

Humanity 1271

Chapter 1271 - Shattered to Pieces

The situation of the battle had become clear, with Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens World gaining an absolute upper hand. Although Bao Shi possessed an extremely strong physique, he was still unable to withstand the stormy assaults.

In such a scenario, defeat and death were only a matter of time.

Given this predicament, Bao Shi should have retreated with courage; he had already proven his strength and had no need to persist until death. With his robust physique, if he truly wanted to escape, no one could stop him.

Yet, he showed no intention of retreating, opting to continue fighting to the death!

No one knew what he was persisting for, but this did not prevent the cultivators observing in secret from giving him the highest respect! Perhaps, it's their greater persistence that makes such extraordinary beings stronger than others?

Suddenly, the fierce and aggressive saber light retracted, the noise in the air turned silent, and two figures, one large and one small, stood less than thirty meters apart on the battlefield.

Lu Ye looked down to examine his Boulder Mountain Saber, feeling a bit distressed as the blade had numerous tiny nicks after the battle. Fortunately, when upgrading the Boulder Mountain Saber, he emphasized its material quality; otherwise, the saber might have shattered during this fight.

Bao Shi's tenacity was unexpected; his perseverance was also commendable. But since their clash occurred under these circumstances, Lu Ye couldn't afford to hold back, and neither could Bao Shi. This battle was undoubtedly one where both sides gave their utmost effort.

And the final result was that he won, and Bao Shi lost.

The price of losing was death!

Thirty meters across, even though Bao Shi's body was broken, he stood proudly, and during his final moments of life, he merely looked at Lu Ye and nodded slightly.

A roaring wind passed by, and Bao Shi's entire towering body collapsed with a thundering crash, turning into small fragments.

An uproar erupted among those secretly observing, despite expecting Bao Shi's demise due to his determination to fight until the end. Witnessing him shatter into nothing but debris was still unsettling.

They were also secretly unnerved by Lu Yiye's ruthless approach, not showing a bit of mercy.

Nevertheless, being able to witness such a battle between two top-tier prodigies made the journey worthwhile.

Before Bao Shi had appeared, the prodigies hidden in darkness had thoughts of testing Lu Ye's strength, but after this battle, none entertained such thoughts.

Even Bao Shi was smashed into pieces, and they lacked the abnormal physique of the Stone Race. Forcing themselves into a fight would just be serving heads to Lu Yiye.

This guy's achievements were already astonishing, but no one was willing to risk their life just to add another number to his tally.

Now, among those qualified to challenge Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens World, only the top-ranked few prodigies might dare, and whether any would come to challenge after Bao Shi's death remains unknown.

Lu Ye returned to his position, quietly regulating his breath to recover.

At his side, Yuk Yaorao wished to speak several times but ultimately sighed without saying anything.

Initially, she planned to leave after a bit of recovery to avoid dragging down Lu Ye, but under the current circumstances, she couldn't leave even if she wanted to.

With so many people lurking quietly around, if she dared leave alone, it would certainly result in no good outcome. Staying here might feel like depending on others for protection, but there's one advantage: as long as Lu Ye doesn't die, no one would dare to casually trouble her.

Because everyone saw her with Lu Ye, provoking her would undoubtedly mean challenging Lu Yiye, and with the residual power from the fierce battle just now, who would dare to mess with Lu Yiye at this time?

Yuk Yaorao felt quite awkward; she had no intention of relying on others, yet things developed in such a direction.

But on second thought, this seemed to be advantageous for her.

Originally, although her strength wasn't weak, she lacked confidence in securing a spot among the final hundred victor seats, especially while severely injured amid such fierce competition, which grows more dangerous towards the end.

Ding You was already dead, and Zhao Yunliu was likely barely surviving. She didn't consider herself much stronger than Ding You and Zhao Yunliu, and continuing this way, the greatest likelihood was being slain in combat, becoming part of someone else's achievement.

But now she only needed to stay here quietly, with great hope of surviving until the end!

As long as Lu Yiye doesn't die!

She hadn't expected that the mere release of goodwill toward Junior Brother Lu twice would yield such a substantial and direct return, prompting some reflection. Indeed, it's best to maintain a kind heart and build good connections with others, because rewards may unexpectedly come back in return.

As time passed, the sounds of battles occasionally echoed from all around.

The cultivators lurking in every corner naturally wouldn't just wait aimlessly; they were engaged in overt and covert conflicts among themselves. Whenever friction or clash occurred, it was destined to be an earth-shattering battle.

But there was a mutual understanding among everyone: to keep the battles on the outskirts, with Lu Ye's location as the center, and to avoid any conflict within a twenty-mile radius.

This was both a mark of respect for the strong and a precaution against being taken advantage of during the fight.

The struggle for the Divine Sea has reached its final stages. Not only is there less than half a month left, but the number of surviving cultivators is likely not large. Those who have made it this far are naturally cautious, avoiding errors that others could exploit.

Just half a day after Lu Ye fought Bao Shi, a fierce aura suddenly approached from afar, intensely growing the moment it appeared. Looking out, a rainbow light flashed like lightning, twisting through the sky as the momentum intensified.

A distant voice came: "Mokeduo from the Ten Thousand Demons Continent, here to learn from your high skills!"

Upon hearing this, the cultivators secretly observing were all excited, for on the Reincarnation Tree's guidance, Mokeduo's rank was three places above Bao Shi, at number four.

Bao Shi had already been cut down alive by Lu Yiye; what performance could Mokeduo possibly have?

Compared to Bao Shi's entrance, Mokeduo was undoubtedly more domineering and clearly came prepared. He accumulated power while charging forward, likely using some secret technique akin to Lu Ye's activation of the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes—the longer the accumulation, the fiercer the power would be.

Mokeduo must have learned about the battle between Lu Ye and Bao Shi through some means, hence, even as a top demon of a top domain, he wouldn't underestimate Lu Ye by any bit.

Declaring one's origin and purpose was the challenger's etiquette; accumulating power en route was a combat strategy. It looked open and fair but was actually quite deceitful and cunning.

Yet no one could reproach him; such are his tactics!

Lu Ye stood tall, instantly seeing through his opponent's intent. In his sight, Mokeduo was still twenty miles away, but his accumulated momentum was already reaching an incredible level, twisting the Void on his path.

Such an accumulated strike, Lu Ye deemed himself incapable of taking head-on, just as when he unleashed the Fire Phoenix Spirit Runes strike, none among the cultivators could withstand it alone. It wasn't about individual strength; it was simply beyond the limits of the Divine Sea Realm.

Thus, his response was simple: with a wave of his hand, array banners flew out, spirit force surged, and the Yin-Yang Dual Origins connected and integrated.

As Mokeduo, rapidly closing in with increasing momentum, saw this, his eye twitched involuntarily!

Indeed, what one fears most always comes true. He had indeed investigated the battle between Lu Ye and Bao Shi, aware of Bao Shi's grim fate and acknowledging that in a fair battle, he might not match the Nine Heavens World's Lu Yiye. However, since the opponent remained stationary, it offered him an opportune moment.

The secret technique he activated, accumulating more power meant a more explosive outcome. He thought he could use it to conclude the encounter definitively, yet now he saw Lu Yiye setting up an array from afar!

This guy... wasn't he a combat cultivator? How could he know formations?

Moreover, judging by his array setup's technique and proficiency, he obviously had quite an achievement in the Array Path.

This defied logical sense!

Had he known Lu Yiye mastered formations, Mokeduo wouldn't have come with accumulated power. This was self-inflicted humiliation.

But now, the arrow was on the string, he had to shoot it. He had declared his origin and intent, and even accumulated enough momentum. If he were to back out now, he would only be ridiculed.

He couldn't help but speed up, lest Lu Ye's formation become too perfected.

Ten miles away, Mokeduo's momentum reached an astonishing level, beyond what the Divine Sea Realm should harbor. Violent spirit forces scattered everywhere, and even the cultivators secretly watching felt Mokeduo had reached his limit, with subtle signs of losing control over his own power.

The observing cultivators felt their scalps tingle, their skin tightened as they silently noted that such an attack would surely obliterate them completely.

Lu Ye continued setting up the array, his actions calm and orderly, showing no signs of anxiety. Meanwhile, Yuk Yaorao, hiding not far behind him, couldn't help but hold her breath, her fists clenching tightly in nervousness.

In a blink, the ten-mile distance closed, and as Mokeduo rushed in with world-ending momentum, a transparent light curtain abruptly emerged, tightly enveloping the area where Lu Ye and Yuk Yaorao were.

A great brilliance erupted with the surging spirit force, and Mokeduo instantly sensed trouble. The resilient sensation from ahead felt like he had plunged into a swamp.

He immediately realized that Lu Yiye's proficiency in the Array Path was higher than he had anticipated. The opponent's array wasn't just a brute blockade but one that continually weakened his momentum.

This was true adaptability and target-specific strategizing, the last thing he wanted to see.

Chapter 1272 - 1270: I Lost

Trapped within the big array, Mokeduo's accumulated power was instantly greatly weakened and obstructed. He roared in fury, unleashing all his strength without reservation, turning the area he was in into a spirit force explosive combustion light ball, preventing anyone from seeing his true form.

Cracking sounds echoed, and cracks appeared on the translucent array light curtain, showing signs of being incapable of sustaining itself.

After all, this Formation was hastily set up by Lu Ye, so its protective strength was not very strong, but it was barely enough to block Mokeduo's charged blow.

As the crash resonated, the protective array shattered with a roar, and Lu Ye soared skyward.

The cultivators observing secretly could only vaguely see Lu Ye's figure turning into a rainbow, crossing paths with Mokeduo.

In the next moment, a spray of hot blood drifted down, and Mokeduo quickly sped away, vanishing in a blink.

In an instant of confrontation, the match was decided!

Seeing Lu Yiye's calm expression, without a trace of injury on him, everyone knew Mokeduo was defeated and likely injured, though no one could tell the specifics. This guy came fiercely, but retreated swiftly, executing his actions decisively and efficiently.

Compared to the bloody battle between Bao Shi and Lu Yiye, Mokeduo's challenge definitely lacked spectacle, yet everyone understood the danger in it was no less than the previous fight, possibly even greater. However, Mokeduo treasured his life, so after a disadvantage, he promptly fled, whereas Bao Shi fought to the death, resulting in his shattering defeat, which left people sighing regretfully.

After two top ten ranked strong challengers came, both met with ruin, ending in one death and one injury. This made the cultivators observing in secret even more aware of the gold quality of the first rank, after witnessing such fierce confrontations; no longer would anyone question Lu Yiye's ranking in the Nine Heavens World.

Such strength, deservedly number one.

Now that even the fourth-ranked Mokeduo was no match for one move from Lu Yiye, it's uncertain if any higher-ranking ones would challenge him.

Time passed, and the Reincarnation Tree's revelation descended once more.

While meditating to recover, Lu Ye paused slightly, because he noticed something odd—his tally hadn't increased compared to the last revelation arrival, and still, the seventh-ranked was Bao Shi from Five Colors Territory!

Wasn't this guy supposed to be dead?

Thinking about it, he got up and approached the place where Bao Shi died, stirring up the scattered stones, only to find a pit appeared on the ground at some unknown time.

Inside the pit, a small figure was sitting cross-legged, devoid of any life signs, seemingly just a piece of stone. Yet the bare head was reflecting bright light under the sunlight!

Lu Ye's eye twitched uncontrollably.

As if sensing the movement above his head, Bao Shi, reduced countless times to about child-size, looked up at Lu Ye and grinned naively, "Rest, just resting!"

Lu Ye was silent for a moment, then buried the scattered stones back.

