains compete, and having achieved gains at the current stage indicates a strong foundation, surpassing most others.

Such a person, if they manage to survive, is worth befriending.

"The one ranked eleventh!" Duu Lang stared intently at the right pillar of the portal, at the line of golden characters in the eleventh position.

Nine Heavens World, Lu Yiye!

This time, it was the elder's turn to be shocked, "Him?"

It shouldn't be. If remembered correctly, this person was only at Divine Sea Level 8 cultivation, even if possessing some skills and qualifying to participate in the Divine Sea contest, he shouldn't have achieved such a high rank at this stage!

When the Taichu Realm's portal opened previously, Lu Ye departed relatively late, so many powerful individuals noted his cultivation and remembered Lu Yiye of Nine Heavens. The elder was among those, thinking at the time that this young fellow from the Nine Heavens World was likely in for a grim fate, unlikely to last long.

But now it seemed he had been mistaken?

Duu Lang was also incredulous, "It shouldn't be!"

When he encountered Lu Ye, Lu Ye was already mining spirit jade in that cave. For more than twenty days thereafter, the two were almost inseparable, and no battles broke out. So, what is this ranking all about?

There can't be a case of duplicate names; even with the same name, the domains of origin are different. So he can be completely sure that the one ranked eleventh is Lu Yiye, whom he met in the spirit jade vein.

Could it be that before meeting him, Lu Yiye had already killed many people? So even though he gained nothing in the more than twenty days that followed, he could still be ranked eleventh?

While the old and the young from Red Sky Continent were astonished here, a great uproar erupted on the platform.

Almost every strong cultivator's gaze was drawn to the presence of Lu Yiye of Nine Heavens, each finding it unbelievable, inconceivable.

At the time, many were focused on Lu Ye's cultivation. Even if they weren't paying attention before, the act of Yang Qing throwing the Dragon Ball into the treasure pond afterward also drew attention to him.

It could be said that focusing on this place, even those monstrous talents from top realms weren't as eye-catching as Lu Ye, because everyone wanted to know when he would die. If he died, then Yang Qing would not be able to retrieve the Dragon Ball from the treasure pond.

How could the top realms not be thinking about such a nine-star valuable treasure? With inadequate preparation for this journey, no matter whether Yang Qing wins or loses, no one can take the Dragon Ball away.

But the next century presents a chance; when those top realms are ready with their stakes, that's when they can fish the Dragon Ball out from the treasure pond.

So all along, there have been many strong cultivators watching the changes in Lu Ye's name.

If he died inside or voluntarily withdrew, his name would disappear from the left column.

Now, his name has indeed disappeared from the left column, but it has appeared on the right, temporarily ranked eleventh!

This is simply unbelievable!

Looking again at the hundred people on the right column, the top sixty positions are almost entirely taken up by those from top realms. Lu Ye's name is the only one among them not from a top realm, resembling a lamb among a pack of hungry wolves.

It's only after the sixtieth place that some cultivators not from top realms begin to appear. From this point alone, it shows the profound differences in background between cultivators from different domains. If it were just an isolated case, it wouldn't mean much, but when a large group emerges, the differences brought by domain origin become evident.

The fact that Lu Yiye of Nine Heavens is temporarily ranked eleventh is indisputable. The many strong cultivators are now curious about just one question: how much has he harvested in the Taichu Realm over this month?

In a month, less than five hundred Divine Sea Realm participants have been eliminated. To achieve the eleventh rank at this stage, one should have at least five or six harvests on hand.

This is very remarkable.

Although the top one hundred ranked currently might not necessarily make it to the end, especially those leading the ranks who will surely face more targeting, according to the patterns of past God Sea Struggles, with such a harvest now, he just needs to find a place to hide for the remaining time, and by the end of the three-month period, he will likely have a safe victory.

No wonder that strong cultivator dared to wager such a valuable treasure; clearly, they have immense confidence in their own junior.

Somewhere on the platform, a few strong cultivators born from top domains gathered together. They too had participated in the God Sea Struggle, but that was many years ago, and they were very familiar with its ins and outs.

Lu Ye's ranking surprised them, but it was just surprise, nothing more. Watching from the outside, none knew what happened inside. Regardless of Lu Ye's current rank, it appeared to them as having an element of luck.

They were more concerned about another group of existences.

An elder with a Dao Bone appearance spoke: "Indeed, the Blood Race is on the move. Those ranked between seventy and ninety are almost all their people."

A beefy guy sneered: "When have the Blood Race not taken action? Even if they originate from different domains, sharing a common source means they have special communication methods, making it easy to gather together. Naturally, they appear large and powerful in the early stages of the God Sea Struggle."

"Unfortunately, we humans can't emulate this communication method; otherwise, we could certainly target them!"

"That's a bloodline ability; how could the human race imitate it? Not to mention their bloodline abilities, even ordinary communication methods are greatly diminished in an environment like the Taichu Realm."

Before, they had thought about gathering manpower to eliminate Blood Race cultivators entering the realm early, but in the Taichu Realm, ordinary communication methods are less effective, making it challenging to gather manpower. The Blood Race is different; relying on their bloodline's unique abilities, they can easily clump together, sweeping through and establishing a significant advantage in the early God Sea Struggle stages.

Once this advantage is established, it's hard to erase.

So every time the God Sea Struggle concludes, the Blood Race occupies a significant portion of the victorious seats, which is the most daunting group of opponents for the human race from various top domains.

Even those cultivators from top domains, once surrounded by the Blood Race in the early stages, rarely escape unscathed. No matter how deep their roots, they cannot triumph over sheer numbers.

However, the Blood Race's method also has its drawbacks, with too many people gathered initially, making harvest distribution problematic, hence leading to generally low rankings.

But right now is the best time for these Blood Race cultivators to increase their ranks, as a large number of cultivators are driven by the Taichu Realm's rules to converge toward the center. They just need to sweep and intercept en route to easily gain rewards.

Chapter 1246 - Ambushed

The current time is the best opportunity since as time moves forward, cultivators participating in the Divine Sea competition will gather even more densely, making it easy to form small groups. At that time, the numerical advantage of the Blood Race will be impossible to showcase.

Right now, it's different. Initially, many people linger on the outskirts of the Taichu Realm, but as time passes and rules push them, they have to move towards the center, giving the Blood Race an opportunity to intercept and kill.

They don't need to kill many, an average of four or five per person, and then act collectively, and their spot is basically secured.

So this period is the prime time for the Blood Race to exert their efforts.

The strong individuals from different domains of the Blood Race are now gathered together, watching the changes in names on the pillar to the right of the portal, each with a gratified expression.

