

Humanity 1311

Chapter 1311 I Choose Her!

The stirring caused by the Mental Consciousness reverberated within the treasure vault. As Hai Tang was heading out, she sensed something and immediately stopped, looking at Lu Ye with confusion.

Lu Ye still looked up at the top, and shouted again, "Come out!"

In the area within his line of sight, a mass of mist appeared out of thin air. It was the same mist as when the treasure vault first opened, just like before. The mist twisted, and a sinister voice came out from it, "What is it?"

"Senior!" Lu Ye first bowed, then opened his mouth again, "Junior would like to confirm something with Senior, and I ask for Senior's permission."

A voice came from the mist, sounding a bit impatient, "Speak!"

Lu Ye said, "Senior previously said, since Junior has passed the test of the Ghost Ship, I can freely choose one thing from this ship to take away. Is that correct?"

The mist said, "Exactly so, then... have you made your choice?"

Lu Ye nodded, "I have chosen."

"Since you have chosen, just take it, there's no need to ask me. But you only have one chance; so... is the Treasure Bead in front of you your choice?"

Lu Ye looked down at the Treasure Bead on the stone platform before him, slowly shook his head, and then raised his head. He pointed with his hand towards Hai Tang, who was looking this way with a puzzled expression, "I choose her!"

Hai Tang was full of astonishment.

Behind Hai Tang, the many crew members standing outside the treasure vault were momentarily stunned, then their expressions twisted, and the sound of ghostly wails and wolf howls erupted from that direction, as if they were extremely dissatisfied with Lu Ye's choice.

Even the mist within the treasure vault twisted and shifted more rapidly now, no longer as calm and collected as before, and instead seemed a bit angry, "Impossible!"

Lu Ye was leisurely ready, "Is Senior intending to break your word? Junior just confirmed with Senior, since the rules are like this, may I ask, is Senior Sister Hai Tang not a part of the ship?"

A reluctant and unwilling voice came from the mist, "Yes!"

"Since she is, then I can choose her, unless Senior intends to renege!" Lu Ye fixed his gaze on the direction of the mist, his expression firm.

"But..."

"No buts!" Lu Ye rudely interrupted the mist, as for whether this would lead to any dire consequences, the various encounters on the Ghost Ship taught him one thing: although this place is bizarre and dangerous, as long as you act within the rules, there is no problem. When the mist appeared earlier, it told him the rules for selecting treasure from the vault, so Lu Ye's decision at this moment neither broke nor stepped outside of those rules.

He was quite sure the mist would most likely be unable to refuse him.

Of course, whether it would work or not, he had to give it a shot!

If he hadn't noticed it, that would be one thing, but since he did, his conscience wouldn't let him rest unless he tried.

Having been interrupted by Lu Ye, the mist seemed to suffer a sort of difficulty, twisting and turning violently, before finally speaking again after quite a while, "Boy, do you know what kind of treasure the Treasure Bead before you is?"

"I don't know!" Lu Ye truthfully shook his head.

"This bead is called the Dayan Spirit Pearl, it can help you..."

"I don't listen, I don't listen!" Lu Ye raised his hand to cover his ears, shaking his head repeatedly. Of course, covering his ears was just a gesture and had no real effect, so he also sealed off his Divine Sense.

The mist shook with fury!

Over the years, whether deliberately or unintentionally, many cultivators have drifted to the Ghost Ship. Not to mention those who didn't complete the trial, there are always some who have. Yet, among those who passed the test, which one hasn't been overwhelmed by the choices in this treasure vault? And yet, it's this boy's turn; when I am about to tell him the many marvelous uses of the Dayan Spirit Pearl, he refuses to listen?

After quite a while, Lu Ye reopened his Divine Sense, and immediately the voice of the mist came to his ears, "Not to mention anything else, if you were to sell the Dayan Spirit Pearl, its value is at least a million spirit jade. Now, do you realize its tremendous value?"

The mist evidently awaited this moment, having no time to explain the Dayan Spirit Pearl's uses to Lu Ye directly, it just told him its appraised value.

Of course, a million spirit jade is merely a valuation standard; in stellar space, such treasures are typically priceless beyond the market value.

Yet Lu Ye showed no sign of being moved, still stubbornly staring at the mist, "I choose her, just tell me if it works or not!"

Outside the treasure vault, the ghostly wails and wolf howls grew increasingly louder. Qin Zong and the others all had distorted expressions, and by the looks of it, if they weren't constrained from entering the treasure vault, they'd likely rush in to tear him apart.

These crew members have always been a part of the Ghost Ship, eager to see someone else end up in the same situation as they are, yet unwilling to see anyone escape from the Ghost Ship.

The mist stopped trembling and its voice became much calmer, "Boy, are you sure about making this choice?"

"I am sure!" Lu Ye nodded heavily.

"Hehehe..." the mist began to shake, as if very happy, "What an interesting boy. In all these years, never before has anyone been like you, truly opening one's eyes!" The voice became solemn, "Since this is the case, take her with you!"

Lu Ye, who initially adopted a try-it-out attitude, did not expect to actually succeed. He immediately gave a solemn bow, "Thank you, Senior. Please forgive the earlier rudeness!"

Turning around, he took bold strides towards Hai Tang, who was standing there at a loss.

Since the mist reappeared, and upon hearing Lu Ye's request, Hai Tang was dumbfounded. She never thought Lu Ye would make such a request at the last moment; she never thought she still had hope of escaping the Ghost Ship!

From the day she fell into this place and failed the test, she knew her life would end here. She would gradually weaken here until she vanished entirely, becoming nourishment for the Ghost Ship. She wouldn't even become a part of the Ghost Ship like Qin Zong and other crew members; the day she disappears, she would leave no trace in this world.

She had already mentally prepared herself.

The warnings and information she shared with Lu Ye were just out of a willingness to help where she could, without expecting anything else, accepting her fate as someone doomed to die.

She hadn't expected such a turn of events at the last moment.