Bao Shi leaped from the pit, stones flying everywhere, explaining to Lu Ye, "It's our Stone Race's Innate Divine Ability, I'm not lying, you really did kill me!"

Lu Ye was noncommittal, and the cultivators watching in secret were also in an uproar. Formerly, seeing Bao Shi knowing he couldn't win yet not retreating, many had sincerely offered their highest respect for

his choice; while seemingly foolish, the courage against strong foes touched everyone and was indeed admirable. Now they realized, it wasn't any foolish reckless persistence; the guy could shed his skin and escape all along.

Inwardly, everyone was grumbling, preferring they hadn't wasted their sincere respect on such a thick-browed guy who was truly not a good thing.

Lu Ye returned to his original spot to sit and rest, while Bao Shi followed over with a carefree greeting to Yuk Yaorao, leaving her stunned for quite a while without any reaction.

Some couldn't read the situation. How did these two who previously fought intensely now coexist so harmoniously? It's tough to understand the thoughts of these top geniuses.

Actually, it wasn't that complicated. Lu Ye didn't feel any battle intent from Bao Shi, naturally he wouldn't be on guard against him. Correspondingly, Bao Shi having died once at Lu Ye's hands would definitely not invite trouble.

Though unsaid, both knew, after experiencing a life-and-death battle, there was no reason for another fight between them.

One such battle was enough; there was no need to definitively destroy one side.

The situation in the field became somewhat strange. Originally there was only Lu Ye with Yuk Yaorao, but now Bao Shi joined. This guy appeared naive, but he was actually particularly lively and restless, unable to sit still for a moment, sometimes chatting with Yuk Yaorao and questioning Lu Ye.

Although Lu Ye wasn't keen on engaging, having experienced a life-and-death battle previously, ignoring him completely seemed unkind, so he made idle chat on and off.

Around them, the frequency of conflicts was increasing, and occasional intense clashes echoed from every direction. With this contention reaching its final stage, those wanting to prevail naturally felt it was time to exert themselves.

This stage is no longer one that can be endured merely by avoidance; the revelations of the Reincarnation Tree descend sporadically, and to remain unnoticed among the crowd, one must secure enough accomplishments. If one's achievements fall short and they're marked by the Reincarnation Tree's revelation, they will only become targets for others' attacks.

Under such ruthless sieving, the number of surviving cultivators continually dwindles.

The incessantly talking Bao Shi suddenly grew silent, his small figure sitting there with a serious and focused expression.

Lu Ye's thumb also rested on the Boulder Mountain Saber, gently stroking it.

Yuk Yaorao didn't know what had happened but instinctively felt something was amiss, as if an immense danger lurked unseen.

She glanced around but remained unable to discern where this danger might originate.

It wasn't until one incense stick's time later that a soft sigh reached her ears: "The top rank is indeed deserving!"

With the emergence of the voice, Yuk Yaorao shockingly noticed the space not far from her slightly twisting, followed by the spectral reveal of a petite figure.

It was a woman whose face was obscured behind a ghost-like mask, covering most of her features, her hair simply tied back, clad in form-fitting black attire, with complex patterns adorning the exposed skin.

Before she spoke or revealed herself, Yuk Yaorao hadn't sensed the slightest presence; only upon her sudden arrival did Yuk Yaorao see this person.

Finally understanding the bizarre atmosphere earlier, cold sweat soaked her clothes instantly, and she exclaimed in shock: "Youping!"

Earlier, Lu Yiye, Junior Brother Lu, faced challenges from ranks seventh and fourth, winning both battles. Yuk Yaorao thought someone would challenge him again, especially the two now ranked behind Junior Brother Lu. Regardless of their stance, they would certainly appear.

As expected, these two indeed did not give up easily; Youping had appeared, evidently seeking an opportunity to strike, although seemingly unsuccessful.

For a ghost cultivator, if they aren't confident in delivering a fatal blow under complete concealment, it's better not to act, lest they place themselves in danger.

Yuk Yaorao didn't know what sort of hidden confrontation existed between Junior Brother Lu and Youping, but judging from the strange atmosphere and some subtle actions of Junior Brother Lu earlier, it seemed Youping hadn't found a chance to strike in this covert standoff, leading her to boldly reveal herself.

The concealed ghost cultivator poses the greatest threat; thus, openly showing her presence is undoubtedly a retreat, a statement, a gesture of unwillingness to conflict with Lu Ye.

Youping cast a cold glance at Yuk Yaorao, her voice as chill as water: "It's good to be pretty; casually clinging to a strong backer, congratulations."

Yuk Yaorao blushed instantly, yet she couldn't refute it. In her heart, she didn't wish to depend on anyone, but realistically speaking, she indeed was sheltered under Junior Brother Lu's wing; otherwise, in such a place and environment, she wouldn't have a foothold.

Feeling secretly vexed, she knew it was impossible to leave just now with her injuries yet to heal and the battle for the Divine Sea reaching its critical juncture. Should she leave, she might not last half a day outside.

With a sigh within, she could only accept her fate for now, planning to repay Junior Brother Lu's favor when the opportunity arose.

Youping turned her gaze to Lu Ye, speaking lightly: "I thought the greatest rival in the Taichu Realm would be Gu Yulou, but here you come, young lad. Remember, beauties can be disastrous, those easily swayed by charm won't walk far."

Lu Ye cast her a casual glance: "Those who talk too much don't walk far either!"

Bao Shi laughed heartily from the side, prompting Youping to glare at him: "What's so funny? Keep laughing and I'll knock your teeth out!"

Bao Shi appeared indifferent: "I fear nothing, not even being smashed to bits, so why would I fear you knocking my teeth out?" Others might dread Youping, but Bao Shi didn't, as her methods were of little use against him; his Stone Race body bore almost no exploitable weaknesses, aside from being shattered like Lu Ye could, a unique advantage other races couldn't replicate.

Therefore, if there was anyone in the Taichu Realm unafraid of the ghost cultivator from Northern Underworld Land of Specters, it would be Bao Shi.

Youping shot him a hateful glare before turning to call sweetly in another direction: "I failed, do you want to try?"

With Youping's words, a figure leisurely approached from that direction, his demeanor extraordinarily poised, his appearance excellent, holding a Silver Spear in hand.

Despite the lack of any imposing presence about him, his mere arrival gave Lu Ye a faint sense of pressure.

Thus, he instantly recognized the identity of the newcomer.

Yellow Dragon World, Gu Yulou!

Chapter 1273 - Can't Win

The cultivators watching from the shadows evidently recognized Gu Yulou, and thus they became excited and expectant.

Currently, three top ten ranked contenders have already come forth to challenge Lu Yiye. Bao Shi was pulverized, Mokeduo retreated after one blow, and Youping seemingly could not find an opportune moment to strike.

What kind of performance will Gu Yulou deliver?

Since ancient times, the clash between the first and second rank has always been the most noteworthy and anticipated. If Lu Yiye can even defeat Gu Yulou, then the top position will be unshakable, truly making him the legitimate first place in this Divine Sea competition.

What sparks will ignite between these two, is genuinely intriguing.

Under the watchful eyes of numerous gazes, Gu Yulou, carrying his Silver Spear, walked straight to the pile of rubble, stared silently at the stones for a moment, and then raised his head to look at Bao Shi: "Were you killed?"

Bao Shi, arms crossed, replied leisurely, candidly admitting, without feeling awkward for having been killed once before.

Gu Yulou nodded lightly, planted his spear in front of him, and sat down cross-legged.

Youping's eyebrows furrowed in confusion over his actions and couldn't help but ask, "Aren't you here to challenge him? Why are you not making a move?"

Gu Yulou lowered his eyes and replied plainly, "I can't beat him!"

Youping immediately wore an expression of disappointment, annoyed, "You haven't even fought him yet, how do you know you can't beat him?"

Gu Yulou appeared disinterested in explaining, but Bao Shi beside him laughed heartily: "He fought me, so he knows he can't beat him!"

The remark sounded a bit convoluted, but Youping understood the meaning behind Bao Shi's words. Gu Yulou clearly had a confrontation with Bao Shi before. Though the outcome is unknown, judging from the current situation, that battle seemed closely matched, even if Gu Yulou had a slight edge, it wouldn't have been significant.

However, using Bao Shi as the common opponent, Lu Ye was able to crush him utterly. Comparing these results, Gu Yulou could judge Lu Ye's strength level without needing another direct confrontation.

A foe capable of slaying a monster like Bao Shi is likely another beastly monster. Gu Yulou has no interest in fighting such a monster.

Youping was visibly upset: "Gu Yulou, you come from the Yellow Dragon World, not bringing back first place, would your elders let you off easily?"

Gu Yulou said coolly, "The Yellow Dragon World's first doesn't lack this time."

Youping persuaded earnestly, "But your Yellow Dragon World is a brand after all, how can the brand be ruined in your hands? As the Divine Sea Realm's most exceptional representative of your generation, you must carry your responsibility to bring back another first for Yellow Dragon World, it's your duty!"

Bao Shi curiously glanced at Youping: "You, a Specter Race from the Northern Underworld Land of Specters, why worry for someone else's Yellow Dragon World?"

Youping couldn't help but glare at him: "Mind your own business!"

Bao Shi laughed knowingly, revealing her intention: "You are hoping to reap the benefits while they fight tooth and nail!"

Gu Yulou seemed indifferent to the fight for first place, while Youping was highly invested. She had no confidence in overcoming the two ranked above her, but if those two fought, it would present her a rare opportunity to perhaps maneuver and eliminate both.

Unfortunately, Gu Yulou was unmoved, no matter her persuasion, taking it as nothing more than the wind by his ears. For such a strong person, once he's made up his mind, it's difficult for outsiders to alter his perceptions and determinations.

After a few more attempts at persuasion, seeing Gu Yulou truly indifferent, Youping finally sighed: "Pointless!"

Saying so, she sat down, idly playing with two dirks spinning at her fingertips in boredom.

Youping wasn't the only one feeling pointless; the cultivators originally hoping to witness an earth-shattering battle also felt the same.

No one anticipated that after Gu Yulou arrived, there would be no clash with Lu Yiye, and merely after a few words, he quietly took a seat beside him.

Within this small area are gathered five figures. Except for Yuk Yaorao, the remaining four are all top ten ranked, including the first, second, and third ranks, even Bao Shi, who is seventh, hardly does justice to his actual strength. If truly calculated by strength, he wouldn't just be seventh.

This formation is immensely luxurious and enough to make anyone feel overawed.

Historically, during the centennial Taichu Realm Divine Sea contention, it seems never had such an odd scene occurred in its concluding phase, with several top-ranked geniuses not hunting around to enhance their gains but silently waiting here.

There's no agreement, nor discussion, just a spontaneous and natural behavior, yet they seem to be getting along quite harmoniously...

Lu Ye couldn't figure out what was going on. The place he chose to rest slowly evolved into a gathering place for the strong. First, Bao Shi clung and wouldn't leave; then Youping and Gu Yulou came running over to join. As time went by, more and more figures gathered from all directions, each finding their own spot to sit quietly!

In just less than two days, the cultivators gathered here have exceeded ten, and the number continues to increase.

Not just anyone is qualified to come here. Those who dare to merge into such a special small group at this time are not top-tier elites without ample achievements. In other words, even if they gain nothing more in the future, they can still guarantee a position at the forefront.

Among the enlightenment bestowed by the Reincarnation Tree, seven of the top ten rankings have gathered here, and the remaining ones are basically all within the top thirty.

Those cultivators beyond thirty ranks did not have the courage to join here at all.

The number gradually increased, and after several days, there were more than twenty people gathered within this small range, each looking condensed and focused.