From this moment on, until the next few days, is the period with the most frequent changes in the top hundred rankings on the list. Many temporarily listed in the top hundred will disappear, and many names will appear. Even if they don't disappear, their rankings on the list will fluctuate frequently, presenting a scene of passing the stage baton.

In the Taichu Realm, Lu Ye is engaged in fierce combat with someone.

After parting ways with Duu Lang, he continued forward. Even though it was his first time participating in such a grand event, unaware of the intricacies, he knew that this journey would likely not be peaceful because everyone is moving towards the inside. Moreover, as the range of activity in the Taichu Realm narrows, it becomes easy to encounter others.

Once encountered, it's useless to speak of racial distinctions. Even among the human race, there will be no peace, and in the eyes of any cultivator, his cultivation of Divine Sea Level 8 is a huge temptation.

As expected, midway through his journey, he was intercepted.

A robust physique cultivator and a magic cultivator with exquisite spell skills worked seamlessly together. The physique cultivator entangled Lu Ye closely like a leech that one couldn't shake off, while the magic cultivator cast spells from a distance.

Even though Lu Ye was prepared, he was momentarily caught off guard and found himself in a perilous situation.

These two likely didn't originate from the same domain, but each had extremely powerful backgrounds. Lu Ye wasn't sure how they got entangled together, but this combination of long and close range was indeed troublesome.

Amidst the fierce fight, Lu Ye repeated a familiar tactic. Seemingly frustrated, he launched a weapon control attack at the magic cultivator, while frantically defending against the physique cultivator's ferocious onslaught.

When the magic cultivator dodged the weapon control attack, Lu Ye's figure suddenly disappeared from his original spot, only to reappear at the magic cultivator's side.

This miraculous technique left the two adversaries shocked. The physique cultivator, hair bristled in fury, was about to rush to the rescue, only to find another figure suddenly appear, identical to Lu Ye. The physique cultivator was stunned, not understanding what had happened, and could only attack wildly on instinct.

What met him was a river of Sword Qi spanning like a brocade.

On the other side, the magic cultivator instantly experienced what it meant to wish for death rather than life.

In normal combat, he would never be caught so defenseless in close proximity. He had many means to block an enemy's approach.

But Lu Ye's method of using the Void Spirit Runes for teleportation was simply too unexpected, leaving the magic cultivator unable to react unless he had preemptively prevented the weapon control from approaching.

But in a contest of this level, how could a mere weapon control be taken seriously by him?

He ultimately paid the price for his negligence.

On Lu Ye's side, he swung the Boulder Mountain Saber furiously. He chose to personally deal with the magic cultivator while letting his doppelganger engage the physique cultivator, simply because the magic cultivator posed a greater threat to him.

In the cultivation world, there is a tacit agreement when fighting in groups—you first deal with the long-handed ones. Although Lu Ye's encounter wasn't exactly a group fight, the logic holds true.

Being confronted by a combat cultivator like Lu Ye up close, what good fate could await the magic cultivator? Even though he desperately summoned his protective spirit treasure, he couldn't block the heavy strikes as massive as mountains.

In less than ten breaths, two defensive spirit treasures shattered one after another, leaving the magic cultivator without any usable protection, having to rely solely on his deep cultivation foundation.

Lu Ye swung the saber a few more times, causing his spirit force to surge and his internal organs to shift, blood spurting from his mouth.

With a few more strikes, even the spirit force protection was shattered, and he perished instantly.

On the other side, the physique cultivator was still entangled with the doppelganger. Seeing the magic cultivator defeated and killed, he was so shocked that he no longer dared to fight. In panic, he urged his protective force and fled, even though the doppelganger's flying sword was sharp, it couldn't stop him immediately.

But he was eventually blocked by Lu Ye's true self. Under attack from front and back, he experienced what it was like to be besieged.

Understanding his circumstances, he quickly begged for mercy, promising Lu Ye that if spared, he would offer up all the treasures he carried.

How could Lu Ye be swayed by such words?

To him, once it started, it could only end with death. Sparing this person would indeed not cause him any loss and would even gain him more treasures.

But letting him go would leave the issue of having killed the other one unchecked. Although he wasn't afraid of retribution later on, he still had to maintain precautions for future travels in stellar space.

From another perspective, if he were in such a situation and begged for mercy, would those two spare him?

It's clearly impossible.

The principle is the same—in such a competition for opportunities, there is either no conflict, just like his interaction with Duu Lang, or if there is a conflict, it won't end peacefully.

If you come with a heart set on killing, then be prepared to be killed yourself!

A moment later, the physique cultivator followed in the footsteps of the magic cultivator, and the fierce battle ended just like that.

The tumultuous spirit force gradually settled down.

Lu Ye was just about to sheathe his saber when his expression changed suddenly. He looked up behind his doppelganger, and simultaneously, the doppelganger darted forward, urgently activating the protective array attached to the Crimson Dragon Battle Suit.

But ultimately, it was a step too slow. Before the array could be triggered, a fleeting cold gleam struck the doppelganger's back, not very powerful, yet incredibly penetrating, leaving a hole in the doppelganger's chest.

The scene was like a hidden poisonous snake suddenly lunging out at the moment when the previous battle ended, delivering a bite to the doppelganger.

What shocked Lu Ye was that he never saw who attacked; he only knew the doppelganger was ambushed!

Even now, there was no trace of the attacker, Lu Ye only faintly sensed a vague aura swiftly retreating!

Without any hesitation, spirit force and blood Qi surged around him, and the vast Blood Sea suddenly spread forward. Not only that, Lu Ye himself dashed forward, even instantly granting himself Wings and Move-Like-The-Wind Spirit Runes, just to increase the speed of the Blood Sea's spread.

A moment later, the massive Blood Sea spread across the sky, with Lu Ye concealed within the vacuum, standing immovable.

He could sense something trapped within the Blood Sea but couldn't pinpoint the exact location.

This was quite unbelievable, because the Blood Sea was an extension of his own power, and wherever it covered were his touchpoints. By right, he should be able to clearly sense any anomaly within the Blood Sea.

But strangely enough, he felt everything was vague, like viewing flowers shrouded in mist.

The situation became somewhat bizarre, and Lu Ye roughly guessed which race had ambushed the doppelganger.

Earlier, while Yang Qing was showing him around that platform, not only did he impart much information about the Divine Sea conflict but also spoke of the traits of many races.

Among them, there was one race Yang Qing told him to pay special attention to, because the race was very strange, just like the current situation.