When Lu Ye made the request, she doubted her own ears, but when he began to verbally confront the mist, she felt so grateful she almost cried.

At this moment, seeing Lu Ye approaching her, Hai Tang could no longer hold back, tears slid from the corner of her eyes as she sobbed, "Junior Brother Lu..."

"Let's talk outside. Let's go!" Lu Ye called to her, placing a hand on the hilt of the Boulder Mountain Saber, his figure steady, ready to spring into action.

The mist had agreed to let him take Hai Tang out, but there were some troubles at the vault's exit. Qin Zong and those others looked like specters, eager to eat him alive. However, restricted by rules, they could not step into the vault; still, he had to deal with this situation to get out!

Hai Tang clearly sensed something amiss as well and quickly followed behind Lu Ye, focusing her spirit force, preparing herself.

Yet what surprised Lu Ye was that as he continued to approach, the state of Qin Zong and others changed.

The sound of wailing and lament quickly vanished, and the sinister expressions on the faces of many crew members blocking the vault entrance turned into gentle smiles. Their gazes at Lu Ye carried strong approval and admiration, while their looks at Hai Tang transformed into envy.

What are these guys up to?

Lu Ye didn't relax his vigilance, stepping out of the vault door and stopping in front of Qin Zong and others, the long saber slightly unsheathed by half an inch!

Qin Zong didn't say anything; he simply stepped forward and gently patted Lu Ye's shoulder before turning into a wisp of fog.

Next was Xiao Jianming, then Xu Qingwei...

One crew member after another stepped forward, seemingly bidding Lu Ye a final farewell.

Lu Ye vaguely understood; these crew members did not want to see Hai Tang escape the Ghost Ship, so when he made the request, their malice was apparent. At the same time, their behavior blocking the vault door was likely their final test for him.

Having chosen resolutely to take Hai Tang away, they couldn't stop him. Being forever integrated with the Ghost Ship, they had long since become part of it. Now, all they had was admiration for Lu Ye and envy towards Hai Tang.

Not everyone can forsake the valuable treasures in the vault to take away an insignificant crew member.

Deep down, they too might have hoped for such a thing, hoping that one day, someone else would take one of them away.

The complexity of human nature is ever-present.

The dense mist spreads, just like the scene when Lu Ye fell into the Ghost Ship, invisible to the naked eye and undetectable with Divine Sense.

A sinister sound unique to the mist reached Lu Ye's ears, "Little one, over the years, you're the first to make such a choice, you're quite remarkable. As a reward for showing me an entertaining show, I'll bestow you a benefit!"

As the words fell, the thick mist around rapidly surged into Lu Ye's body, causing him a slight shock. He quickly urged his spirit force to protect himself.

Though the mist claimed it was a benefit, Lu Ye dared not fully believe it.

Yet oddly, no matter how he urged his spirit force, he couldn't stop the mist's integration.

He hastily submerged his consciousness to inspect the Talent Tree and found nothing unusual, which finally set his mind at ease.

After a short while, the surrounding mist vanished, and clarity returned to his vision.

Lu Ye looked around, discovering himself in some part of the stellar space, within sight, a battered battleship was moving away.

It was the Ghost Ship!

Lu Ye furrowed his brows and ultimately bowed respectfully in the Ghost Ship's direction, "Thank you for the previous guidance, senior!"

No response!

No response was necessary.

Meeting in stellar space is rare, the Ghost Ship drifts about, and Lu Ye figures he might never see this ship again in his lifetime, nor have any dealings with it.

Watching the Ghost Ship disappear, Lu Ye suddenly realized that he left the Ghost Ship. But what about Hai Tang?

"Junior Brother Lu!" A Mental Consciousness reached out from afar, along with Hai Tang's voice, carrying a deep sense of weakness.

Lu Ye quickly rushed toward that direction and soon arrived at Hai Tang's location, looking closely, he was taken aback, "Senior Sister Hai Tang, why are you... like this?"

Chapter 1312 Mount Fangcun Dwarf Race

Hai Tang was clearly very weak at the moment. She had fallen into the Ghost Ship months earlier than Lu Ye, her physical body trapped within, her essence continuously leaking.

Strictly speaking, the Hai Tang that Lu Ye saw on the Ghost Ship was not her true self, but rather the manifestation of her psyche spirit body.

Thus, she was able to repeatedly trace back through countless cycles; her true body was always trapped somewhere on the Ghost Ship.

Separated from her true body, Hai Tang was unable to control her own physical form, and naturally, her condition would progressively weaken until she eventually perished.

What surprised Lu Ye was not her current state, but her appearance.

The Hai Tang he had seen inside the Ghost Ship appeared as a normal human race cultivator, yet the Hai Tang now before his eyes was only palm-sized. She looked no different from a human, but Lu Ye was certain Hai Tang was definitely not of the human race!

There were simply no humans so small in this world.

The smallest race Lu Ye had encountered was undoubtedly the Fairy Race, but even the individuals of the Fairy Race were as large as infants, much larger than the Hai Tang before him.

Hai Tang managed a faint smile on her pale face: "I'm sorry, Junior Brother, I am of the Dwarf Race from Mount Fangcun."

"Dwarf Race from Mount Fangcun?" Lu Ye stared in disbelief: "But on the Ghost Ship, Senior Sister, you clearly..."

Hai Tang explained: "It's likely one of the rules of the Ghost Ship, actually. The crew you see should have various races among them; it's just that on the ship, everyone manifests in the form of a normal human."

Lu Ye finally understood, realizing he was somewhat ignorant.

Still, such a small figure was indeed a novel sight for Lu Ye.

However, now was not the time to marvel at new things. Hai Tang's condition was visibly troubling, so Lu Ye said with concern: "Senior Sister, you should recover yourself first!"

As he said this, he extended his hand, gently lifting her and placing her on his shoulder.

Hai Tang nodded and sat down cross-legged.