Yuk Yaorao felt pressured like a mountain!

Staying in such a place where top elites gather, she always felt somewhat out of place. She knew very well that her strength wasn't enough to be qualified for such a conventionally accepted place, but at this time, even if she had the courage to leave, she couldn't.

She could only strive to lower her presence. Fortunately, Lu Ye was sitting not far from her, his figure providing her with invisible protection at all times.

The elites who dared to gather here now, and who can gather here, are almost certainly candidates who can win, ranking high. They have no intention to engage in the upcoming competitions, which might not be a bad thing for other cultivators.

Therefore, these people gathered, instead of others enjoying the scene, because they don't have to worry about encountering Gu Yulou, Youping, such strong individuals in future actions, nor need they fear encountering Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens World, infamous for his killing spree.

The range where cultivators can move within the Taichu Realm has shrunk to the last 10,000 miles in square radius, but the competition isn't over yet because the final list of a hundred candidates has not been decided.

At this crucial last moment, battles everywhere have become more frequent than ever, as cultivators engage in more ferocious fights after encountering each other.

No one withdrew! Everyone has persisted to this point, one step away from ultimate victory; who would be willing to quit? All gritted their teeth, hoping to last longer than others!

More people gathered on Lu Ye's side, and it started to become lively.

The hospitable ones took out fine wine and food from their own storage sacks from their domain to share and drink with others. The elites, from different domains, supposedly opposing one another, inexplicably achieved harmonious coexistence here.

Such an experience is rare for any cultivator.

Besides the Taichu Realm of the Reincarnation Tree, where else can so many cultivators from various races and places across the stellar space gather all at once? Even if they elevate to the Constellation level and travel the stellar space, similar experiences will never happen again.

For talented youngsters whose current cultivation is only at the Divine Sea Realm and nearing promotion to the Constellation level, this is undeniably a precious experience.

Everyone can meet like-minded fellow Daoists here, broaden their horizons, and see things they wouldn't have the chance to witness normally.

No matter whether they meet again as enemies or friends while traveling the stellar space in the future, today's encounter here is a sort of fate recognized by all.

In such an atmosphere, even someone as aloof as Gu Yulou couldn't help but integrate.

Youping, who wished Lu Ye and Gu Yulou would fight until both were severely injured so she could benefit from their strife, boldly walked over to Lu Ye, wrapped an arm around his neck, grabbed a wine jar larger than a human head, and poured wine into his mouth: "Drink up, you pretentious ones, I can't stand hypocrites like you who are full of scheming insides!"

She seemed to be convinced that there was some unspeakable backdoor deal between Lu Ye and Yuk Yaorao; otherwise, how could cultivators from different domains come together? Moreover, the more powerful one was protecting the weaker one everywhere.

Lu Ye was filled with liquor poured by her, yet could hardly utter a word.

In a drunken daze, Lu Ye was greatly puzzled at how the situation here developed as it did. He stayed because Yuk Yaorao needed time to heal and was too lazy to hide constantly. So he simply remained here, waiting for challengers due to his confidence in his abilities, never expecting to unintentionally attract so many top-tier elites by chance.

But just looking at the result, it seemed quite okay indeed!

While this side was buzzing with glasses clinking and cheerfulness, other parts of the Taichu Realm harbored sinister intentions, with relentless competitions unfolding. Under the same sky, two entirely different situations formed a very stark contrast.

Chapter 1274 The End

For about ten days, the situation remained unchanged until a massive humming sound rang throughout the world, and everyone instantly understood that the Divine Sea competition had ended, with the final hundred places confirmed.

In various places of the Taichu Realm, cultivators locked in fierce opposition suddenly ceased their altercations, backing off to maintain a safe distance. The nearly three months of persistence and contention was all for this moment, now that the struggle was over, naturally there was no reason to continue fighting.

Lu Ye and the others gathered at one location, and everyone silently drank their cup of wine, waiting silently.

Though there was initially a big sun hanging in the sky, at this moment, another dazzling big sun suddenly rose up. This second rising sun was bright but not glaring, its brilliance carrying a gentle feeling.

This second sun rose to the mid-heavens and suddenly trembled slightly, transforming instantaneously into a hundred beams of light, varying in size, the largest being nearly ten times the size of the smallest.

After splitting, these beams seemed to possess a spirit of their own, flying in all directions and falling into the bodies of cultivators still in the Taichu Realm.

As the unchallenged top scorer of the Divine Sea competition, Lu Ye undoubtedly received the largest beam, and having anticipated this, he neither evaded nor resisted.

When the beam of spirit light surged into his body, Lu Ye felt a warm sensation throughout, as if his fatigue from the past days was instantly wiped away, his energy becoming much more vigorous.

Besides, there seemed nothing particularly special.

But with careful perception, he clearly sensed a mysterious power within his flesh and blood, which could not be channeled for now and posed no harm, merely residing temporarily within.

Acknowledging this internally, he knew that only upon breaking through the Divine Sea and ascending to the Constellation realm would this stored power truly be triggered, granting him the ability to connect with the stellar space. Moreover, the spirit light from the Taichu Realm provided greater benefits for cultivators' growth and advancement than that born in Nine Provinces or other domains.

As for the specific benefits, Lu Ye was unsure; he would have to advance to the Constellation realm to slowly experience it.

Every cultivator still in the Taichu Realm received their portion of spirit light, sufficient for their advancement, regardless of its amount.

Yuk Yaorao looked at Lu Ye gratefully, honestly speaking, if not for staying with Lu Ye until the end to avoid conflicts with others, she surely wouldn't have secured a spot among the hundred, likely facing elimination.

And being eliminated in such a situation meant only death, unless she voluntarily chose to leave early.

The spirit light entered each body without delay, and powerful repulsion began to spread from all directions.

Thus everyone knew, it was time to depart.

A cultivator cupped his fists and said: "Fellow Daoists, should we meet in stellar space someday, please offer each other your guidance!"

Of course, this was merely a courtesy, as once gone from here, the chances of these cultivators meeting in the vast stellar space were slim, given the vast expanse and their different domain backgrounds.

But anything is possible; today's acquaintance could be the start of future companionship. Being the top talents left behind, they naturally shared mutual admiration.

Some reciprocated the gesture, while others remained silent.

The repulsion from all directions intensified, as figures began to disappear amidst the distorting Void.

The Baiyu Platform of the Reincarnation Tree, after three months, became lively once more.

Though compared to nearly three months ago, when thousands of Divine Sea cultivators flocked to the Taichu Realm, the return of just a hundred made the excitement notably less.

Those whose own younger generation gained something were naturally ecstatic, but more were left lamenting as their young ones perished in the Taichu Realm, now only able to envy others' reunions, truly a reality of some houses happy and others sad.

As the top scorer of the Divine Sea competition, Lu Ye returned and many strong cultivators focused their attention on him.

His entry into the Taichu Realm had previously caused a stir, as amidst the uniform Divine Sea Level 9 cultivators, he was the most unique, being just a Level 8 cultivator made him exceptionally noticeable.

No one expected that an unassuming Level 8 cultivator from an overlooked domain, presumed by many strong cultivators to not survive long, would seize the top spot.

For generations, those who could rank in the top ten in the Taichu Realm were destined for great achievements, let alone the ones at the top.

Before Lu Ye returned, there were already strong individuals privately exchanging information, wondering where exactly the Nine Heavens World was located. Yet no matter how they exchanged and explored, no one had heard of the Nine Heavens World's name; there was never a precedent of this domain participating in previous Divine Sea competitions.

This domain seemed to have suddenly appeared out of nowhere, with no trace to follow.

This is not surprising, given that there are so many domains within the stellar space; even the most knowledgeable cultivators dare not claim they know them all.

Moreover, not every large domain will send cultivators to participate in the Divine Sea battles. Many large domains have the qualifications to participate but lack the avenues to do so, which is why they've never appeared before the world.

Thus, many strong individuals believe that the Nine Heavens World is likely one of those domains, and perhaps Nine Heavens cultivators have participated in previous Divine Sea competitions, but quietly without stirring any waves, naturally going unnoticed.

Just like this time, there are thousands of domains participating, but nowadays, except for those particularly famous domains, who would bother to keep records of those that remain silent and unknown?

On the Baiyu Platform, Lu Ye keenly sensed several hostile gazes. Following those gazes, he discovered a group of strong Blood Race and Insect Race individuals gathered.

He understood; his actions in the Taichu Realm against the Blood Race and Insect Race haven't been concealed from these individuals. Although they don't know the specifics of what happened inside the Taichu Realm causing the Blood Race's complete defeat and the Insect Race's massive losses, his victories have earned him ranking improvements.

Anyone concerned with ranking improvements can infer whose hands their juniors perished at.

These strong individuals from the Blood Race and Insect Race have apparently determined that their juniors fell by his hands. If the timing wasn't inconvenient, they might have already come up looking for trouble.

"Well done!" A familiar voice sounded; Yang Qing appeared beside him, smiling and praising, blocking those Blood Race and Insect Race individuals' gazes.

"I have fulfilled my duties!" Lu Ye nodded slightly, seeing Yang Qing's mood seemed quite good. It was unclear if he had encountered something fortunate.

Little did he know that thanks to his performance this time, Yang Qing had reaped great rewards — a nine-star Dragon Ball token allowed him to take away thirty percent of the treasures from the treasure pond. Although each treasure may not be of high value, the quantity was substantial.

In the future, he only needs to find the opportunity to exchange these treasures for spirit jade, and he won't have to worry about resources needed for recovery. He felt increasingly that bringing Lu Ye to the Reincarnation Tree to participate in the Divine Sea battles was a wise decision; otherwise, how else would he obtain so many benefits so easily?

Even for a strong individual like him, it's vexing to search for spirit jade within the stellar space — a time requiring enduring great loneliness and monotony.

With matters settled here, Yang Qing had no intention of staying longer and was prepared to leave with Lu Ye; however, before they could move, Yuk Yaorao came over with a distinguished middle-aged man.

Yuk Yaorao specifically came to express her gratitude; she had briefly explained to her elder about her experiences in the Taichu Realm, stating that it was thanks to Lu Ye's protection at the last moment that she succeeded safely, and this elder from the Moon Jade Realm was someone who values gratitude and insisted on coming to thank him personally.

After some courteous exchanges, Yuk Yaorao's elder expressed genuine gratitude and invited Lu Ye to visit Jiuxuan World as an honored guest if there's an opportunity, assuring him that the entire Jiuxuan World would treat him as the most distinguished guest.

Lu Ye casually agreed, but as for whether he'd go... he didn't even know where Jiuxuan World was, so how could he go? This matter could only be left to fate.

While Lu Ye exchanged pleasantries, Yang Qing stood aside with a confident air as if he were the greatest, yet the Moon Jade elder didn't mind at all, knowing that a nine-star treasure casually given meant his background couldn't be matched by a mere Moon Jade realm individual. He had the self-awareness not to engage in fruitless actions.

Amidst the lively commotion, at the edge of Baiyu Platform, Duu Lang sighed, "Master Uncle, shall we go?"

The cultivator beside Duu Lang said, "It's a rare opportunity; shouldn't we greet them?"

Duu Lang shook his head, "No need, Master Uncle. I only met Fellow Daoist Lu in passing. Witnessing him secure first place is enough history-making. Since we didn't involve ourselves before, there's no need to stir things up now and disrupt peace of mind. When a disciple reaches Constellation in the future, perhaps fate will allow another encounter within the stellar space for an equal friendship."

The cultivator nodded slightly, "That sounds sensible!"

This nephew of mine is also ambitious. Greeting him now would appear sycophantic, something any self-respecting cultivator wouldn't do.