Truth be told, in the stellar space, there are many races, each capable and talented, except the human race, which seems ordinary.

Yet it's precisely this seemingly ordinary human race without any special skills that has become the largest group in stellar space. If it weren't for severe internal strife, other races might have long been subjugated by the human race.

The Blood Sea rose and fell, Lu Ye remained still, and so did the enemy trapped within, evoking a sense of eternal stalemate.

Lu Ye hummed softly, raising his hand slightly, and gently stroked forward.

This stroke was like vibrating an unseen string, as ripples visibly spread outward with his motion.

If he couldn't find the enemy trapped in the Blood Sea, it would be absolutely laughable.

Ripples multiplied, old ones hadn't faded before new ones formed, spreading layer upon layer outward, causing the entire Blood Sea to tremble.

With such tremors, the Blood Sea established a unique frequency.

Under these tremors, each ripple brought new feedback to Lu Ye.

A moment later, he turned his head towards a direction, and his body abruptly vanished from where he stood.

In that direction, the Boulder Mountain Saber cleaved as Lu Ye appeared, a cold gleam flashed briefly, followed by a clanging sound, marking the counterattack of the concealed enemy.

With one strike, the enemy tried to escape, but having been discovered by Lu Ye, wouldn't be let go so easily!

With a thought, the Blood Sea in that area suddenly transformed into a prison, its viscosity and stasis greatly increased.

A faint shadow emerged, its outline outlined by the Blood Sea.

Lu Ye thought it was indeed the race that Yang Qing had previously warned him about; he hadn't recognized their power until encountering them.

Ruthlessly attacking within the Blood Sea, this race, despite their bizarre abilities, couldn't fully exert themselves; thus in direct confrontation, they weren't a match for Lu Ye.

The enemy shouted unintelligibly, appearing furious and rattled, evidently not expecting to be caught.

In stellar space, the human language is universal; almost every race's cultivator speaks it, though each race has its own language. Other than some learned individuals, most humans don't understand it.

Lu Ye figured the enemy wasn't pleading for mercy but rather hurling insults.

The battle erupted suddenly and ended swiftly. Once realizing escape was impossible from the Blood Sea, the cultivator showed a grim determination to fight to the death but ultimately proved futile.

Chapter 1247 - Specter Race

Until Lu Ye cut it down with his blade, only then did he completely see the figure's appearance.

Spanning less than four feet in height, the figure was gaunt and seemed almost malnourished at first glance. However, the skin exposed outside was engraved with extremely complex patterns. Those patterns crisscrossed and were all jet black, exuding an exceedingly bizarre aura.

Without a doubt, these patterns were tattoo runes, and they were visible tattoo runes.

In the Nine Provinces, there are cultivators who enjoy tattooing visible rune tattoos on themselves to demonstrate their unique style, and these tattoos can often serve special functions.

Especially physique cultivators and ghost cultivators, they love doing such things. Physique cultivators use defensive tattoo runes to enhance their defensive capabilities, while ghost cultivators use special tattoo runes to boost their explosive power and stealth ability.

Lu Ye also had a tattoo rune on him, the Void Rune Tattoo on the back of his hand, which his master tattooed for him back in the day, using this tattoo rune as the core to construct a storage space.

Yet, the tattoo runes in the Nine Provinces differ significantly from what Lu Ye is witnessing now.

The tattoo runes in the Nine Provinces are man-made, whereas the ones he's seeing in front of him are natural.

To put it another way, this dead fellow was born with these tattoo runes. It's not just him — every member of his race is born this way.

Specter Race!

Among the major factions within the cultivation world, ghost cultivators are most adept at concealment and stealth attack, whereas the Specter Race is naturally the forefather of this method.

According to Yang Qing, the human race developed the ghost cultivator faction by gradually learning from the Specter Race.

Therefore, when it comes to the various races in stellar space, the most proficient in stealth and attack must be the Specter Race.

Lu Ye had only heard of it before, but this time he truly witnessed the prowess of the Specter Race. When his doppelganger was attacked, he couldn't react in time, and the enemy fled swiftly after striking. If not for him promptly spreading out the Blood Sea, he really would have failed to catch them.

He had seen various ghost cultivators in the Nine Provinces, and Wuchang was the strongest among them. Even against Wuchang, before he ascended to the Constellation Realm, it was not so simple to attack and kill him.

Lu Ye's powerful psyche rendered his senses sharp. Although winning a battle relaxed his mind to some degree, he shouldn't have been caught off guard by someone approaching him from behind without noticing.

In this world, within the same realm, only a cultivator from the Specter Race could achieve such a feat. If it were any other race, no matter how proficient they were in stealth attacks, it would be impossible.

This encounter served as a subtle reminder to him, despite his current success and significant gains, he must not underestimate other cultivators. In battles of this level, any disrespect could lead to catastrophic consequences.

He dealt with the corpse of the Specter Race, as usual, not gaining much in terms of spoils — just a seemingly inconspicuous yet extremely sharp spirit treasure dirk.

The Specter Race is small in stature and since adept at surprise attacks, they don't use large weapons. Dirks or daggers are their standard arsenal.

The quality was decent.

Glancing to the side, his doppelganger's chest had a large hole, and the Crimson Dragon Battle Suit was stained red. If it had been a regular person, such an injury would have been life-threatening, but the doppelganger was nonetheless unharmed.

The essence of the doppelganger is based on half of the Talent Tree, condensing Lu Ye's blood Qi, spirit force, and Divine Soul Power. Strictly speaking, it is a pure energy body, so unless it is completely obliterated, the doppelganger will not die.

The penetrating wound on the chest had long healed; however, the Crimson Dragon Battle Suit could not be repaired, so it appeared somewhat pitiful.

The recent experience was undoubtedly dangerous. If the target of the Specter Race's stealth attack had been the real body instead of the doppelganger, it would likely have severely injured the real one!

Lu Ye wasn't worried about dying. Although his doppelganger could essentially perform all his skills, their physique strength differed markedly.

A doppelganger, as an energy body, couldn't possess his strong physique. Even if the Specter Race were to attack his real body, they wouldn't achieve the result of penetrating his chest in one strike.

From this perspective, the Specter Race probably discerned something and deliberately targeted the doppelganger, knowing that even if they attempted to strike the real body, they might not succeed.

After all, everyone picks the softer target.

The doppelganger changed into a new outfit and quickly departed. It was a shame about the Crimson Dragon Battle Suit, which came from the Hall of Battle Merits and was a protective treasure garment Lu Ye was fond of. It was also the iconic attire of sword cultivator Li Taibai. Now damaged beyond repair, it could only be put away as a memento.