"Do you need an elixir pill?" Lu Ye asked.

Hai Tang shook her head: "Elixir pills from the outside world don't suit my Dwarf kind. I have my own means of recovery, so there's no need to worry, Junior Brother."

Lu Ye no longer asked, reasoning that the elixir pills he used were about half the size of Hai Tang's head, which would be quite ungraceful for her to consume.

Would she nibble on them?

That would be far too unbecoming.

While Hai Tang focused on recuperating herself, Lu Ye began to explore the surroundings, intending to determine the direction of the Nine Provinces.

He hadn't been delayed long on the Ghost Ship, about ten days by his count, so he shouldn't have strayed too far.

He observed the Sun and then the Taibai Star amidst the vast stellar space, deducing the direction towards the Nine Provinces. Lu Ye propelled himself, setting off on the return journey.

This first venture from the Nine Provinces into the stellar space had certainly encountered many events.

Lu Ye sorted through his thoughts, realizing only the initial three months had passed peacefully, between searching for spirit jade and exploring. Afterward, he encountered a large group of star beasts, which he fiercely defeated, and on the brink of returning met Fong Rumu, who guided him to the Ghost Ship.

He had always thought the stellar space around the Nine Provinces would be silent, as Yang Qing had previously mentioned the remoteness of the Nine Provinces.

But now it seemed, despite its remoteness, it was lively at times.

The objects or creatures roaming the stellar space occasionally drifted towards the Nine Provinces.

He controlled his speed within manageable limits, leaving some of his mind to watch over the surroundings, ensuring he wouldn't fly headlong into anything. Only then did Lu Ye delve into his consciousness, examining himself.

Upon leaving the Ghost Ship, a dense fog had rushed into his body. Though his Talent Tree didn't show any unusual reactions, and the fog asserted it was a benefit, Lu Ye didn't dare be careless without fully understanding what this benefit entailed.

His Mental Consciousness examined every inch of his flesh, finding nothing amiss.

This was bewildering...

Seeing no anomalies in his physique, Lu Ye then investigated his Divine Sea.

He indeed found something unusual; previously, only the presence of the Soul Suppressing Pagoda existed within the Divine Sea, but now, there was a dilapidated ship navigating that ocean.

The dilapidated ship's design was identical to the Ghost Ship!

The Ghost Ship's physical body couldn't have entered his Divine Sea, for Lu Ye had watched it depart earlier. If so, what was the story behind this Ghost Ship here?

Lu Ye manifested his psyche spirit body, flying onto the Ghost Ship.

In an instant, various mysterious insights lingered in his mind, and Lu Ye closed his eyes to focus and comprehend.

A moment later, he opened his eyes, revealing a bright gaze.

The last words from the mist were true, this was indeed a great gift!

The Ghost Ship in the Divine Sea can be considered to be an imprint of the actual Ghost Ship, possessing some features and rules of the Ghost Ship, but naturally, not as powerful as the real Ghost Ship.

And this object can be used for soul battles.

For Lu Ye, now that he has set foot in the stellar space, he will inevitably face some powerful opponents he can't defeat by force in the future. The chaos in the stellar space is beyond comparison with the Nine Provinces.

Within the Nine Provinces, cultivators typically don't encounter enemies whose realm greatly surpasses their own. Spirit Stream cultivators battle within the Spirit Stream battlefield, Cloud River realm within the Cloud River battlefield — combat is between those of similar realms. Even upon ascending to the True Lake Realm and joining provincial guards, Divine Sea Realm members restrain each other. True

Lake cultivators rarely suffer oppression from the Divine Sea Realm, and if they do, their side's Divine Sea Realm members will soon stand up.

But the stellar space is different; there are no such restraints. Like Yueh Xin who forcibly descended upon the Nine Provinces, trying to enslave its land — if not for Yang Qing wiping him out, the current Nine Provinces cultivators would likely be reduced to someone else's slaves.

Or like Lu Ye previously encountering Fong Rumo — had the latter been bloodthirsty, Lu Ye would surely have been doomed.

In stellar space, one's strength is important, but so is luck. No matter how strong you are, if you have bad luck and encounter an invincible powerhouse, you can only blame your own misfortune.

One's cultivation must improve step by step; there is little room for shortcuts when it comes to this, while soul protection offers many peculiar methods.

The Soul Suppressing Pagoda within Lu Ye's Divine Sea is one such method.

Once cultivation reaches the Constellation Realm, each guards their psyche with unique methods, mostly by leveraging treasures or cultivating specialized Psyche Secret Techniques.

However, for Lu Ye, the Soul Suppressing Pagoda is merely a passive defense method that can only maintain Lu Ye's psyche's stability, unable even to block an enemy's Mental Consciousness invasion. But now, the imprint of the Ghost Ship acquired can be used as an active attack method!

If in the future he encounters opponents he can't match physically, or get caught in a duel of souls by a stronger entity, this Ghost Ship imprint will serve its purpose.

The various mysteries around this ship lingered in his mind, Lu Ye let out a low shout: "Everyone, be ready!"

As the words fell, the originally tattered ship's frame restored to the perfect condition of the Ghost Ship, then shadows manifested on the deck. Observing closely, they are indeed the silhouettes of Qin Zong and other crew members.

Outside the Ghost Ship's treasure vault, the dense mist finally flowing into Lu Ye's body was all transformed from Qin Zong and others after disappearing, thus this Ghost Ship likewise bears their imprints, which Lu Ye can freely command.

In other words, when Lu Ye engages in a soul battle with someone, it's no longer just a battle of psyches. Lu Ye can command the Ghost Ship, leading his crew to catch the enemy by surprise.

A duel meant to be pure soul combat, yet Lu Ye unveils a treasure ship... just imagining that scene is terrifying.

Who knows how the struck enemies will react!

Now within the Divine Sea, protected by the Soul Suppressing Pagoda and attacking with the Ghost Ship, there's offense and defense, truly achieving both.