Moreover, Duu Lang is right; he only briefly met Lu Yiye. Initially, his Master and nephew should have left long ago, but seeing Lu Ye's ranking made them stay and watch. Now that the results are out, there is no reason to linger.

To Duu Lang, he had thought Nine Heavens Lu Yiye was like him; yet unexpectedly, Lu Ye charged ahead to win the top place, achieving the utmost honor in this Divine Sea battle, while he had to withdraw from the Taichu Realm early due to unavoidable reasons. Though outwardly claiming indifference, there was indeed some unavoidable disappointment inside.

Chapter 1275 An Incident Occurred

"Junior Brother Lu, take care, I hope we'll meet again someday!" On the Baiyu Platform, Yuk Yaorao gave a graceful salute.

Lu Ye clasped his hands in return and turned around to follow Yang Qing out.

The Shen Hai Contention had ended, and the strong cultivators from various domains had no reason to stay. Each took their juniors and headed home. The next time the scene around the Reincarnation Tree would be as lively as this, it might be a hundred years later.

Leaving the Baiyu Platform, they entered a passage, and Yang Qing continued walking forward.

After a long moment, they arrived at a portal. Turning his head, Yang Qing instructed Lu Ye, "Remember this location. In the future, if you bring your juniors to participate in the Shen Hai Contention, you'll return through here."

Lu Ye nodded silently, faintly catching some underlying meaning in Yang Qing's words, but he didn't hurry to ask more.

Yang Qing opened the door and entered, with Lu Ye following closely behind. Instead of stepping into the room he imagined, they found themselves in an open space that resembled a stellar space magnified countless times over, with stars scattered all around, majestic and vast. Being here made one feel insignificant.

Yang Qing raised his hand and gently pointed forward into the void. A ripple spread out from where his fingertip touched, expanding in all directions.

When the ripple vanished, Yang Qing frowned and asked, "Tree Elder, what is the meaning of this?"

Normally, his single point would open a passageway leading to the Nine Provinces, taking Lu Ye back there, but no passageway had appeared this time, which was rather strange.

Without a passageway appearing, it was evident that the Reincarnation Tree was interfering, or rather, it wasn't permitting passage, though he didn't understand why.

A voice, ancient and aged, abruptly sounded in this small piece of stellar space, "Dragon Monarch, do not worry. It's merely that the young friend beside you is carrying something he shouldn't have taken away!"

Yang Qing raised his eyebrows, turned to look at Lu Ye, and examined him up and down.

Lu Ye immediately looked a little awkward, scratching his head uncomfortably.

It's happened!

He had acted stealthily before, thinking nobody would notice. After so much time had passed without anyone troubling him, he thought he had gotten away with it. Who could have guessed that just when he was about to leave, he got caught by the Reincarnation Tree?

Despite his precautions to avoid exposure in the Taichu Realm, hiding things even when faced with opponents like Bao Shi, not using those two little things to imbue any blessings...

In hindsight, thinking he was unnoticed, but having done it in the Tree World, how could the Reincarnation Tree not know?

It hadn't confronted him all this time because the moment hadn't come, but now that he was leaving, the Reincarnation Tree could no longer ignore it.

Yet this feeling of being caught red-handed is truly embarrassing...

Yang Qing initially didn't understand what the Reincarnation Tree meant, but seeing Lu Ye's demeanor, he realized that the kid probably had taken something he shouldn't have.

He couldn't help but laugh out of irritation. Other Divine Sea Realm cultivators came to the Reincarnation Tree with reverence, carefully trailing behind their elders, afraid of making a wrong step and embarrassing themselves. This kid, on the other hand, took the liberty to steal something under his watch?

The little fellow is incredibly bold!

He instantly barked, "Hand it over!"

Lu Ye was reluctant and began to dodge the question, "What thing?"

Yang Qing glared at him, "How would I know what it is? Stop blabbering, hand it over when I tell you!"

The old voice spoke again, this time very gently, "Young friend, the Fairies aren't meant to be taken to the outside world. If word gets out, it would not only spell disaster for the Fairies but bring trouble to your domain as well."

Yang Qing then understood what Lu Ye had stolen. He had thought the kid might have only taken some inanimate object; who would have guessed it was Fairies! This guy sure has the nerve to think it and do it!

Clarified by the Reincarnation Tree, Lu Ye, unwilling though he was, could only resign himself. With a sigh, he took off the spirit beast sack from his waist and opened it.

Immediately, a small head poked out, unmistakably Lü Yingying, looking suffocated, taking a few deep breaths before leaping out. Then she turned around, half her body digging into the spirit beast sack to pull out Hong Dandan.

The two little fairies glared angrily at Lu Ye, with Lü Yingying shaking her tiny fist at him, angrily proclaiming, "Bad person!"

Hong Dandan chimed in from the side, "Bad person!"

Lu Ye touched his nose, speechless.

The two little fairies fluttered their wings, flew around in a circle, and dove into a passage that appeared out of thin air, disappearing without a trace. It was clear they were sent back to the Fairy Tree World.

The voice of the Reincarnation Tree sounded: "As compensation for resolving the Tree World's troubles, this old one wishes to offer a small gift to you, young friend. I hope you won't find it inadequate."

As it spoke, the Void in front of Lu Ye trembled slightly, and a green leaf appeared out of nowhere.

The leaf looked like an ordinary leaf, even a bit smaller, about the size of a baby's palm, but it was entirely green, as if carved from emerald, vibrant with life.

Although Lu Ye didn't know the mysterious qualities of this leaf, since it was given by the Reincarnation Tree as compensation, it clearly wasn't an ordinary leaf.

He turned his head to look at Yang Qing, his expression seeking guidance.

Yang Qing gave an almost imperceptible nod, and only then did Lu Ye respectfully say, "I dare not refuse the gift of an elder. I am grateful to the Tree Elder for the treasure!"

As he held it with both hands, the leaf immediately fell into his palms, but before Lu Ye could put it away, the leaf suddenly transformed into a green light, merging into his palm.

Soon after, Lu Ye felt a slight warmth on his right wrist. He rolled up his sleeve to check, finding a green leaf's mark appearing there. The mark seemed so vivid, like a real leaf attached to it, but it was merely a mark, which vanished without a trace moments later.

Without any instructions from Yang Qing, it seemed there was no harm. Not wanting to ask much at the moment, Lu Ye could only suppress his curiosity.

"Tree Elder, now that the matter here is settled, we bid farewell," Yang Qing said, cupping his fist.

"Farewell, Dragon Monarch!"

This time, before Yang Qing could make a move, a passage appeared out of thin air in front of Lu Ye. Yang Qing stepped into it first, and Lu Ye followed closely.

In a brief moment of disorientation, their vision spun.

When Lu Ye came to his senses, he found himself on the spirit mountaintop in Tianzhou, facing a nondescript tree with withered leaves, seemingly dead, which was the doppelganger of the Reincarnation Tree.

This doppelganger went through a cycle every hundred years, from vibrant to withered, and now it was in its lifeless state. If Lu Ye hadn't learned about its mysteries from Yang Qing, he wouldn't have paid it much attention even if he had seen it here.

But it was by leveraging this doppelganger of the Reincarnation Tree that he managed to make a round trip from the Nine Provinces to some unknown distant point in the stellar space in just three months.

The wonders of the world truly exceed imagination.

"Senior, regarding the Tree Elder's final gift..." Only now did Lu Ye take the time to inquire with Yang Qing about the mysteries of that leaf.

"You could consider it a link to the Reincarnation Tree," Yang Qing said, raising his right hand and revealing his wrist. With a slight exertion of power, a leaf mark appeared on his wrist, identical to the one Lu Ye had received.

He actually had the same kind of mark.

"A link?"

"With this mark, you can freely visit the place where the Reincarnation Tree is located in the future, of course, as long as there is no interference. Because using this thing is quite troublesome, requiring a long time to accumulate power, unlike when we used the Reincarnation Tree's doppelganger's power to reach it instantly. This might be helpful for your future travels through stellar space, like if you get lost somewhere or need to use the Reincarnation Tree as a transit point to go somewhere else. You can use this mark to reach where the Reincarnation Tree is."

Lu Ye understood. If that were true, it would indeed be somewhat useful. The stellar space is vast; even though Lu Ye hadn't ventured into it yet, he knew traveling in such a broad environment required a lot of time. But if there is a fixed point that could serve as a transit, it would undoubtedly save a lot of traveling time in many situations.

For now, this thing was useless to him, but you could never guarantee you wouldn't need it in the future.

Swapping two little fairies for such a mark, though it seemed like a loss, the former couldn't be taken out, while the latter was a gift from the Reincarnation Tree, carrying a different significance.

Yang Qing also reminded, "But this mark is for your use only; you can't bring others with it. You need to remember this point."

Lu Ye nodded, "It seems the Reincarnation Tree has given this mark to quite a few people?"

Yang Qing said, "Indeed, it has given it to quite a few people, so if you later use the Reincarnation Tree as a transit, you might meet cultivators from other domains, as many people use it as a transit point."

This is the way Reincarnation Tree survives. It cycles once every ten thousand years, and during each cycle, it is at its most vulnerable. Usually, strong individuals from various domains use it as a transit to save time and effort, and when it needs help, naturally, people will come to its aid. This is the survival rule of the cultivation world: to gain something, you must offer something!"

Lu Ye mused over this.

"But overall, if someone is not favored by the Reincarnation Tree, it won't casually give its mark. Very few in the Divine Sea Realm have been given such a mark. You may have received it because you performed quite well this time, and the Reincarnation Tree sees you as promising. Perhaps next time it cycles, it will ask for your help; you should prepare yourself mentally for that."

Lu Ye nodded silently, "Having borrowed its convenience, offering help when needed is the right thing to do."

"It's best that you think that way."

Chapter 1276 Yang Qing's Departure

"Senior, are you preparing to leave the Nine Provinces?" Lu Ye asked again.

Although Yang Qing hadn't told him, Lu Ye faintly sensed that Yang Qing wouldn't stay in the Nine Provinces for too long.

The Nine Provinces, after all, is just a small pond; how can it accommodate a True Dragon like Yang Qing?

Yang Qing smiled faintly, "Isn't this exactly what you all hoped for?"

Lu Ye felt embarrassed, "Previously, we didn't understand Senior well, and there were many misunderstandings. Well, if Senior is willing, you can always stay."

Previously, the Nine Provinces cultivators couldn't clarify Yang Qing's exact attitude towards the Nine Provinces, so they were inevitably uneasy and wary of his stay. No matter what, he had been sealed in

the Spirit Stream battlefield for tens of thousands of years, and there was no guarantee he wouldn't hold a grudge. If such a powerful figure really wanted to vent grievances, the current Nine Provinces wouldn't be able to withstand it.

But after these days of interaction, Lu Ye found that Yang Qing actually bore no malice towards the Nine Provinces. The catastrophe brought by Yueh Xin was resolved by Yang Qing, who later took him to the Reincarnation Tree, participated in the magnificent Taichu Realm event, providing care throughout.

Observing his various actions, Yang Qing's attitude towards the Nine Provinces has become generally clear.

Taking a step back, if a powerful figure like Yang Qing really harbored malice towards the Nine Provinces, who could stop him?

On the other hand, if viewed from a different perspective, if the Nine Provinces had a character like Yang Qing stationed, it would be a dream come true for many domains. There had already been a Yueh Xin before; who knows if a second or third will emerge...

If that time comes, with Yang Qing not in the Nine Provinces, who can resist?

So when Lu Ye realized Yang Qing might soon leave, his mindset changed, wishing more for Yang Qing to stay as the greatest protector of the Nine Provinces!