The vast Blood Sea had been retracted by Lu Ye, though not completely. Around him, dense blood-red still lingered.

Looking around, it resembled a small patch of blood cloud, spanning about ten feet in diameter. Since it was more condensed, the blood cloud was entirely crimson, akin to flames.

Standing within the Blood Sea, Lu Ye quietly sensed the surroundings.

When he was searching for traces of the Specter Race earlier, he vaguely felt something unusual, but at the time, he was solely focused on finding the Specter Race, so he didn't have the time to discern it carefully.

Now, with a calm mind to investigate, there seemed to be nothing out of the ordinary.

This left him puzzled.

With his cultivation at this level, his intuition was unlikely to be wrong; it was merely a matter of being vague or clear. He carefully recalled the scene from before, slightly raised a hand, and gently brushed it across.

Ripples rose, spreading outward around the Blood Cloud.

He originally thought it was due to the methods he used at the time, but after trying again now, he found that wasn't the case, as there still wasn't any anomaly.

Unable to figure it out or clarify it, Lu Ye couldn't dwell on this issue forever, so he could only put away the Blood Sea and prepare to continue on his way.

However, just then, that strange feeling appeared once more—vague, indescribable—like there was something in a direction of the Taichu Realm that had formed a hidden connection with his Blood Sea.

Lu Ye was greatly astonished. Was there a valuable treasure belonging to the Blood Race emerging in this Taichu Realm? Otherwise, how could it give him such a feeling?

He hurried to discern it carefully, finally determining the direction from which that trace of connection came; it pointed to the left front.

Without further hesitation, he urged a piece of his Blood Cloud to swoop in that direction.

During the journey, he continuously sensed it. The guidance from that direction came intermittently, sometimes detectable for a long time, sometimes several times in half a day, and the guiding position was not constant.

The general direction didn't change; it was still to the left front, but the specific position kept changing.

Lu Ye guessed he was probably wrong; it likely wasn't a valuable treasure of the Blood Race emerging but a different situation.

This couldn't help but stir his heart. If the situation was indeed what he suspected, then things would get interesting.

Since entering the Taichu Realm and encountering the first Blood Race Zhou Sifang, Lu Ye had been contemplating how to make something out of the Blood Race cultivators participating in the Divine Sea contest. After all, with his current skills, slaying the Blood Race was the most handy, but no matter how

he thought about it, he couldn't find a good method. The area was too vast, making it initially hard to meet other cultivators, let alone specific members of the Blood Race.

But if it truly was a different situation, that would be an unexpected delight. There was no need for him to do anything special; others had brought the matter to him.

As Lu Ye set off, at the platform where cultivators from various realms gathered around the Reincarnation Tree, at the very edge, an elder with white hair and beard stroked his beard, "Nephew, your friend is quite something. To achieve this level at Divine Sea Level 8, if not a first of its kind, is truly unprecedented."

Duu Lang looked at Lu Ye's name on the pillar to the right of the portal and chuckled, "I didn't expect him to be this formidable either."

They, the old and the young, were originally prepared to leave and return to Red Sky Continent, but after Duu Lang discovered Lu Ye's name appeared in the eleventh position, the elder decided to stay.

As he saw it, Duu Lang seemed interested to see what this so-called "friend" would end up achieving.

Naturally, Duu Lang complied, thinking it was just a matter of two months, and there was no rush.

Now on the top hundred ranking list on the right, Lu Yiye of the Nine Heavens had jumped further up to seventh place, a leap of four ranks from before.

Clearly, this wasn't a result from killing just one person. At least two, perhaps even three, were needed for such an advancement.

Duu Lang could ascertain that this Lu Yiye was indeed the one he met in the Spirit Jade Vein, but truly did not expect him to be this capable.

He couldn't help but feel secretly relieved that he hadn't harbored any ill intentions due to Lu Yiye's lower cultivation. Given Lu Yiye's current performance, if he had harbored such intent, he might be resting under a grassy mound right now.

"If this lad can make it out alive, he'll certainly become someone great in the future. Nephew, such a person is worth befriending," the elder slowly said.

Duu Lang's response was noncommittal. Before befriending Lu Ye, he hadn't known about Lu Ye's capabilities or future potential. To him, if he thought someone was worth befriending, he would do so. If their personalities clashed, no matter how much potential they had, he wasn't willing to flatter them.

He felt slightly regretful.

Because of his heavy responsibilities, he couldn't participate in the upcoming competition anymore. Otherwise, he could have fought alongside Brother Lu, experiencing his prowess up close and seeing where he stood compared to these top-tier prodigies.

As the elder and the youth in Red Sky Continent paid attention to Lu Ye's rank changes, other powerful beings from various realms also naturally noticed.

With thousands of Divine Sea Level 9 cultivators, only one at Level 8, achieving such a high rank, it was hard not to attract attention. Initially, many believed Lu Ye's temporary eleventh place might have had a significant element of luck. But when his ranking suddenly shot up by another leap, everyone knew this wasn't something that could be explained by luck alone. This was a display of strength. If it were purely luck, the ranking would constantly fall, and it wouldn't be able to rise.

To think of Yang Qing's bold act of tossing a 9-star treasure into the treasure pond earlier, it was simply a display of immense confidence in his junior!

Chapter 1248 - Following the Trail

In a certain place within the Taichu Realm, three figures quietly lay dormant, among them two men and one woman.

The Divine Sea contention has reached a stage where people have started to travel in groups, although due to the low chances of encounter, normally, the number isn't large, perhaps just two or three individuals.

As Lu Ye previously encountered a combination of a physique cultivator and a magic cultivator.

These three met by chance and due to concerns about potential dangers ahead, they decided to temporarily join forces.

Having observed here for a while, they've already discovered something.

"Those Blood Race bastards have indeed set a defense ahead; this makes things tricky," said one of the trio, a man with a pencil mustache, sucking on his teeth, showing a distressed expression.

The Blood Race can use secret techniques to sense each other within the Taichu Realm and gather together, which isn't news anymore. Hence, many cultivators participating in the Divine Sea contention were advised by their elders to be cautious at this stage and avoid getting discovered by groups of Blood Race, or else doom is certain.

This is an advantage no other race possesses. It can't be said they are cheating, but the Blood Race's tactics undoubtedly spell calamity for cultivators from other domains.

To continue forward, one must break through the Blood Race's defense, which involves significant risk.

Some have adjusted their strategies against the Blood Race by heading directly to the center upon entering the Taichu Realm, crossing dangerous areas before Blood Race fortifications are fully established, lying low until the end.