After racing the Ghost Ship through the Divine Sea for a moment, Lu Ye withdrew from the Divine Sea.

Overall, he is quite satisfied with the benefit granted by the mist, and judging by its words, he seems to be the only one to have ever received such a benefit — in the past, even if someone passed the Ghost Ship's test, they usually left with a treasure from the vault.

In comparison, the value of the Ghost Ship in the Divine Sea is not inferior to anything in the treasure vault — in critical moments, it can turn defeat into victory.

For cultivators, what's most important in cultivation? Living is most important, as long as you live, there's hope.

Hence, the decision to take Hai Tang away earlier had a touch of unintentionally favorable outcomes.

Honestly, giving up a treasure from the vault was quite hard for him, as those items were indeed precious and rare, but compared with his ultimate choice, they seemed less significant.

If he had really only taken a single treasure, he would never find peace of mind.

Speeding away swiftly.

An entire month later, Hai Tang's situation just barely improved; although she was still weak, her condition was at least stabilized, allowing for gradual recovery as long as she rested properly.

Hai Tang rose from Lu Ye's shoulder, gazing at his side face, her expression sincere as she bowed with heartfelt gratitude: "Thank you, Junior Brother Lu, for rescuing me from my plight. This kindness, Hai Tang will remember forever!"

Lu Ye smiled: "Senior Sister Hai Tang exaggerates; truthfully, I should thank you instead. Had it not been for your last efforts, I wouldn't have passed the Ghost Ship's test. Otherwise, we two might still be clinging on the Ghost Ship in despair, holding hands with tears choking back."

In the final battle of the nineteenth cycle, Lu Ye steered the Ghost Ship into the last enemy vessel but failed in one blow. Seeing the enemy ship's magic array humming with bright light, Hai Tang timely maneuvered the assault magic array, delivering the enemy ship a fatal strike, thus making it possible for Lu Ye to pass the test.

From this aspect alone, Hai Tang owes Lu Ye considerable gratitude.

Amused by his words, Hai Tang couldn't help but chuckle: "No matter what, Hai Tang's life was given by Junior Brother Lu. In the future, should Junior Brother have any request, I will comply without fail!"

Her words were earnest, and Lu Ye waved his hand: "You saved me, and I saved you, so it's like mutual assistance, neither of us owes the other. Also, my decision to take away Senior Sister was not without benefits; what I received is no less than the treasures in the vault."

Chapter 1313 Please Be Sure to Bring Her Back

Before leaving the Ghost Ship, Hai Tang heard the words spoken by the mist. She knew Lu Ye had gained some benefit from it, and now hearing Lu Ye mention it again, she realized it was true.

However, she was not someone who wanted to probe into everything, so she didn't ask further.

She silently remembered this kindness in her heart, planning to repay it if the opportunity arose in the future.

Changing the topic, she said, "But Junior Brother's intuition is really sharp. How did you think of bringing me out?"

If Lu Ye hadn't had this thought and actually succeeded in the end, Hai Tang would never have considered this possibility.

Lu Ye replied, "Actually, Senior Sister should truly thank that mist."

Hai Tang was puzzled, "Why do you say that?"

"It gave me a hint," Lu Ye smiled, "When entering the treasure vault, the mist said that I could choose one thing from everything on the ship to take away. At the time, there were countless treasures dazzling before me, so I didn't think too much and indeed prepared to choose one to take away. But at the last moment, I suddenly realized there was something off about its words."

Hai Tang pondered for a moment and then had an epiphany, "It said everything on the ship, not everything in the treasure vault."

"Exactly!" Lu Ye nodded, "If so, then Senior Sister Hai Tang must also be within the range of choices. Thinking back now, this was undoubtedly a secret hint."

"So that's why you thanked him when you left."

When the Ghost Ship departed, Lu Ye indeed said such words. At the time, Hai Tang didn't know what Lu Ye was thanking, but if things were truly like this, then the mist certainly played a guiding role.

Perhaps it had no choice but to do so, but regardless, Lu Ye did perceive a loophole from its words, thus changing his initial plan.

Overall, the Ghost Ship experience felt like a peculiar game constrained by rules in a specific environment. Not only did intruders have to follow these rules, but even the ship's crew and the final mist had to abide by them. These rules were not lethal yet extremely dangerous, leaving a sliver of hope, quite mystical indeed.

But to engage in such a game, one must have the resolve to gamble with one's life.

Anyway, Lu Ye didn't want to go through it again. Although he had confidence now in controlling the Long Dragon battleship against three enemy ships, without a proper means, even if he could destroy three enemy ships, he couldn't rival the Moon Jade Realm.

"Where is Senior Sister Hai Tang headed?" Lu Ye asked.

Hai Tang's expression was gloomy, "I don't know either."

"Where is Mount Fangcun? If it's not far, I can take you back." Lu Ye proposed.

Hai Tang was still in a weakened state, which was unsuitable for venturing into stellar space. The two had bonded somewhat on the Ghost Ship, and Lu Ye felt that as long as the distance wasn't excessively great, taking her home wouldn't be a problem.

It was a good opportunity to investigate Mount Fangcun as well. Hai Tang's presence here implied that Mount Fangcun wasn't too far from the Nine Provinces. In the future, cultivators from both domains would inevitably have some interactions, so a prior engagement wouldn't hurt.

Hai Tang shook her head, "I don't know where it is anymore."

Lu Ye was amazed; how could one not know where their own home is?

Hai Tang explained, "Mount Fangcun, like the Ghost Ship, doesn't have a fixed location in stellar space but follows a certain trajectory, drifting through the stars. Several months ago, Mount Fangcun passed by this area of stellar space. I came out to collect spirit jade, inadvertently discovered the Ghost Ship, and got trapped. Now, several months have passed, and I don't know where Mount Fangcun will fly next."

So that's how it is.

In that case, Mount Fangcun and the Blood Refinement World should be of the same type, both domains that drift around.