Yang Qing smiled, "To the Nine Provinces, I'm ultimately just a passerby. Had it not been for that unforeseen event, I would have left long ago. Though the Nine Provinces still exist, all my old friends are gone. I have no reason or necessity to stay, not to mention, I have my own matters to attend to."

He turned his head to look at Lu Ye, "Your human race is quite a miraculous species, don't undervalue yourselves. The Nine Provinces is your home, so protecting it is your responsibility. Merely relying on others doesn't take you far. But no need to worry too much; the Nine Provinces are located in a relatively remote area. Unless unexpected events occur, few strong characters will come here. I estimate, as long as you are cautious, without exposing the existence of the Nine Provinces or leaving traces outside, it will be safe within a millennium. And with the growth speed of your human race, you should be able to cultivate a group of strong protectors for your home."

Lu Ye bowed his head in gratitude, understanding that once someone like Yang Qing has made up his mind, it's hard for outsiders to change it. Since he decided to leave, persuading him further is meaningless. He courteously bowed, "Thank you, Senior, for everything during this time!"

Yang Qing waved his hand, "Each of us takes what we need. Hopefully, one day, we can meet again somewhere in stellar space. Maybe by then, I might still need your assistance!"

Lu Ye gladly replied, "That would be the greatest honor for me!"

"Alright, that's all for now. Focus on cultivation," Yang Qing said, and with those words, he disappeared from sight.

His elusive techniques are undoubtedly far superior to Lu Ye using the Void Spirit Runes for teleportation. Even after witnessing many times, Lu Ye couldn't grasp the key; it's not just the significant difference in cultivation but perhaps an application of some mystical power.

However, Lu Ye could still feel that Yang Qing hadn't left the Nine Provinces, clueless about what he was doing.

It wasn't until most of the day passed that Lu Ye suddenly raised his head, faintly detecting a fleeting shadow outside the Nine Provinces, softly calling, "Number Nine!"

A cluster of spirit light gathered not far from Lu Ye, gradually forming the shape of a small white rabbit, hopping towards Lu Ye.

"Did Senior Yang leave?" Lu Ye asked.

Number Nine spoke human words, "He has left!"

Lu Ye was slightly surprised, "You don't seem very happy?"

Number Nine sighed, "It's strange, when he was here, I always felt uneasy. But now that he's left, I feel even more restless. Lu Ye, what if another Sun Blaze Realm like Yueh Xin comes over, what will we do?"

"Don't jinx it, don't speak nonsense!" Lu Ye glared at it, "Senior Yang said, our Nine Provinces is in a relatively remote location right now. As long as we're cautious, there won't be trouble for a thousand years."

"But things don't fear one in ten thousand but fear the slightest chance. What if it really happens? Yang Qing was just giving an estimation, nothing guaranteed."

Lu Ye solemnly replied, "That's why we need to rely on ourselves! I must cultivate diligently and improve my cultivation. As for you... start absorbing the essence of the Blood Refinement World to elevate your level; only self-reliance is true strength. Counting on others is ultimately unrealistic."

Number Nine said, "I've been absorbing all along, but this matter inherently takes time and can't show results quickly."

"Then try even harder!" Lu Ye admonished.

Number Nine immediately frowned deeply, unsure how to endeavor more diligently!

The battlefield marking suddenly transmitted a message; Lu Ye investigated and found it was Jian Guhong who sent the message.

Earlier, Jian Guhong and the others tasked him with finding Yang Qing to ascertain his attitude towards the Nine Provinces. As soon as Lu Ye arrived, he was taken by Yang Qing to the Reincarnation Tree, delaying his return for three months. During this period, Jian Guhong and the others were unable to contact Lu Ye, not knowing what had transpired.

At last, they reestablished contact at this moment.

Lu Ye sent a message back, informing Jian Guhong of his current location.

Less than half a day passed before several beams of light swiftly approached from afar—indeed, it was Jian Guhong and others.

Currently, the Constellation Realm in the Nine Provinces has grown to several hundred individuals, mainly because the Nine Provinces have just advanced to a large domain, allowing many Divine Sea Level 9 cultivators to manifest their potential swiftly. In the Nine Provinces now, nearly every day sees someone advancing to the Constellation Realm. This is typical of any newly advanced large domain.

As time goes on, this frequency of advancement will gradually stabilize. Then, the ascent from Divine Sea to Constellation will proceed in a continuous stream, rather than in explosive rounds as it does now.

Most Constellation Realm cultivators are out exploring the stellar space, searching for spirit jade used to aid cultivation. They have not ventured too far, scattered within less than a month's journey from the Nine Provinces. Thus, should anything occur in the Nine Provinces, they can return swiftly to assist.

Of course, this is also related to the fact that the Nine Provinces have only recently connected with stellar space and the cultivators have just begun their exploration, careful not to venture too far lest they get lost and unable to find their way back, which would be awkward.

Most Constellation Realm cultivators are exploring the stellar space, with only a few, including Jian Guhong, staying behind. This mainly concerns Yang Qing; although their strength is insignificant before Yang Qing, as part of the strongest cultivator group in the Nine Provinces now, they have the duty and responsibility to stay and protect.

Upon meeting each other, Jian Guhong immediately asked, "How are things?"

Lu Ye replied, "Senior Yang has already left."

Jian Guhong was taken aback, "Left?"

Lu Ye nodded, "He has left the Nine Provinces and may not return in the future."

Jian Guhong and others fell silent, unexpectedly finding the long-standing worry resolved so easily, yet feeling regret due to Yang Qing's decisive departure, affirming that he bore no malicious intent toward the Nine Provinces.

With the departure of such a formidable figure, the Nine Provinces have lost their protection. Should another adversary like Yueh Xin arrive, they will have to rely on their capabilities to withstand.

Human nature is ultimately complex; the Constellation Realm cultivators were anxious when Yang Qing was around, fearful of potential harm to the Nine Provinces. Now that he has left, they cannot help but feel ashamed, realizing they judged him unfairly.

After a long while, Jian Guhong finally spoke, "Let him go. The Nine Provinces are our human race's Nine Provinces, and the domain's safety will depend on us in the future."

Lu Ye nodded, "What Senior said is reasonable. Therefore, we must cultivate diligently in the future and quickly enhance our cultivation."

Wuchang curiously asked, "You've disappeared for more than three months suddenly; where did you go? Why couldn't we contact you?"

Lu Ye replied, "Senior Yang took me to a place called the Reincarnation Tree to participate in an epic gathering of thousands of domains!"

Upon hearing this, everyone's interest was piqued, Wuchang's eyes widened further, "An epic gathering of thousands of domains?"

The Nine Provinces cultivators have thus far only encountered the Blood Refinement World and Unparalleled Continent domains apart from their native land. Although everyone now knows many domains exist in the vast stellar space, the scene of an epic gathering of thousands is hard to imagine—it must be a magnificent spectacle.

Seeing everyone interested, Lu Ye briefly explained the events' causes and effects.

Learning that the seemingly lifeless small tree before them was actually a doppelganger of an Innate Supreme Treasure, even the most composed among them couldn't help but utter amazement.

Listening to Lu Ye describe the gathering of thousands of domain's powerhouses at the Reincarnation Tree, they felt a longing rise within them.

As they heard of the wonders and mysteries of various races, their curiosity grew even more intense.

Finally, upon hearing that Lu Ye dominated the Taichu Realm, clinching the top place, they all shared his honor and beamed with smiles.

Wuchang patted Lu Ye's shoulder, "Well done, kid. It seems that those domain prodigies still can't beat our Nine Provinces. Haha, great work."

Jian Guhong asked, "Yiye, why did Senior Yang tell you not to reveal your Nine Provinces origin, but instead use the name Nine Heavens?"

Lu Ye seriously replied, "Because prior to the Nine Provinces era, many formidable enemies were provoked. Although it's been ten thousand years, for those top-tier domains and supreme powerhouses, hatred isn't easily forgotten. Our Nine Provinces' decline was due to excessive flamboyance. Hence, when traversing stellar space, we should refrain from exposing our Nine Provinces origin to avoid being targeted."

Chapter 1277 - Inventory

This is a question worth paying attention to for a long time. Jian Guhong and others silently noted it down and planned to find an opportunity to notify those Constellation Realm cultivators who have left the Nine Provinces.

Fortunately, everyone hasn't gone too far away, so the message won't be too difficult to convey.

Yang Qing has left, and now there is another problem facing Jian Guhong and the others.

"Yiye, do you think there's a need for Constellation Realm cultivators to stay and guard the Nine Provinces at this stage?"

Jian Guhong and the others stayed because of Yang Qing. Now that Yang Qing has left, they seem to have lost their reason to continue staying in the Nine Provinces. But if they just leave, the Nine Provinces would be unguarded, leaving them undecided for the moment.

Lu Ye thought for a moment and said, "I think the urgent task for you seniors is to search for Spirit Jade to enhance cultivation. The Constellation Realm is merely a starting point in the entire stellar space. Even if you stay and guard the Nine Provinces, if a strong enemy does invade, you probably won't be able to do much. Moreover, unlike domains like the Unparalleled Continent, the Heaven and Earth's Will in Nine Provinces is clear and strong; if an external enemy invades, it can impose Heavenly Punishment. Given the current foundation of the Nine Provinces, even if a Moon Jade Realm cultivator comes, the power of Heavenly Punishment can barely resist. Yet seniors at Constellation Realm facing Moon Jade Realm would seem powerless."

To the Nine Provinces at this stage, the Heavenly Punishment brought down by Number Nine is undoubtedly the strongest protection. Before the individual strength of the Nine Provinces cultivators surpasses the power of Heavenly Punishment in their domain, any guardianship is meaningless. Instead of wasting time in the Nine Provinces, it's better to search for resources for cultivation.

Jian Guhong nodded, "What you say makes sense, we should set out now."

The Constellation Realm ultimately needs to traverse the stellar space; affairs of the home world don't require their involvement, it's left to the Divine Sea Realm cultivators of each province to handle. For so many years, this is how the Nine Provinces have survived, there's no reason to make Divine Sea Realm cultivators obsolete now with the emergence of Constellation Realm.

This should be the correct development direction for a domain. Below Constellation Realm, cultivators strive within the domain, while above, they venture into stellar space to seek their path forward.

Jian Guhong and his group departed.

On the spirit mountaintop, only Lu Ye remained, with a rabbit manifested by Number Nine hopping around beside him carefree.

He didn't choose to return to Mount Ao. For him, the current task is only one: to ascend to Divine Sea Level 9, then break through to Constellation, acquiring the qualification to walk the stellar space.

So staying here to cultivate is also fine; in fact, it's quieter here. Moreover, with the battlefield marking, if anyone wishes to contact him, they can transmit messages anytime.

A Divine Sea battle in the Taichu Realm opened his eyes far wider than other Nine Provinces cultivators, making him realize more clearly the shortcomings of his home domain.

For a domain to grow strong, it depends on its cultivators. The stronger the individual strength, the stronger the domain can become. In the stellar space, powerful domains are abundant; what he has seen and heard may just be the tip of the iceberg, more so are those domains lacking even the qualification to partake in the Divine Sea battle.

Yet these domains aren't necessarily weaker than the Nine Provinces; they simply lack strong cultivators to obtain a doppelganger from the Reincarnation Tree, hence their absence in such grand events.

Improving individual strength and developing the domain's future, Lu Ye suddenly finds the cultivation path long and arduous. Back when he was only at Spirit Stream Realm or Cloud River Realm, he thought only about when he could ascend to Divine Sea Realm to roam unrestrained. Only now he understands, Divine Sea is just another starting point on the long cultivation journey.