But the Blood Race isn't foolish either. After witnessing this several times, they adjusted their strategy to ambush at the center, ensuring every guard counts.

Thus nowadays, before the situation is clear, no one knows where the Blood Race will appear. If you think they're at the center, they might show up halfway in the Taichu Realm, intercepting those rushing towards the center. Alternatively, thinking the center is safe and rushing there might lead you straight into their Blood River.

It all comes down to luck.

Strong figures from various domains have protested to the Reincarnation Tree due to this, but the Reincarnation Tree wouldn't interfere, leaving the matter unresolved.

Fortunately, the Blood Race knows not to push too far. Though they have a few more spots each Divine Sea contention, they rank low, refraining from contesting higher positions. This is a concession from the Blood Race themselves; for if they overdo it, it will spark hostility from all races, and despite miraculous secret techniques, they'll face assaults everywhere.

By employing such strategies, the Blood Race has made notable gains each Divine Sea contention, allowing them to consistently produce numerous elite Constellations, maintaining their strength.

Ding You, with a pencil mustache, hails from Xuandu World, accompanied by temporary partners, the man Zhao Yunliu from Dominant Star and the woman Yuk Yaorao from Jiuxuan World. All are the finest Divine Sea Realm cultivators of their generation within their domains, yet even with their temporary alliance, it's unwise to reveal themselves recklessly.

Yuk Yaorao suggested, "Should we take a detour? The Blood Race's front line can't be too long, at most ten thousand miles. Circumventing this stretch might ensure safety."

Ding You shook his head, "The Blood Race numbers are ample. What we saw is likely just one squad. Though the Blood Sea seems vast, there are at most five or six Blood Race members within. Such squads, the Blood Race have three or even four at the least; each squad responsible for a line of defense. Indeed, if we detour, there's no telling how far we'd need to go, nor can we guarantee escaping their defense zones. If we avoid this group, another Blood Race squad might catch us off guard elsewhere, making matters worse."

Yuk Yaorao acknowledged this reasoning, sighing slightly, "Then we have no choice but to wait and see who loses patience first."

It's clear that they're not the only trio stuck here, surely many others are lurking too. Simply, no one wishes to be the first to confront the Blood Race, so they all remain hidden, awaiting others to make a move.

Once others take action, seizing the opportunity to dash forward or exploit the chaos would be excellent options.

"What do you think, Fellow Daoist Zhao?" Ding You looked at Zhao Yunliu, whose domain of origin, Dominant Star, is considered a top-tier domain, thus his strength and foundation surpass theirs. However, Zhao Yunliu, true to the traits of top-tier domain natives, isn't easy to converse with. Believing himself superior, he carries some disdain towards those from larger domains.

If not for the Blood Race's blockade ahead, Zhao Yunliu likely wouldn't have teamed up with them.

Zhao Yunliu replied indifferently, "Decide amongst yourselves, no need to ask me."

Ding You couldn't help but feel distressed...

The most troublesome are those hard to engage with, hindering the establishment of a consensus on certain matters.

"A presence approaches suddenly!" Yuk Yaorao spoke, having cultivated a perception-type secret technique, thus excelling in reconnaissance compared to the other two.

Ding You hurriedly asked, "Which direction?"

Yuk Yaorao raised her hand and pointed, leaving Ding You astonished, "Why is someone coming from there?"

He assumed it was another group advancing inward. If so, they could be invited to join forces, amplifying strength in numbers, potentially allowing a direct confrontation with the Blood Race's defense.

Yet Yuk Yaorao indicated the side!

At this point in time, only those heading inward would come from the side, how could someone come from there?

"This aura..." As she spoke, Yuk Yaorao also showed a surprised expression, because she noticed something strange about the newcomer's aura, somewhat similar to the aura of those from the Blood Race...

"Blood Race!"

No need to doubt anymore, because from that direction, a mass of blood light had already entered their view.

It was a blood cloud about ten meters in diameter, densely colored due to compression, moving slowly like a drunkard, swaying as it approached, at first glance, resembling a large chunk of fresh blood pudding.

Ding You and Yuk Yaorao continued observing, but Zhao Yunliu suddenly dropped his previous indifference, his eyes fierce: "Only one, must have been summoned to join us, kill it!"

Coming from a top domain, proud and ambitious, he had planned to make a name for himself in the Taichu Realm, only to be blocked by a group of Blood Race here, simmering with rage. Now seeing a lone Blood Race, of course he wouldn't let the chance slip by.

The reason he could judge it was a solitary member was simple; the blood cloud was too small, clearly concocted by a single Blood Race for convenient travel.

As the words fell, disregarding the opinions of the two beside him, he charged out directly towards the mass of blood pudding.

Ding You raised his hand, unable to stop him, could only curse quietly and follow closely.

That's why he was unwilling to join forces with someone like Zhao Yunliu from a top domain. Usually indifferent, but at critical moments liked to act on his own without regard for his companions' feelings.

With the two moving, Yuk Yaorao could only follow.

In an instant, spirit force surged, sword light gathered like a stream, aiming for the blood cloud from afar.

Zhao Yunliu was a sword cultivator, skilled with flying swords to oppose enemies. It was precisely for this reason he didn't think much of the incoming Blood Race, as their Blood River Technique posed little threat to him.

Of course, he wouldn't be foolish enough to force his way into someone else's Blood River, trapping himself.

Following closely behind the flying sword were Yuk Yaorao's various spells.

Ding You wasn't flashy; as a physique cultivator, he could only swing his fists, stirring his blood Qi and spirit force, launching fists from a distance.

In a flash, the three formed a triangle, encircling the blood cloud in the center, with sharp attacks bombarding the blood cloud to weaken its foundation.

This was the best method for various stellar space races to deal with the Blood Race: weaken the foundation of the Blood River Technique first, thus creating a chance to slay them.

Lu Ye found it troubling; tracing that mysterious sensation brought him here, expecting a scene of his imagination, only to be suddenly attacked by three humans midway.

If only that were it, he suddenly noticed a familiar figure among them.

Jiuxuan World, Yuk Yaorao!

This enchanting woman who was thrown into the Fairy Tree World alongside him for a trial, though they hadn't formed many bonds, Lu Ye could say she had helped him somewhat in the Fairy Tree World, with many things being explained carefully by Yuk Yaorao.

So he couldn't kill her.

Moreover, under such circumstances, fighting one against three, even if Lu Ye wanted to kill, the chances were slim unless he could somehow drag them into the Blood River.