Only Mount Fangcun is obviously at a higher level than the Blood Refinement World, having given birth to someone like the Constellation-level Hai Tang. Thus, when their domain drifts ubiquitously, its cultivators can travel outward to collect spirit jade.

Such a domain indeed has advantages, never having to worry about spirit jade exhaustion near their domain because they're always moving, always having new stellar spaces to explore.

But there are also drawbacks, like how Hai Tang is now. Once separated from their domain for too long, they might be unable to find their way home.

Lu Ye felt quite troubled.

He couldn't just ignore Hai Tang's current situation, but taking her back to the Nine Provinces didn't seem quite right either.

Externally, the Nine Provinces cultivators now uniformly called themselves Nine Heavens cultivators to prevent drawing attention from enemies dating back to the era before the Nine Provinces.

However, Hai Tang's nature was commendable. When Lu Ye first boarded the Ghost Ship, utterly confused, she promptly reminded him, and when he sought information, she was entirely forthcoming. At the critical moment, it was even her decisive strike that broke through the enemy ship's defenses.

So bringing her back to the Nine Provinces doesn't seem to be an issue.

Lu Ye thought for a moment and said, "If Senior Sister has nowhere to go, why don't you come back to my domain with me?"

"Sure." Hai Tang nodded with a smile, "But what is your domain called? Our Mount Fangcun's Dwarf Race, due to roaming all around, has indeed seen a lot; perhaps your domain is recorded in Mount Fangcun's archives, and if so, I might have seen it."

"Then Senior Sister must not have seen it," Lu Ye replied with a smile, "Because the Nine Heavens World I came from only recently advanced to a large domain. Even I just advanced to Constellation Early Stage less than half a year ago."

"I see..." Hai Tang understood, especially since if it truly is a newly upgraded large domain, Mount Fangcun probably would have no record of it. With so many domains in the stellar space, Mount Fangcun, despite its wide knowledge, couldn't possibly document every domain, generally only the larger ones.

Suddenly startled within, because if Lu Ye hadn't mentioned it, she truly wouldn't have realized he had advanced to Constellation Early Stage only a few months ago. She could discern Lu Ye's cultivation level as Constellation Early Stage, but the condensation of his spirit force was not something a newly promoted Constellation should possess.

At the very least, it takes ten to twenty years of accumulation.

It seems this Junior Brother Ye has extraordinary talent, and his various performances on the Ghost Ship made it hard to see through him. To this day, Hai Tang still couldn't understand how he managed the spirit force endurance issue.

Sure enough, one shouldn't underestimate any cultivator in the stellar space. Even the Nine Heavens World, as a newly upgraded large domain, produced such figures; given time, they would surely excel.

They continued to fly forward, not at a fast pace, mainly because Lu Ye was responsible for exploration tasks, so he had to record the celestial bodies he saw.

Originally, the journey through the stellar space was monotonous, but with the addition of Hai Tang, it became less dull. The two occasionally chatted casually, which helped pass the time.

However, many times, Hai Tang needed to recover herself, so most often, Lu Ye was still in a silent state.

Half a month passed, and suddenly there was movement from the battlefield marking.

Lu Ye concentrated to investigate and found it was a message from Number Nine.

"Lu Ye, you're still alive?"

Lu Ye's face turned dark. He replied, "Of course I'm still alive." This Number Nine was becoming more and more outrageous.

"You sure are brave! No cultivator exploring the stellar space dares to venture too far; generally, they stay within a half-year journey. Only you went the furthest."

If the journey exceeded half a year, it would be impossible to maintain timely contact with the Nine Provinces. Number Nine, as the Heaven's Augury of the Nine Provinces, could sense the markings of the Nine Provinces cultivators anytime, naturally determining the rough location of those who left their domain.

Lu Ye, however, was different, as he had been out of its sensing range for more than two months.

But to say the truth, this wasn't his intention. He had initially planned to return but unexpectedly encountered Fong Rumu, who took him on a swift flight, after which he sought the Ghost Ship, which took him on another trip, leading him ever further.

"Alive is good, alive is good, come home soon!" Number Nine urged.

Lu Ye suddenly felt a strange sensation, like a mischievous child who forgot the time while playing outside and got urged by the parents...

But then again, wandering within this vast, boundless stellar space, one would indeed feel empty without some attachment to the heart.

Just after ending the communication with Number Nine, Jian Guhong's message arrived, inquiring about his recent situation.

Clearly, Jian Guhong had been checking his battlefield marking's condition. Previously, Lu Ye had ventured too far, making Jian Guhong unable to contact him, but now that he entered the communication range, Jian Guhong became aware.

Lu Ye spent some time narrating his various experiences during the trip, letting Jian Guhong record them. Whether it was Fong Rumu or the Ghost Ship, they were not things that the Nine Provinces cultivators had ever encountered, and they might meet them in the future; of course, Lu Ye wouldn't withhold such important information.

As for the previous encounter with the lanternfish, Lu Ye had long informed Jian Guhong via communication, so presumably, entering the stellar space in the future, the Nine Provinces cultivators would be more vigilant.

Then Lu Ye mentioned Hai Tang and sought Jian Guhong's opinion.

Naturally, Jian Guhong knew nothing about Mount Fangcun's Dwarf Race, but as the first Governor of the Nine Provinces, he focused on another aspect that intrigued him.

"Are you saying, this Fellow Daoist named Hai Tang comes from Mount Fangcun and is particularly knowledgeable?"

"Perhaps, according to her, Mount Fangcun, like the Ghost Ship, wanders around, and Mount Fangcun's cultivators expand their horizons with their domain's movement, so naturally, they have a broad experience."

"We must invite this Fellow Daoist Hai Tang back!"

Lu Ye immediately understood his intent, "Senior Brother wants to invite her to teach us Nine Provinces cultivators some common knowledge of the stellar space?"