How about reaching Sun Blaze Realm? Even if Yueh Xin was strong enough, he was still killed by Yang Qing. This hasn't hindered Lu Ye's enthusiasm for cultivation; instead, it makes him more determined. Cultivation is akin to climbing mountains; the process of scaling one peak after another is the most memorable and something worth looking forward to.

Lu Ye didn't rush to cultivate; rather, he began to tally his gains from the trip to the Reincarnation Tree.

All sorts of war spoils were laid out in front of him dazzlingly.

First was the core of the Void Beast obtained in the Insect Race Tree World; this item was placed by the Insect Race in the Tree World to establish links with other Tree Worlds, facilitating the invasion of other domains and the plundering of rare species.

The Insect Race's arrangement was flawless, after all, the Insect Race Tree World was not a place generally accessible for Divine Sea Realm cultivators, much less rob such treasures.

Yet Lu Ye managed such feats, not only uprooting the insect hive in the Insect Race Tree World but also seizing the Void Beast's core.

The core contained extremely profound patterns, seemingly with traces of Void Spirit Runes. Lu Ye had only hastily examined it, not closely checking before; now he saw quite apparent traces of Void Spirit Runes.

This item could penetrate two different Tree Worlds, relying on the functions of the runes within.

Lu Ye vaguely felt that this thing could perhaps be used for escaping, like when trapped in a sealed space, using its mystical powers to open connections between the confined space and the outside world.

This was just an idea of his. To determine how to fully unleash its power, careful experimentation was needed. In any case, keeping it for now wouldn't hurt, as it might come in handy someday.

Lu Ye glanced to the side at the pile of spirit jade resembling a small mountain.

He hadn't counted the spirit jade, but there were no less than 30,000 pieces. It was part of the harvest from the Spirit Jade Vein with Duu Lang, interspersed with a small number of spirit crystals, perhaps only about a hundred pieces.

In comparison, spirit crystals are undoubtedly more valuable than spirit jade, with their stored energy being more abundant. The relationship between them is akin to the comparison between low-grade spirit stones and supreme-grade spirit stones.

It was undeniably lucky to have encountered Duu Lang in the Spirit Jade Vein. Without Duu Lang sharing some jade-eating ants with him, based solely on his own ability, it would have been impossible to achieve such a large harvest in less than a month. By his own efficiency, extracting a thousand pieces of spirit jade in the same timeframe would have been commendable, let alone 30,000 pieces!

To those seasoned in stellar space exploration, 30,000 pieces of spirit jade might not be much, but to Lu Ye, it's a considerable fortune.

It's worth noting that Jian Guhong and others previously searched for spirit jade in the stellar space, laboring for a month or two, with even the luckiest among them gathering just a few hundred pieces, while the least fortunate acquired only a few dozen.

This was in the vicinity of the Nine Provinces, unexplored for many years, resulting in a higher yield of spirit jade.

If it were in other large domains where Constellation cultivators frequently arise, the outer space surrounding their domain would hardly have any spirit jade left because once it appeared, it would be swiftly collected, leaving almost nothing behind.

The 30,000 pieces of spirit jade would at least secure Lu Ye's cultivation needs shortly after ascending to the Constellation Realm. At the very least, it allows him to fully stabilize his Constellation Realm foundation, which is of significant practical benefit to him.

The spirit jade is the most tangible gain; besides that, there are various spoils of war!

During his journey in the Taichu Realm, Lu Ye killed many people. Although almost everyone possessed their own storage space, and killing them wouldn't yield much plunder, the spirit treasures in their possession could always be considered spoils of war.

Moreover, they were all top Divine Sea Realm cultivators from various domains, hence the quality of the spirit treasures was most certainly top-notch.

Placed before Lu Ye were various shapes and forms of spirit treasures and other valuables, dozens in total, and some unopened storage sacks, which, even if not highly valuable individually, would collectively be quite considerable.

The spirit treasures were of no use to Lu Ye as a combat cultivator; having the Boulder Mountain Saber was sufficient, so he naturally didn't need other treasures.

They could, however, be fed to the sword gourd.

This encounter and competition in the Taichu Realm made Lu Ye realize a problem: with the improvement of his cultivation level, the sword cultivator doppelganger's effectiveness was diminishing.

The reason lies in the sword cultivator doppelganger's heavy reliance on the Sword Qi within the sword gourd. The sword gourd's Sword Qi wasn't potent enough, resulting in an unsatisfactory performance from the sword cultivator doppelganger.

The Sword Qi currently stored in the sword gourd originated from previously devoured Magic Artifacts and Spiritual Artifacts, lacking significant power. However, if the sword gourd were to consume spirit treasure-grade items, the Sword Qi's potency would surely increase massively.

Previously, Lu Ye was unaware of the sword gourd's origins, finding it quite mysterious and having no idea of its incredible wonders, capable of generating Sword Qi by devouring other treasures. Now that he knew it was an affiliated treasure of the Innate Supreme Treasure, any remarkable or mysterious traits it possessed were understandable.

Even for spirit treasure-grade or higher-level items, the sword gourd should be capable of consumption, and the resulting Sword Qi would be even stronger. Ding You from the Xuandu World mentioned that ten thousand years ago, someone appeared with the sword gourd, with a power capable of destroying stars and extinguishing suns, which was tremendously frightening.

Lu Ye wasn't sure if the sword gourd could destroy stars and extinguish suns, but if it consumed high-enough treasure-grade items, this might not be impossible?

However, the sword gourd had a drawback: the Sword Qi couldn't be retrieved after use. To maintain the sword gourd's power, it needed to devour a substantial number of treasures, which would be costly in future battles.

Without hesitation, Lu Ye, besides keeping a short mace and a small amount of black sand, let the sword gourd devour all other treasures.

The short mace was a spirit treasure from the Loathsome Aphid of the Insect Race, heavy and extremely sturdy. The black sand came from a physique cultivator's treasure, similarly heavy and possessing adhesive properties.

These two items were mainly kept for re-forging the Boulder Mountain Saber. After the battle with Bao Shi, numerous small nicks appeared on the Boulder Mountain Saber, and with Lu Ye's cultivation advancements, the current Boulder Mountain Saber was becoming insufficient for his needs.

At the latest, by the time he ascends to Constellation, the re-forging of the Boulder Mountain Saber would become imperative!

Chapter 1278 - What the Heck

Due to the Soul Severing Saber's effect of forming restrictions, Lu Ye had low requirements for the re-casting of the Boulder Mountain Saber. He only needed to reinforce its material and weight, a task any moderately skilled Artifact Refiner could accomplish with minimal difficulty.

Lu Ye even considered re-casting it himself. He had some skill in the Path of Artifact Refining, having once rigorously trained under Master Khong in the secret realm of the Sword Weapon Sect for several months, thus he was not entirely unfamiliar with the field.

However, there was no urgency in this matter, as there was still some time before his advancement to the Constellation stage.

Among the other gains, the largest treasure was the treasure gourd, the sibling of the sword gourd!

Placing the two treasure gourds side by side, they appeared similar on the surface, with the main difference being the color of their skins. The sword gourd was predominantly blue, making it a blue gourd, while the second treasure gourd had a slightly red sheen on its skin.

The Taichu Realm of the Reincarnation Tree opens once every century, allowing Divine Sea Realm prodigies from various domains to compete within. However, the Creation Vine does not manifest each time. It only appears when the treasure gourds mature, revealing themselves from another spatial realm.

Throughout history, the Divine Sea struggles in the Taichu Realm have occurred countless times, yet the Creation Vine has only appeared a few times. Over ten thousand years ago, someone from the Nine Provinces' Sword Weapon Sect obtained the sword gourd. Even further back, someone seized a wind gourd reportedly capable of unleashing Hellfire Astral Wind. Touching it meant death for the cultivator, and it now serves as a world-stabilizing treasure for a top-tier domain!

There might also be other treasure gourds with varying effects that have been concealed by their owners, making them unknown to the world due to the long passage of time and their hidden nature.

Lu Ye was quite curious about the wondrous effects of the treasure gourd he obtained. Yet, due to the unsuited environment of the Taichu Realm, he had yet to explore its properties.

Now, he finally had the opportunity!

Holding the treasure gourd in his hand, he silently channeled spirit force to perceive it, clearly sensing the myriad intricate and complex patterns contained within. Even with Lu Ye's current skills in the Path of Spirit Runes, he struggled to fathom the exact effects of these patterns.

He attempted to infuse spirit force into it, hoping to activate the treasure gourd's powers, but the spirit force vanished without a trace, without any feedback.

At first, Lu Ye thought he hadn't exerted enough strength, considering that the treasure gourd, as an affiliated treasure of the Innate Supreme Treasures, wouldn't be so easily activated.

Only after spending nearly half a day and depleting a large portion of his spirit force did Lu Ye realize that this likely wasn't the activation method. Otherwise, even given his insufficient cultivation, there should have been some response.

Looking at the sword gourd provided insight; he could wield its power even when he was only at the True Lake Realm, so there was no reason the new treasure gourd couldn't be activated.

If this method wasn't right, then how should it be activated?

Lu Ye recalled the sword gourd's traits, suspecting this treasure might require swallowing something first, similar to the sword gourd, which consumed treasures to generate Sword Qi and kill enemies.

With this in mind, Lu Ye brought a discarded Magic Artifact to the opening of the treasure gourd. As expected, there was no reaction.

Though his knowledge of Innate Supreme Treasures like the Creation Vine was limited, he knew one thing: these treasure gourds, all from the Creation Vine, should possess different effects, with no two being identical.

It was a hunch, but Lu Ye trusted this feeling was correct.

Thus, having the sword gourd, other treasure gourds likely couldn't consume treasures.

Undeterred, he picked up a Spirit Stone to try, yet found no effect. He switched to spirit jade, likewise to no avail.

Lu Ye felt a bit at a loss. Had he been mistaken, and the treasure gourd didn't require consuming something for activation?

If so, how should he test its effects?

The situation was quite tricky. Without precedent to follow, he had to rely solely on personal experimentation. It couldn't be so worthless that after all his efforts to secure the treasure gourd under the noses of hundreds of cultivators, it served as mere ornamentation, could it?

With spirit force infusion yielding no results, Magic Artifacts ineffective, and Spirit Stones and spirit jade failing as well, Lu Ye casually picked up a bottle of healing pills, pouring out a single elixir pill to bring it near the treasure gourd's opening.

Lu Ye initially tried it offhandedly without much expectation, but a miraculous scene unfolded as the healing pill neared the opening, inciting a slight reaction from the treasure gourd.

A faint flash of light flickered at the opening, and the elixir pill was sucked inside and disappeared.

Lu Ye was momentarily stunned, then overjoyed.

Any reaction was better than none!

Picking up the treasure gourd, he squinted at the opening, but failed to locate the healed pill within. Shaking it vigorously yielded no sound, as if within the treasure gourd lay a void where the elixir vanished.

Lu Ye was again puzzled. It appeared this treasure gourd's effect related to elixir pills—it could at least consume them—yet following this consumption, nothing seemed unusual.

This realization was quite perplexing.

The initial event was too sudden for Lu Ye to respond, so he retrieved another healing pill. This time, he moved slowly, closely observing the treasure gourd's changes as the pill neared the opening.

As before, a faint glimmer flashed across the opening, and the healing pill was absorbed inside.

Lu Ye skeptically turned the treasure gourd upside down and shook it vigorously, yet nothing fell out. After the healing pill was swallowed, it was as if it had sunk into the sea without making a single splash.

Lu Ye frowned, pondering the possibilities.