But these three were obviously very experienced, all engaging in long-range attacks, never approaching his blood cloud, never giving him a single chance.

Only escape was possible, choosing a direction and making a break for it.

The chosen direction was where Ding You was, which enraged him immensely! Zhao Yunliu acting unilaterally had already dampened his mood, and now being singled out as an escape route by the Blood Race naturally infuriated him.

But as a physique cultivator in this situation, he was indeed a breakthrough point, no matter how angry, it was in vain.

Zhao Yunliu and Yuk Yaorao over there let their flying swords and spells fly together, both exerting full force, knowing the opportunity was brief. Once the battle started, nearby Blood Race might become aware, so to kill this lone Blood Race, it had to be fast, without delay.

But to their surprise, this Blood Race's blood cloud... had a resilience that was somewhat ridiculous. From the feedback returned from their spells and flying swords, it seemed they weren't attacking a blood cloud, but a piece of extraordinarily tough toffee.

Chapter 1249 - Blood Malice World, Li Taibai

This made Zhao Yunliu feel incredible.

There's no denying that the Blood Race is indeed hard to kill under the protection of the Blood River Technique, but it shouldn't have such strong resilience.

For a moment, he couldn't tell whether his information was mistaken.

Ordinary Blood River Technique naturally can't have such resilience. As a secret technique that combines all the Cultivation Techniques of the Blood Race, it can both attack and defend with unpredictable changes.

However, everything has its pros and cons. Precisely because it spreads out its strength, the defense of the Blood River isn't very strong. It's just that it's difficult for anyone to find the Blood Race hiding within, thus providing an indirect form of protection for the Blood Race.

Zhao Yunliu and others were responding normally. As long as they continued such an attack, they could naturally keep reducing the size of the Blood River Technique until the Blood Race hiding inside had no place to hide and could be killed.

The method wasn't wrong, but this was Lu Ye's controlled Blood Cloud.

He could freely set up arrays within the Blood Cloud! The protective array constructed with Sword Control and Foundation Fortification Spirit Runes as the core can largely offset enemy attacks.

Though because there was no solid array base, the Formation could collapse with a touch, fixing it was just a matter of a thought.

So the actual situation was that the attacks of the three, Zhao Yunliu and company, destroyed the arrays constructed by Lu Ye, but did not consume much of the Blood Cloud, which gave them the impression that the Blood Cloud was incredibly resilient.

This was a method that no one else could emulate, not even the Blood Race itself. Even if there were those among them who were proficient in the Array Path, who could guarantee to set up an array with just a thought?

Lu Ye could, because the core spirit runes of his arrays bore no risk of construction failure, as soon as he intended, the spirit runes would form.

With rumbling sounds, the Blood Cloud, covering a perimeter of ten feet, swept across the sky, surrounded by three figures clinging like leeches, making continuous attacks.

Suddenly, an aura approached swiftly from not far away, locking onto Lu Ye's Blood Cloud with Mental Consciousness, indicating his intention to confront him.

Ding You was overjoyed!

He knew there were other lurking cultivators nearby, all waiting for someone to take the lead; as soon as the battle started here, someone couldn't help but jump out.

At this position, at this moment, the Blood Race was the common enemy of all cultivators. It's rare to encounter a solitary one, naturally leading to a situation where everyone wants to strike.

It's foreseeable that more and more people will be attracted as the battle unfolds, and then join their camp.

This was undoubtedly good news for them. What the scattered cultivators lacked now was a focal point, and the solitary Blood Race suddenly appearing provided them with a good opportunity.

However, at this moment, a vast blood-red suddenly appeared on the horizon, quickly spreading towards this side.

Yuk Yaorao's face sank, and she exclaimed, "Not good, the Blood Race over there has noticed."

What was coming were precisely a team of Blood Race they had observed before. There were roughly five or six Blood Race cultivators, who had established a horizontal defense line of ten thousand miles in this area, sweeping back and forth. Any captured cultivators within were invariably doomed.

The Blood Race had at least two more such teams, just stationed in other positions.

Upon this discovery, the cultivator who suddenly emerged intending to join them also noticed. Reacting swiftly, he immediately turned and fled far away.

"Go!" Ding You shouted in a low voice.

If they couldn't kill this solitary Blood Race, they could only retreat first; otherwise, once entangled by the Blood Race team, none of them could escape.

Though he shouted, he did not retreat immediately. As a physique cultivator, he always had the sense of responsibility to protect his teammates, even if temporarily their opponents, which was an awareness every physique cultivator possessed. So, before his teammates left, they wouldn't expose their backs to the enemy.

Yuk Yaorao resolutely withdrew, while Zhao Yunliu did not retreat, still controlling his flying sword fiercely, frantically striking at the Blood Cloud, with the determination to solve this Blood Race before its reinforcements arrived.

"Leave!" Ding You roared angrily, any longer and it really would be too late.

In terms of escape speed, he, a physique cultivator, couldn't match the Blood Race. Once entangled, Zhao Yunliu might manage to flee with his Sword Control, but Ding You would inevitably be captured.

Until he shouted the second time did Zhao Yunliu reluctantly unleashed one last Heaven-shocking Sword Aura, turned to escape, transforming into sword light.

Only then did Ding You retreat, with his heart in his throat.

Fearing the Blood Cloud might suddenly swell and swallow him whole. If that were the case, he would be done for.

Fortunately, no such thing happened. Not until he fled to a relatively safe distance did he turn around and madly escape.

The Blood Cloud wobbled in pursuit for a while without success and could only seem helpless to stop. Soon, a vast Blood Sea spread swiftly from afar, touching the sky and ground, with great momentum. Such a Blood Sea wherever it went would leave any hidden cultivators with nowhere to hide.

This was also the method the Blood Race used to search for enemy traces, always yielding some unexpected gains at times.

Within the Blood Cloud, Lu Ye quietly sensed.

Clearly perceiving that the guidance he had felt from the void was coming from this approaching Blood Sea.

Indeed, just as he had surmised, it wasn't that some valuable treasure of the Blood Race had emerged, but that other Blood Race cultivators had used some peculiar secret technique, causing their Blood Rivers to resonate and communicate even across great distances.

This is likely why the Blood Race can gather together.

Lu Ye felt invigorated, though he did not show it outwardly. He even constructed a Pseudo-Might Spirit Rune to disguise his cultivation as Divine Sea Level 9.

In the Blood Sea, he could use the blood to conceal his appearance and figure, but he could not mask his cultivation fluctuations, especially not from those proficient in Blood Techniques.

Then he stirred his Blood Cloud, allowing it to gently collide and merge effortlessly within the vast Blood Sea, evidently being welcomed by the group.