"This is a rare opportunity. Compared to our own exploration, Mount Fangcun controls a much broader information scope. We wouldn't pry into confidential details, just inquire about things everyone knows but we don't, which wouldn't make her feel uneasy."

"That's good. I've already invited her, and Senior Sister Hai Tang currently has nowhere to go; she's agreed to return to the Nine Provinces with me."

Chapter 1314 It's So Hard for Me

Originally, Lu Ye was somewhat hesitant about his decision to invite Hai Tang to go to the Nine Provinces together, but hearing Jian Guhong's words, he immediately realized that his decision was correct.

When he was with Fong Rumu before, although he heard some information about the starry sky from Fong Rumu, that information was not systematic and quite scattered, mainly because Fong Rumu spoke whatever came to mind.

However, if Hai Tang could help popularize the information, it would undoubtedly have great benefits for future Nine Provinces cultivators entering the starry sky.

Explaining this to Hai Tang, she readily agreed, happy to be able to help Lu Ye.

A few days passed.

The battlefield marking stirred again, and upon investigation by Lu Ye, he found it was a transmission from Number Nine.

"What's the matter?"

Number Nine's tone was somewhat hesitant: "There's something, I'm not sure if I should tell you, but I don't want to keep it from you either, it's quite difficult."

Lu Ye was speechless: "If you don't want to tell me, why bring it up?"

Number Nine said, "But if I don't tell you, you'll blame me when you find out later."

"What could I blame you for?" Lu Ye was curious, "What exactly is the matter, if you don't say it now, I'm going to blame you."

Leaving things half-said is annoying. If Number Nine hadn't mentioned it, so be it, but since it did, it must be something related to him, and he had to know.

"Then I'll tell you," Number Nine hastily said. Although it possessed spiritual intelligence, its nature was akin to a child's. In the entire Nine Provinces, only Lu Ye could occasionally chat with it; no one else knew its exact existence. Hearing Lu Ye's insistence, how could it dare conceal anything?

"A woman named Nian Yuexian has disappeared."

Lu Ye's figure paused, his brows furrowed: "Disappeared? What do you mean?"

"She's gone missing, suddenly vanished!" Number Nine replied.

It knew Lu Ye had a good relationship with Nian Yuexian. When Lu Ye first joined the provincial guard, Nian Yuexian took considerable care of him. If it were a Nine Provinces cultivator unfamiliar or unknown to Lu Ye, it wouldn't bother telling him about this.

Lu Ye realized things were amiss.

On Jian Guhong's side, he still needed to investigate the state of the battlefield marking's imprints to determine the condition of those in the Constellation Realm who had left the Nine Provinces, such as when Lu Ye previously left a range where communication was possible, Jian Guhong was unable to contact him.

But Number Nine was different. As the Heaven's Augury of the Nine Provinces, it could always sense the location of those in the Constellation Realm. When it says someone has disappeared, things aren't that simple.

"Wasn't she out of your sensing range?" Lu Ye asked.

"No, although her original position was near the edge of my sensing range, if she gradually moved out, I would have noticed, but in reality, I suddenly lost the sense of her battlefield marking."

Indeed, something had gone wrong.

Lu Ye remained silent for a moment, then asked, "Is she alive or dead?"

"I don't know, without sensing the battlefield marking, I can't determine life or death."

Within the Nine Provinces Heaven's Augury coverage range, if a cultivator dies, the imprint will shatter, allowing others to determine their death through this method, but outside its range, even if they die, the imprint simply remains in a state of no contact and won't shatter.

This was also why Number Nine was reluctant to inform Lu Ye. If Nian Yuexian truly died, the place where she disappeared must harbor great danger. If it didn't inform Lu Ye, he wouldn't investigate, but since it did, Lu Ye certainly wouldn't ignore it.

"When did it happen?" Lu Ye asked further.

"Just four hours ago!"

"Point me to the location!" As Lu Ye said this, he quickly turned and flew.

Number Nine sighed, knowing things would develop this way, and with no choice, it guided Lu Ye's direction.

Not to mention the many favors Nian Yuexian had done for Lu Ye in the past; even if unacquainted Nine Provinces Constellation cultivators met with danger, upon learning about it, Lu Ye would still investigate.

Since it's within the Nine Provinces Heaven's Augury sensing range, the nature of this danger and its extent must be understood; it's his responsibility as the first generation Constellation in the post-Nine Provinces era.

Sitting perched on Lu Ye's shoulder, Hai Tang, who was recovering, sensed something and slowly opened her eyes.

Lu Ye transmitted, "Senior Sister Hai Tang, I'm temporarily not returning to our home world, a senior sister is missing, I need to investigate."

Hai Tang understood and nodded: "Then be careful."

She continued to hasten her recovery to ensure that if Lu Ye encountered danger, she could promptly assist.

The location where Nian Yuexian vanished was not far from Lu Ye, only a month's journey away. This was why Number Nine chose to send the transmission to Lu Ye, because of all the Nine Provinces Constellations who ventured out, only Lu Ye was closest.

Although there are quite a few Constellations on Nine Provinces' side now, once in the stellar space outside Nine Provinces, it's like fish in the sea, very dispersed. Usually, unless accompanied like sect master and Yun Xuechu, Nine Provinces' native cultivators rarely encounter each other in the starry sky.

A month later, guided by Number Nine, Lu Ye arrived at the location where Nian Yuexian had disappeared. He did not rush to reveal himself but hid from afar, quietly investigating.

However, looking around, there was nothing in this stellar space, not to mention celestial bodies, there wasn't even a single meteorite in sight.

What kind of danger could such a place possibly hold to cause the sudden disappearance of Nian Yuexian?

Just as Lu Ye was puzzled and prepared to investigate more thoroughly, Hai Tang suddenly uttered a light sound of surprise and flew off Lu Ye's shoulder.

Seeing this, Lu Ye followed closely behind.

Soon after, Hai Tang stopped at a certain location, glanced around, and then raised her hand to form a magic spell.