Immediately, he tried taking out other elixir pills, discovering without exception, no matter what kind of elixir pill it was, the treasure gourd would swallow it without hesitation, and then the entire gourd was like the mythical beast Pixiu, only taking in and not giving out.

What is this thing! Lu Ye was a bit angry.

Number Nine saw him busy and hopped over, wide-eyed, staring at the gourd in his hand: "Lu Ye, Lu Ye, what's this gourd for? It seems quite powerful."

Lu Ye replied irritably: "I don't know if it's powerful or not, but it's certainly annoying."

He turned to look at Number Nine, wondering if the treasure gourd could swallow Number Nine, but that was something he could not try. If it indeed swallowed her, it would be a big problem. From the experience gained so far, it seemed the treasure gourd only swallowed elixir pills and did not react to other things.

Seeing through his thoughts, Number Nine quickly stepped back a few paces, her figure flickered, and she vanished into glimmers of light.

Lu Ye continued to try patiently.

The treasure gourd could swallow elixir pills, but what about herbs?

It seemed worth a try?

This time, Lu Ye had collected many rare herbs in the Taichu Realm, all of which were hard to come by in the outside world. They were initially intended to be given to Second Senior Sister and Hua Ci for

alchemy. For a healing cultivator, these were extremely precious items, all now laid out in front of him in a variety of colors and shapes. He knew nothing about pharmacology and had no idea about the properties of these herbs or their uses.

He grabbed a herb still clinging to soil and slowly brought it to the mouth of the treasure gourd.

The result was exactly as he thought, with a flash of light at the gourd's mouth, the herb was swallowed without a trace.

He grabbed another herb to try, and the result was the same.

Lu Ye pondered, the treasure gourd could swallow all kinds of elixir pills and herbs, confirming the gourd's effect must be related to medicine. However, to confirm its exact effect, more experiments were needed.

Since the treasure gourd was not responding, perhaps it hadn't swallowed enough?

Anyways, with plenty of herbs and elixir pills in hand, more attempts wouldn't hurt.

Deciding firmly, Lu Ye continued to produce elixir pills for the treasure gourd to swallow and then herbs.

Only when the treasure gourd had devoured over a dozen different herbs did something unusual happen!

Lu Ye suddenly noticed that the treasure gourd in his hand was gently vibrating. He quickly held it tighter, focusing his mental consciousness to sense carefully.

He could vaguely feel that something extremely mysterious was happening inside the treasure gourd, yet he couldn't discern exactly what changes. He only knew within the gourd, various mysterious spirit runes were swiftly disappearing and reappearing faster than he could inspect and discern.

This situation continued for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, then the vibrating treasure gourd suddenly calmed down.

Lu Ye concentrated on observing and saw a weak light flash at the gourd's mouth, followed by a misty light shooting out.

What is this!

With quick reflexes, Lu Ye grabbed the misty light in his hand. Before he could examine it, a second weak light flashed at the gourd's mouth, and a second misty burst emerged.

Then came the third, and the fourth...

Lu Ye was caught in a frenzy.

After nine bursts of light emerged, the treasure gourd returned to normal.

Now, Lu Ye understood what the misty bursts from the gourd were.

It was elixir pills, yet unlike any he had seen before. Each pill's surface was covered with intricate patterns, looking extremely sophisticated and seemingly naturally formed, yet containing hidden profound truths.

Due to these patterns, each elixir pill emitted a faint, radiant glow, appearing exceptionally splendid.

This was a type of elixir pill that Lu Ye had never seen. If the elixir pills he had encountered before were mud balls, then these nine were treasure beads!

Not only were they visually appealing, but they also exuded a faint fragrance, refreshing the mind and dispelling the previous frustration and annoyance.

Even without knowing these elixir pills' effects, Lu Ye could clearly determine that these nine pills were undoubtedly treasure pills of the highest quality. As for their specific effects, that remained unknown and required personal experimentation.

Chapter 1279 - Exploration

To Lu Ye, ingesting elixir pills is nothing to worry about. Even if what spews out of the treasure gourd are poison pills with unknown effects, he doesn't mind.

Under the refining of the Talent Tree, there's probably no poison in this world that can affect him.

He casually picked up a pill and threw it into his mouth, gently chewing it. A popping sound soon resonated as if something broke, followed by a sweet flavor rolling down his throat and into his stomach.

That sensation didn't feel like consuming an elixir pill but rather eating a berry full of sweet juice; the soft sound was the berry's skin breaking.

It was Lu Ye's first time experiencing something like this.

Since he began cultivation, he has ingested many types of elixir pills, especially those that enhance cultivation, with only one feeling: no elixir pill tasted good.

Yet, the elixir from the treasure gourd gave him a different sensation, making him secretly marvel. Indeed, it's a unique taste that comes from the treasure gourd.

He calmed his mind to experience the effects of this elixir.

Moments later, Lu Ye realized what this elixir was for.

It was, astonishingly, a healing pill!

Because after the medicinal effect dissolved, some accumulated hidden injuries in his body showed significant signs of relief, and a tingly, comfortable sensation spread throughout his body.

As a combat cultivator, engaging in close combat with enemies is unavoidable, so injuries during fights are inevitable. Since starting cultivation, Lu Ye had sustained countless large and small injuries, and there was a time when removing his clothes revealed a shocking network of scars.

Even after these wounds healed, there were some subtle accumulations. Long ago, Hua Ci told him that if he had the chance, he should often seek a healing cultivator for detailed conditioning to eliminate these hidden accumulations in his body.

Lu Ye didn't take it seriously because these minor accumulations didn't practically affect his strength; he couldn't even feel them in his daily life.

However, when he ingested this healing pill, alongside the medicinal effect, the relief of the hidden accumulations was quite genuine.

In a short time, Lu Ye felt much lighter, as if greater vitality burst forth from within his flesh.

The effect of such a healing pill is almost indescribable in words, with its efficacy on injuries reaching an extreme.

What surprised Lu Ye even more was that after taking this healing pill, the Talent Tree showed no reaction!

This had never happened before—there are always impurities in any elixir. When the elixir enters the stomach, its useful elements are absorbed and refined by the body, exercising its expected medicinal power, while the impurities would be burned clean by the Talent Tree, transforming into gray mist and dispersing.

The higher the quality of the elixir, the smaller the reaction of the Talent Tree, meaning the thinner the gray mist.

To date, all the elixirs that Lu Ye had taken were of excellent quality because he had long since had no shortage of merit and battle merit. Elixirs could be purchased at will from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault, naturally choosing those of good quality.

Yet, no matter how good the quality, there are impurities, evidenced by the gray mist produced upon burning by the Talent Tree.

But this time, there was not a bit of gray mist generated by the Talent Tree, which undoubtedly means one thing: the healing pill from the treasure gourd contained not a hint of harmful impurities!

What an incredible matter it is, considering that even the most skilled Pill Master cannot produce an elixir without impurities; this is simply beyond human achievement.

And such a healing pill—after consuming one, there are still eight left! If used at a critical juncture, it could undoubtedly save lives.

The emergence of the healing pill must be related to the dozen or so medicinal materials previously devoured by the treasure gourd. Those herbs were collected by Lu Ye from the Taichu Realm, extremely precious and rare. The healing pill born after these herbs were devoured by the treasure gourd must be of very high quality, naturally possessing extraordinary medicinal effects, but its impurity-free state... should have no relation to the herbs and likely pertains to the treasure gourd's inherent ability.

In other words, even if replaced with less precious herbs, the elixir produced by the treasure gourd would still be impurity-free, which is a capability belonging to the treasure gourd itself.

The key issue now is that Lu Ye hasn't figured out how these elixirs are born!

There must be a process to this, and if he can understand this process, Lu Ye feels that he can probably figure out the treasure gourd's effects.

He recalled his previous actions, merely allowing the treasure gourd to devour elixirs and then the herbs he collected from the Taichu Realm, but it seemed there was no pattern to follow.

Moreover, he didn't even recognize what those herbs specifically were, just choosing them randomly.

Trying to find a pattern within such chaos is undoubtedly challenging, but since there's already a successful precedent, with more attempts, discoveries are inevitable.

With this mindset, Lu Ye began once more to let the treasure gourd devour elixirs and various herbs.

After a while, the treasure gourd trembled slightly again!

Knowing the treasure gourd was about to spew elixirs again, Lu Ye held his breath, concentrating as he sensed changes within the gourd, waiting in anticipation.

Sure enough, a moment later, as a gleam of light flickered at the opening of the gourd, a hazy glow was sprayed out.

Lu Ye was already prepared and easily collected it, followed by the second batch, the third batch...

After a full nine luminescent batches, the treasure gourd finally settled down again.

Lu Ye carefully examined the newly produced nine elixir pills and discovered they were similar to the previous nine, swirling with haze and dazzlingly bright, with intricate patterns covering their surfaces, appearing extremely mysterious.

But it was obvious to discern that this batch of nine elixir pills was not the same type as the previous nine. It wasn't just the difference in size, the most noticeable difference was the color.

What is going on?

Why does the treasure gourd produce two different types of elixir pills under nearly the same process? Could it be related to the raw materials used?

Lu Ye collected a considerable amount of herbs from the Taichu Realm, with various types, and the herbs used previously differed from those used this time.

It seems naturally reasonable that different raw materials, once consumed, produce different elixir pills.

Moreover, Lu Ye discovered a pattern: once the treasure gourd starts spewing elixir pills, it is always nine, not one more or one less.

Though there have been only two instances, it seems a potential pattern of the treasure gourd.

The previous elixir pills were healing pills; what is this batch?

With a hint of curiosity, Lu Ye took out one elixir pill and popped it into his mouth, and, like before, gently chewed it. The elixir pill shattered, and soon a sweet fragrance followed his throat down to the abdomen.

He quietly sensed for a moment, and Lu Ye raised his eyebrows.

He probably knew what this elixir pill's effect was now.

This was indeed an elixir pill capable of enhancing a cultivator's cultivation, used for cultivation purposes! Moreover, its effects were excellent and long-lasting.

In normal circumstances, the process of him swallowing an elixir pill for cultivation is roughly this: one elixir pill ingested, refined, absorbed, transformed into his powerful foundation, the whole process lasts no more than ten breaths, because each elixir pill offers limited enhancement, the sensation isn't apparent until a certain accumulation is reached.

But this one elixir pill persists for far longer than ten breaths, even after dozens of breaths, his abdomen remains warm as if a small furnace was placed inside, the most crucial point being, Lu Ye can clearly perceive his foundation slowly growing as the medicine melts.

This implies that this elixir pill can provide a significant enhancement to a cultivator at this level, and relying on such elixir pills for cultivation efficiency might be even faster than Theft of Heaven's Augury!

For Lu Ye, Theft of Heaven's Augury was originally the fastest cultivation method, as the Talent Tree could freely devour pure spirit force, turning it into his foundation, while swallowing elixir pills and Spirit Stones was just a supplementary means.

Yet, if one possesses enough of such elixir pills, the cultivation efficiency of swallowing elixir pills would undoubtedly become the main cultivation method!

More astonishing is the fact that these elixir pills bear no impurities, making it easy for anyone to refine and absorb them.

Thus, if enough of such elixir pills truly exists, anyone's cultivation speed would experience a leap forward! This would inevitably be a major shock and upheaval to the existing cultivation methods in the cultivation world.

The invisible small furnace within the abdomen still sustains its function, how long this elixir pill's effect will last before being completely expended is unknown. The invaluable aspect is its immense reserves of medicinal effects, yet within the cultivator's body, it releases slowly without a sudden burst, providing ample time for absorption and refinement, preventing wasted efficacy.