No matter which domain or cosmic stellar space, all Blood Race are like family, a shared understanding within the Blood Race.

Not only the Blood Race, most other races are similar.

Only the human race is the exception!

Originally, after welcoming Lu Ye, this group of Blood Race cultivators was supposed to pursue the few human race cultivators who had just appeared. Opportunities are rare, and many cultivators are lurking in concealment, making even a sweeping search of this vast territory unlikely to yield results. Encountering them, it was natural not to let them go.

But when Lu Ye with his Blood Cloud merged into the vast Blood Sea, all the Blood Race suddenly froze, their expressions tense! Even the massive Blood Sea was stirred, as if ready to collapse at any moment.

The reason being, every Blood Race sensed an extremely dense and refined saintliness, along with a mighty suppression brought by this saintliness!

A deathly silence...

Saintliness, this thing, is familiar to every Blood Race cultivator, but within their respective domains, only when their cultivation reaches a certain level are they granted Sacred Blood for refining. Hence, even though they are the elite of various domains, only one among them had refined a drop of Sacred Blood; the other four are fundamentally ordinary Blood Race, not Sacred Seed beings.

This includes Zhou Sifang who Lu Ye killed earlier, so he did not obtain Sacred Blood.

Their domain's situation is different from the Blood Refinement World, which, due to the world's level, can't produce Constellation Realm cultivators, so Divine Sea reigns supreme, and over numerous years has instead birthed many Sacred Seeds.

However, their domain has Constellation, Moon Jade, Sun Blaze; with insufficient cultivation and aptitude, it is impossible to acquire Sacred Blood.

Even those from the Moon Jade Sun Blaze Realms are not necessarily all who have refined Sacred Blood, as this item is extremely rare in their domains, each drop precious.

But regardless, they have personally felt saintliness from their elders.

They thought their elders' saintliness was strong and rich enough, but upon comparison, realized what they once perceived was nothing at all.

If their elders' saintliness was like light spring rain, then what appeared now was a stormy downpour, an immense threat, causing not only the four ordinary Blood Race but even the sole Sacred Seed's mind to waver unstably.

In such circumstances, there is no mood to chase fleeing humans.

They believed they welcomed a solitary, bullied companion, but who knew the person turned out to be the sovereign ruler among the Blood Race!

How could there be a Blood Race with such dense saintliness at the Divine Sea Realm?

Saintliness cannot be faked; they felt it clearly.

In the prolonged silence, the only Blood Race cultivator who refined Sacred Blood spoke, exceptionally respectful: "May I ask, Fellow Daoist, which domain do you come from?"

Lu Ye aware of his advantage over the Blood Race naturally wasn't overly courteous, coldly responded: "Blood Malice World, Li Taibai!"

Another silence followed, after a long pause, a weak voice echoed within the Blood Sea: "From Blood Malice World... wasn't Fellow Daoist Zhou Sifang from there participating in this event?"

This person seemed acquainted with Zhou Sifang, unsurprisingly, as previously during interactions among their domain's strong figures with Blood Malice World's experts on the platform, the juniors who followed their elders had met Zhou Sifang.

This is also why Lu Ye specifically inquired about Zhou Sifang's background when killing him, needing to craft his persona among the Blood Race.

His understanding of the Blood Race was limited to the Blood Refinement World, so he could only inquire about Zhou Sifang's background.

And facing such a question, Lu Ye was prepared, calmly replied: "I was in closed-door training, coinciding with this event upon emerging, so I took that waste's spot, is there a problem?"

"No, no."

Dare anyone have a problem, saintliness reigns supreme among the Blood Race, the powerful saintliness Lu Ye exuded erased all questions.

Chapter 1250 - Blood Resonance Technique and Saintliness Restraint Technique

The few Blood Race members could never have imagined that in this world there was actually a human race member whose saintliness far exceeded that of their elders.

As for Lu Ye's disdainful reference to Zhou Sifang as worthless, the few Blood Race members dared not say a word. With such strong saintliness under the same cultivation realm, any Blood Race member before him would indeed be worthless, including them.

They dared not speak, yet Lu Ye continued with his domineering arrogance: "This secret technique of bloodline summoning is quite novel, which of you performed it?"

Although the few were puzzled as to why Lu Ye asked such a strange question, they dared not refuse to answer.

Still it was the Sacred Seed who had refined the Sacred Blood that replied: "This is the Blood Resonance Technique; Fellow Daoist, have you not cultivated it?"

Lu Ye had never cultivated it; all the blood techniques he could employ mostly came from the bloodline inheritance within the Sacred Blood. However, the Blood Race's blood techniques were not immutable. Although bloodline inheritance encompassed all phenomena and was manifold, new talents constantly

emerged, always developing or refining some blood techniques with special uses, which could not be acquired through bloodline inheritance.

"I'm the one asking you!" Lu Ye maintained a commanding posture. He knew that with such close contact, it was hard to say whether he would reveal any flaws, and probably couldn't deceive others for too long. Thus, his methods of action could not be too conventional. Now that they were intimidated by his strong saintliness, he should seize the moment. Appearing too weak would be inappropriate.

The few Blood Race members felt bitter in their hearts, feeling that this clansman seemed not to regard them at all. Yet, what could they do but feel bitter? If they possessed such terrifying saintliness, they probably wouldn't be much better off.

The only Sacred Seed responded respectfully: "The Blood Resonance Technique was created over a thousand years ago by a senior of the Blood Heart World, specifically to summon our Blood Race clansmen. It is quite fitting for use here. Basically, all of us can perform it, as the seniors of various domains have taught it."

"I see!" Lu Ye appeared enlightened, "I have been in closed-door cultivation all this time, not concerning myself with outside affairs, only focusing on exploring the mysteries in the bloodline inheritance. I didn't expect to miss out on these; it's unfortunate. Once I return, I should seek out a few seniors to learn from them well."

One Blood Race member immediately spoke: "If Fellow Daoist wishes to learn, there's no need to wait until returning. We can explain its intricacies now; it is not too complicated a secret technique. How does Fellow Daoist feel?"

Lu Ye nodded: "Okay!"

The Blood Race member immediately recounted the intricacies of the Blood Resonance Technique. Indeed, it was not too profound a secret technique, just an alternative application of blood technique. Anyone with a bit of foundation could understand it quickly.

In less than one incense stick's time, Lu Ye grasped the Blood Resonance Technique.