A peculiar light suddenly flashed in her eyes. After observing for a moment, her face broke into a smile as she exclaimed with joy, "Junior Brother Lu, I found the aura of home."

"The aura of home?"

Hai Tang's small head nodded repeatedly, "Mount Fangcun was here for a while!"

Lu Ye carefully observed, but even with Insight Spirit Runes, he couldn't find anything unusual nearby. It immediately became clear to him that this must be a secret technique unique to the Dwarf Race, and only they could perform it to see the "aura of home."

His heart stirred.

Nian Yuexian disappeared at this location a month ago, and Hai Tang said Mount Fangcun stayed here for a while...

Could it be just a coincidence?

If there were no other possibilities, then this would be the only one.

"Can you find it?" Lu Ye asked urgently.

Hai Tang nodded, "I should be able to. They must have noticed my disappearance, so they stayed here for a while waiting for me and left some traces. But since I never showed up, Mount Fangcun had to move on. There should be some traces left along the way, and I can find them."

With that, she continued to look around, finally determining a direction, "This way!"

As she spoke, she landed back on Lu Ye's shoulder. Lu Ye then urged his body forward, heading in that direction.

Although concerned about Nian Yuexian's safety, Lu Ye couldn't help but be curious, "Can Mount Fangcun dock at will?"

An entire domain, unlike a spirit ark, can't just stop at will, can it?

Like the Blood Refinement World back then, if not for the combined effort of many Heaven's Augury Pillars, it wouldn't have stopped near the Nine Provinces. It required immense thrust, and to stop the Blood Refinement World, considerable resources were consumed.

Hai Tang smiled, "Mount Fangcun might be somewhat different from what Junior Brother imagines. You'll know when you see it."

Originally thinking she'd never return home, Hai Tang felt noticeably better with this unexpected discovery. However, she quickly realized something else, "Junior Brother Lu, is that position where your Senior Sister disappeared?"

Lu Ye nodded, "Indeed."

Hai Tang immediately understood, "In that case, she might have entered Mount Fangcun."

Lu Ye asked, "If so, would there be danger?"

Though Hai Tang seemed nice, the exact nature of the Dwarf Race's character couldn't be assumed. If they were hostile to the human race, Nian Yuexian might be in trouble.

Hai Tang replied, "If she really entered Mount Fangcun, Junior Brother need not worry too much. While my Dwarf Race does not welcome other races into our domain, some cultivators do occasionally wander in. Generally speaking, those who enter aren't in mortal danger, but..."

"But what?" Lu Ye knew nothing good usually followed the word "but."

"But they must serve a hundred years of hard labor to earn their freedom." Hai Tang glanced at Lu Ye somewhat sheepishly, "This has been a longstanding rule of Mount Fangcun. Most cultivators in stellar space know this rule, so they generally don't venture into Mount Fangcun."

The Nine Provinces cultivators were unaware of the rules of stellar space.

Nevertheless, learning that Nian Yuexian wasn't likely in mortal danger eased Lu Ye's worries a bit. His greatest fear was something bad happening to her.

As things appeared, Nian Yuexian most likely entered Mount Fangcun unwittingly and was thus retained there.

As for Mount Fangcun stopping at this location...

Since ancient times, Mount Fangcun had been wandering, with its cultivators following the home's voyages, venturing out to gather spirit jade. However, they never strayed too far. Hai Tang hadn't gone far before encountering the Ghost Ship. Though she had read many records about the Ghost Ship, she hadn't taken it too seriously at the time and boarded out of curiosity, only to end up trapped.

If not for Lu Ye bringing her out, she would have likely faced dire consequences.

This was simply a lack of experience wandering stellar space. Despite having read many chronicles and knowing the wonders of stellar space, carelessness still led to mistakes.

It also had to do with the Ghost Ship's deceptive nature—that wrecked vessel. Lu Ye had thoroughly investigated it before boarding, determined it was safe, yet it was easy to board and nearly impossible to leave when trying to depart.

Chapter 1315 Mount Fangcun

Hai Tang is ultimately in the Constellation Realm. Although there are many strong cultivators in Mount Fangcun, a Constellation Realm cultivator is not someone who can be casually abandoned. Moreover, there are other reasons that make Mount Fangcun unable to easily abandon her. Noticing she hasn't returned, Mount Fangcun stopped at this position.

Perhaps there are strong cultivators from Mount Fangcun searching for her traces all around, but they couldn't find Hai Tang, and it led to misfortune for Nian Yuexian.

Lu Ye couldn't determine exactly how things had developed, but he imagined this should be the process.

Currently, it's highly likely that Nian Yuexian is trapped inside Mount Fangcun. Hence, he must go over to check, but soon he realizes a problem: "Senior Sister Hai Tang, if your Mount Fangcun has such a rule, then if I were to enter..."

Hai Tang smiled: "That rule applies to intruders. You are my invited guest, so naturally, it doesn't apply. Junior Brother, do not worry. If your Senior Sister is indeed at Mount Fangcun, once I go back, I'll ask Master to mediate so you can take her out."

"Thank you then, Senior Sister."

Hai Tang said, "You saved my life and helped me escape from hardship. I honestly don't know how to repay you. I'm very glad to help. No need to be polite with me, Junior Brother."

Lu Ye didn't say any more, and Hai Tang earnestly performed a secret technique of the Dwarf Race, searching for traces that others couldn't see.

Originally, he planned to take Hai Tang back to the Nine Provinces to consult her about the information in stellar space. Now, it seems that plan is in vain.

It's also something unavoidable; plans often can't keep up with changes.

Lu Ye received the communication from Number Nine and hurried to the location where Nian Yuexian disappeared. He spent a month, in other words, a month ago, Mount Fangcun should still be at that location, so it shouldn't have moved too far.

However, pursuing a drifting domain in stellar space isn't too easy, especially since Hai Tang needs to regularly stop to discern the direction Mount Fangcun is moving. Sometimes she even goes the wrong way, which wastes time.