Lu Ye calmed his mind, already having two successful experiences; though these two experiences seem somewhat devoid of a distinct pattern, with more attempts, the concealed rules can definitely be uncovered.

In the following days, Lu Ye was continuously engaged in mental battles with the treasure gourd. During the period, he even communicated with Second Senior Sister for advice on pharmacology matters.

Through relentless efforts and exploration, Lu Ye finally found the correct usage of this treasure gourd and understood the kind of efficacy it could manifest.

The process of exploration was arduous, yet once the method was identified, all challenges could be effortlessly resolved.

Lu Ye couldn't have anticipated that this treasure gourd he obtained in the Taichu Realm had such an extraordinary ability! It wasn't like the sword gourd, which can devour treasures to generate Sword Qi, slaying enemies invisibly, nor like the legendary wind gourd, infused with Hellfire Astral Wind, with boundless power.

It is simply an alchemy tool, yet utilizing its potency, even if one is completely ignorant of pharmacology, as long as the inherent pattern is grasped, one can refine elixir pills of extremely high quality with no impurities!

Additionally, the most reassuring aspect is that the refining process requires no interference from external forces, the treasure gourd can autonomously complete the entire alchemy process.

Lu Ye decided to dub it the pill gourd!

Chapter 1280 - The Proper Way to Use the Pill Gourd

Alchemy is an exceptionally meticulous endeavor, where a seasoned alchemist often starts learning from identifying medicinal ingredients, accumulating knowledge over years and decades, exploring successful experiences through repeated failures, and only then can they possibly concoct an elixir pill.

For a sect to train a qualified Pill Master, considerable investment is needed in the early stage. Those minor sects and small families simply lack the strength and foundations to cultivate their own Pill Masters because the costs during the alchemy accumulation process are beyond what they can bear.

In the Nine Provinces, the total number of healing cultivators is actually quite large. Each of these healing cultivators is proficient in pharmacology and knows how to heal people effectively. However, not all healing cultivators can perform alchemy. Those who can make pills only comprise a small portion of the total number, not even one-tenth, and even within this fraction, their alchemical skills vary greatly and cannot be treated equally.

Yet there exists this wondrous treasure in the world, which even those ignorant of pharmacology, as long as they grasp its principles, can produce treasure pills that the most illustrious Pill Masters would find unattainable!

Pill Gourd!

Lu Ye decided to name this treasure gourd obtained from the Taichu Realm as the Pill Gourd. The name perfectly aligns with its characteristics.

He couldn't comprehend why the Pill Gourd possesses such magical capabilities, but since it is an affiliated treasure of an Innate Supreme Treasure, possessing some mysterious traits comprehensible to none is quite reasonable, just like the sword gourd has the ability to absorb treasures and generate Sword Qi. This is the innate ability of the sword gourd; the user need not understand the principle behind it, merely utilize it.

Initially, Lu Ye hadn't planned to return to Mount Ao recently, but after understanding the efficacy of the Pill Gourd, he had to make a trip back to Mount Ao.

Nearby, he found a branch of the Heaven's Augury Mercantile Union, using the Heaven's Augury Pillar within it to directly teleport back to the sect headquarters of the Righteous Blood Sect.

This was a special favor bestowed by Number Nine. Currently, across the whole Nine Provinces, only Lu Ye could freely use the Heaven's Augury Pillar to teleport anywhere; others didn't have this privilege, mainly because Number Nine had remained hidden and, up until now, only Lu Ye knew the details about Number Nine in the entire Nine Provinces.

There used to be Senior Yang Qing, but Yang Qing has since departed.

Lu Ye found Second Senior Sister Shui Yuan on Righteous Peak and spoke to her briefly. She then led him to a secluded chamber.

Seeing him behaving mysteriously, Shui Yuan laughed, "What nice thing have you gotten this time?"

Lu Ye gave her a thumbs-up, "Second Senior Sister, your insight is truly remarkable. I did get something nice, look!" Like showing off a treasure, he presented the Pill Gourd.

Shui Yuan took it and examined it closely. Although she could sense the profound and extraordinary nature of the Pill Gourd, she was left baffled as to where exactly its extraordinariness lay.

She looked at Lu Ye in puzzlement, "What is the purpose of this treasure?"

Lu Ye took back the Pill Gourd from her hand and retrieved a bottle of elixir pills and some prepared medicinal ingredients from his storage sack, saying, "Senior Sister, take a look at these medicinal ingredients. What thoughts do you have?"

Shui Yuan had quite a high level of expertise in the Alchemy Dao, and coupled with Lu Ye's recent seeking of advice from her, she easily recognized the ingredients were for concocting Spirit-Nurturing Pills.

In the Nine Provinces, the elixir pills needed for cultivators' cultivation are divided into three grades according to their effectiveness: Spirit-Nurturing Pill, Origin Spirit Pill, and Cloud Spirit Pill.

Spirit-Nurturing Pill is the lowest grade and is used by Spirit Stream Realm cultivators for cultivation. Next is the Origin Spirit Pill, which is needed by Cloud River Realm cultivators for cultivation. The Cloud Spirit Pill, however, is the elixir used during the cultivation of the True Lake Realm and Divine Sea Realm. The ingredients used vary, leading to different medicinal effects.

After Lu Ye ascended to the True Lake Realm, the elixir pills he took were Cloud Spirit Pills, used frequently like eating roasted beans during cultivation and combat.

The Cloud Spirit Pill is the highest grade and the most difficult to create; even if Shui Yuan personally attempted, only a seventy percent success rate could be assured.

So, upon seeing Lu Ye take out these materials for making the Cloud Spirit Pill, she couldn't help but feel curious. Could it be that Lu Ye wants to try making the pills himself? If so, what is this gourd used for?

Lu Ye smiled slightly, opened the bottle containing the elixir pills, and took out one pill, which was indeed the Cloud Spirit Pill!

Then, under Shui Yuan's puzzled gaze, Lu Ye placed this Cloud Spirit Pill into the mouth of the Pill Gourd; a faint light shimmered as the Pill Gourd swallowed the Cloud Spirit Pill.

Lu Ye quickly stuffed all those materials for making Cloud Spirit Pills into the Pill Gourd.

Once all the ingredients were inside, the Pill Gourd suddenly began to tremble slightly. Shui Yuan was puzzled but didn't inquire further, waiting silently.

After just a moment, faint light flickered at the gourd's mouth, followed by a billowing mist.

Lu Ye, experienced already, began collecting promptly, gathering nine times before presenting them before Shui Yuan: "Senior Sister, please look!"

Shui Yuan was utterly astonished, seeing nine dazzling treasure pills neatly aligned in Lu Ye's palm, each emitting a faint glow.

Such an item might as well be called a Bright Pearl. At first glance, it seems completely unrelated to elixir pills. Even though Shui Yuan has been involved in the Alchemy Dao for many years and has personally refined many elixirs, she has never witnessed such a bizarre scene.

Raising two jade-like fingers, she picked up a Spirit-Nurturing Pill from Lu Ye's palm, carefully observing the mysterious patterns on the pill's surface, and then gently sniffed it at her nose, looking at Lu Ye in shock: "Is this a Spirit-Nurturing Pill?"

Lu Ye nodded: "Senior Sister, you may test its medicinal effect."

Gazing at the Spirit-Nurturing Pill in her hand as if she had seen something she cherished, Shui Yuan felt reluctant. But considering that Lu Ye still had eight more pills, she resolutely placed it into her mouth.

A soft popping sound came from within her mouth, and Shui Yuan closed her eyes, quietly savoring the experience, her facial expressions constantly changing.

If not for her personal experience, it would be hard to believe that such a high-quality Origin Spirit Pill exists in the world. She clearly noticed that once this pill entered her stomach, it quickly transformed into gentle medicinal force, enhancing her own essence. The most remarkable thing was, she sensed no impurities within it at all.

Although it wasn't as directly observable as Lu Ye's Talent Tree, someone with her cultivation level, especially as an outstanding Pill Master, could vaguely detect how much impurity a pill contained.

All elixir pills contain impurities, which are harmful substances to cultivators, also known as pill poison. Over time, cultivators accumulate pill poison in their bodies, requiring time and effort to dissolve.

Thus, while cultivators use elixir pills to aid their cultivation, they never consume them in large quantities. Doing so would only waste time dealing with pill poison later, nullifying any advantage.

The quality of an elixir pill is entirely determined by how much pill poison it contains, which is the ultimate pursuit for Pill Masters during alchemy. Skilled Pill Masters can create pills with minimal pill poison, naturally earning them admiration.

Yet Shui Yuan never imagined that a pill void of any pill poison could exist in the world, and it just so happened to be produced right under her eyes.

This single fact alone means that once news of this pill's existence leaks, it will surely become sought after by every cultivator!

Furthermore, the medicinal effect of this Spirit-Nurturing Pill is extremely potent, incomparable to ordinary Spirit-Nurturing Pills. The difference between them must be measured in multiples.

A Spirit-Nurturing Pill without pill poison and with several times more potent effects than ordinary ones could almost be deemed a divine object!

Shui Yuan, having been stationed at the Righteous Blood Sect for years, overseeing the sect's development, swiftly comprehended the enormous future potential of such pills.

Most directly, if the sect possessed enough of these pills, disciples' cultivation pace would be unimaginably accelerated! The time needed for their growth would be significantly shorter than other cultivators.

"Little Junior Brother, what kind of treasure is this gourd? How does it produce such elixir pills?" Shui Yuan opened her eyes and inquired.

Lu Ye replied: "I call it the pill gourd. I acquired it by chance when accompanying Senior Yang Qing to a place called the Reincarnation Tree. Initially, I wasn't aware of its effects, only discovering its use recently. As for why it can refine elixir pills... this object is an affiliated treasure of an Innate Supreme Treasure. That might be its innate ability, and its underlying workings are not something we can investigate. All I know is how to use it. Here, Senior Sister, I'll teach you how to use it. From now on, you will manage this item."

Shui Yuan nodded, attentively listening.

The process of the pill gourd refining elixir pills is actually simple. First, you need to have the pill gourd consume a Spirit-Nurturing Pill as an introduction.

Then, you add the necessary herbs for refining this pill into the gourd. When the amount and variety of herbs reach a sufficient level, you only need to wait peacefully, and the gourd will automatically refine and produce high-quality elixir pills, spitting them out.

Of course, the quality of the pills produced by the pill gourd is heavily dependent on the quality of the herbs thrown in.

The reason the healing pills and cultivation elixirs previously refined by Lu Ye were of such high quality was mainly because the herbs he used came from the Taichu Realm. Those herbs are not only rare but also valuable, and they naturally elevate the quality of pills refined from such raw materials.

During the demonstration for Shui Yuan, the herbs used were bought from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault and could be easily found within the Nine Provinces. Yet despite this, the quality of the pills produced was beyond imagination, a level unattainable by human craftsmanship.

The pill gourd differs from the sword gourd and wind gourd, which enable cultivators to fight or attack enemies with powerful force, resembling more of an auxiliary nature item. Yet this very nature is akin to what newly developing sects like the Righteous Blood Sect need.

Entrusting the pill gourd to Shui Yuan for management was a carefully thought-out decision by Lu Ye.

His primary method of cultivation remains the Theft of Heaven's Augury, which already provides sufficient cultivation efficiency without the need to consume pills refined by the pill gourd.

Moreover, if there ever was a need to ingest elixir pills, they could be directly purchased from the Heaven's Augury treasure vault. With the Talent Tree beside him, he fears no mere pill poison.

Thus, the pill gourd has little use to him while in his possession. Therefore, letting Shui Yuan manage and utilize it to boost the sect's overall strength is far more beneficial than keeping it by his side.