It incited the few Blood Race members to heap praises, even the only Sacred Seed was no exception:
"Fellow Daoist is indeed intelligent. When I cultivated this Blood Resonance Technique, it took me a full three days, and even then, the elders of this domain praised it highly."

"It took me five days."

"I took seven days..."

Who knows if they were telling the truth; anyway, elongating the time now certainly wasn't wrong.

Lu Ye shook his body, the saintliness urged forth, and the few Blood Race members fell silent as cicadas in the cold, not knowing if their flattery had backfired.

"I don't know who was in charge before, but now that I'm here, I'll take charge. Who approves and who opposes?"

This vast Blood Sea was a fusion of several Blood Race members' Blood River Techniques. Since it was a fusion, there must have been one presiding over it and the others assisting. Only then could they exert the full might of the merged Blood Sea; otherwise, it would be chaos.

The Blood Resonance Technique was learned, so the next step was to find a way to deal with these few Blood Race members, thus he needed to seize command authority.

Dealing with a single Blood Race member wouldn't be so troublesome, but with five Blood Race members here, he had to strategize. He must ensure they could be caught all in one sweep without leaking information, and kill swiftly enough not to give them time to react.

"We have no objections!" The only Sacred Seed spoke first, and the other Blood Race members echoed in agreement.

Who dared to have objections? His saintliness was evident.

To be sure, the Sacred Seed weakly asked: "Fellow Daoist Li, may I ask if you have cultivated the Saintliness Restraint Technique?"

It wasn't that he was cautious without reason; given past lessons, it was possible that this newcomer hadn't even cultivated the Saintliness Restraint Technique, having not cultivated the Blood Resonance Technique.

To be sure, it was necessary to ask.

Sure enough, the newcomer's voice was puzzled: "What is the Saintliness Restraint Technique?"

The Sacred Seed Blood Race patiently explained.

Lu Ye slowly understood.

Still a secret technique developed by the Blood Race experts, ordinary Blood Race members could easily form alliances because none of them had saintliness, thus there was no issue of suppression among them. As long as roles were clear during cooperation, there would be no problems.

But the sacred seeds cannot.

Unless the sacred nature between sacred seeds is completely the same, otherwise, there would inevitably be suppression in the presence of strength disparity. In such a partnership, the side with weaker sacred nature would not be able to exert their full strength, making it less effective than not partnering at all.

Lu Ye had encountered very few situations in the Blood Refinement World where the sacred seeds worked together, only twice in total. Once was when two sacred seeds used some kind of secret technique to stack their sacred nature in vain to contend with him. Naturally, it was like a giant ant trying to shake a tree; at that time, his saintliness was already very powerful, not something that the combined saintliness of the two sacred seeds could contend with.

The other instance was the final great battle on Jade Pillar Peak, but that time the Blood Spirit was causing trouble, merging the powers of all the living sacred seeds at the time, which doesn't really count.

It's difficult for sacred seeds to collaborate, and even harder with ordinary members of the Blood Race due to suppression issues.

To solve this issue, a powerful blood clan member dedicated themselves to developing the Saintliness Restraint Technique. This technique, when executed, serves no other purpose but to suppress the saintliness of a sacred seed. Since it's self-imposed suppression, it's easy to perform and extremely effective. Thus, different blood clans could unite without concerns of suppression.

Ultimately, saintly suppression is only effective within the Blood Race for controlling others; it has no use against enemies of other races and could even backfire.

The five blood clans here, including one sacred seed, were able to join forces happily because the sacred seed used the Saintliness Restraint Technique to restrain its own saintliness.

Since he could use it, naturally, he had cultivated it, but the other four blood clans lacked this capability.

No doubt about it, he followed the sacred seed blood clan in cultivating the Saintliness Restraint Technique again...

Lu Ye admired the research spirit of the strong members of the Blood Race; their bloodline heritage was enough to master many complex Blood Techniques, yet they continued innovating.

This is one reason a race can remain powerful.

He intended to cultivate the Blood Resonance Technique, even if the blood clans didn't mention it, he would have sought to learn it by some means. The Saintliness Restraint Technique, however, was a chance acquisition.

In future encounters with the Blood Race, the Saintliness Restraint Technique would offer more options.

Unlike now, when he used Blood Techniques, any blood clan member would consider him kin, as that overwhelming sacred nature was impossible to conceal.

Without saintliness, however, even the Blood Race would struggle to determine if he was kin since other races, especially some magic cultivators of the human race, could also use Blood Techniques.

This cultivation took half a day, and the Saintliness Restraint Technique was undoubtedly far more complex than the Blood Resonance Technique. The blood clans showed no impatience, especially the sacred seed, who taught diligently.

While Lu Ye cultivated the Saintliness Restraint Technique, a vast Blood Sea lay across the sky. Unless blind, any nearby cultivator would see it but dared not invite trouble, biding their time in silence.

As Lu Ye practiced the Saintliness Restraint Technique, his saintliness slowly withdrew and eventually vanished completely.

The atmosphere of the Blood Sea became relaxed and pleasant.

For the blood clans, over this half a day, they had been bearing an immense pressure akin to carrying a mountain; now without the saintliness, they felt much relieved.

"Don't move—I'm going to fuse the Blood Sea," commanded Lu Ye, spreading his blood cloud outward.

He had stormed into the Blood Sea previously, yet protected himself within a blood cloud ten feet in radius. This was because once the Blood Sea fused, the Blood Race could discern him through feedback from the Blood Sea. Knowing his expertise in Blood Techniques, how could Lu Ye not have precautions?

Having learned what was needed, with nothing left to worry about, it was time to lay bare his plans.

With his activation, his blood Qi spread in all directions, saturating every corner of the Blood Sea. To prevent the blood clans from identifying him, he deliberately didn't merge the blood Qi near them.

Merging blood Qi among the Blood Race was still simple, not too complex. It just required a certain level of control; notably, the stronger blood clan in charge could manage a bigger Blood Sea.

This is why the blood clans involved in the Divine Sea struggle were divided into several teams - to ensure more gains and because too many members would hinder control of the fused Blood Sea.

A team of five to six is ideal; although not invincible, they are hard to match at this level.

The process went smoothly; given his previous warning, the blood clans obediently stayed put, minimizing any risk of exposing him.

Once Lu Ye had full control over the entire Blood Sea, he flicked into motion, heading toward the nearest blood clan. At the same time, the remaining blood Qi around him swiftly fused.

The blood clans had little guard against Lu Ye's actions, falling victim to preconceptions; each believed Lu Ye was a clan member. As Lu Ye approached closer, the blood clan began feeling puzzled: is this clan member, so strong in saintliness, trying to get close to me?