After two whole months, Hai Tang excitedly said, "It should be not far away; these traces are very clear. It should only take a few days to get home."

Sure enough, a few days later, a small mountain-like thing suddenly entered Lu Ye's view.

He initially didn't pay much attention because stellar space has all kinds of drifting meteorites, floating lands, and he had seen many oddly shaped things before.

But what he didn't expect was when Hai Tang saw this mountain-like star body, she was elated: "Finally found it!"

Lu Ye was dumbfounded: "Is this Mount Fangcun?"

"Uh-huh!" Hai Tang nodded heavily.

Lu Ye's eye twitched. He wanted to ask if she was mistaken, but then he thought it was pointless to ask. Hai Tang is from the Dwarf Race; she can't possibly mistake her own domain.

But... does this count as a domain?

The small mountain in view isn't large. In stellar space, it's not exactly everywhere, but it's not hard to see. It's just a small mountain-shaped meteorite. Though the mountains are continuous, the tallest mountain is only a few dozen meters high. Even if the Dwarf Race is really small, living in such a place would feel cramped, right? Besides, Lu Ye couldn't sense any living spirit from it.

Hai Tang seemed to notice his confusion and explained, "Mount Fangcun is mysterious and unpredictable, naturally having the effect of camouflage and delusion, so you can't see much from the outside."

The implication is that Mount Fangcun has a world within.

Lu Ye laughed: "Then I must take a good look."

But soon, Lu Ye noticed something amiss: "Your Mount Fangcun... isn't complete?"

One side of the mountain star body has obvious traces of fracture, and it's unclear how it happened.

Hai Tang nodded: "Mount Fangcun is indeed incomplete. It broke into three parts many years ago. We belong to the East part of Mount Fangcun, and there are also South and West parts. In the future, Junior Brother, if you encounter the other two parts of Mount Fangcun in stellar space, don't rush in recklessly."

Lu Ye nodded: "I understand."

As they spoke, the two drew closer to Mount Fangcun and soon reached the perimeter of the mountain star body.

Hai Tang said, "Junior Brother, don't resist!"

Saying this, she urged her spirit force, enveloping Lu Ye, and headed toward the mountain star body.

Just as they were about to collide, Lu Ye suddenly had the illusion of entering a thin film. Immediately, the brightness before him exploded.

Looking up, his expression was surprised because in front of him was a big sun suspended in mid-air.

It appeared so abruptly, without any sign beforehand.

Lu Ye immediately understood that Mount Fangcun looks one way from outside and another from inside, truly another world.

A powerful Mental Consciousness suddenly swept across. Lu Ye's body involuntarily tensed because this consciousness was so strong, he only felt it in Yueh Xin, Yang Qing, and Fong Rumu, among a few others.

Sun Blaze Realm!

It was evidently because Hai Tang brought him into Mount Fangcun, drawing the attention of the Sun Blaze Realm's strong cultivator guarding the border.

In an instant, that Mental Consciousness disappeared, undoubtedly having confirmed Hai Tang's identity.

Lu Ye steadied his mind and continued to observe the interior of Mount Fangcun. The light of the big sun was obscured by the clouds, and at this moment, he and Hai Tang were rapidly descending below.

He took a gentle breath, feeling the long-lost scent of the air.

Passing through the clouds, the land below came into view. Vast and continuous, with many undulating mountains lying like dragons across the land, grand and magnificent.

This is what a domain should look like.

"Junior Brother, how is the interior of Mount Fangcun?" Beside him, Hai Tang asked with a smile.

"The atmosphere is extraordinary!" Lu Ye could feel that the level of Mount Fangcun was much higher than that of the Nine Provinces. This was definitely a top-tier domain.

Outside, he could see Mount Fangcun's full view at a glance, but once inside, even if he spread his Mental Consciousness completely, he could only explore a minuscule area of Mount Fangcun.

Suddenly realizing something was off, he turned to look at Hai Tang beside him, dumbfounded: "Senior Sister Hai Tang, you've... grown larger!"

At this moment, Hai Tang was no longer the palm-sized little figure, but a normal human race size, as when he saw her on the Ghost Ship.

Hai Tang pursed her lips into a smile: "It's not that I've grown larger, it's that you've become smaller. This is the law of Mount Fangcun. It is said that the complete Mount Fangcun is a stellar space supreme treasure. Although it is now divided into three parts, the laws within still operate, causing any cultivator entering this place to become smaller."

Lu Ye hadn't noticed it at all. He slightly activated his spirit force without any obstruction. His storage ring and storage space also weren't affected. Even the Boulder Mountain Saber remained a size suitable for his use!

What a wondrous law this was?

Hai Tang continued, "First, I'll take you back to our peak to see the master, then we'll think of ways to gather some information about your Senior Sister. If she truly is trapped here, I'll ask the master to help save her so you can reunite."

Her arrangements were appropriate, and Lu Ye naturally had no objections.

Flying along the way, Lu Ye found that there were no such things as cities inside Mount Fangcun, and the number of the Dwarf Race seemed not too many, certainly not as numerous as the human race in the Nine Provinces, visible everywhere.

All the Dwarf Race gathered together with each spirit mountaintop as a foundation. Some spirit mountaintops had many people, others had few.

When he asked about this, Hai Tang did not hide it: "Junior Brother is correct. Our Dwarf Race indeed gathers based on spirit mountaintops. Each spirit mountaintop is equivalent to a sect of your human race. Within Mount Fangcun, there are a thousand spirit mountaintops, equating to over a thousand sects."

Although this number wasn't small, compared to the Nine Provinces, it paled in comparison.

The Nine Provinces had tens of thousands of sects combined, probably over ten thousand.

This undoubtedly relates to the population base of the Dwarf Race.

Among these thousand spirit mountaintops, three stand out the most: Misty Peak, Cloud Sea Peak, and Immortal Spirit Peak, all hosted by Sun Blaze Realm strong cultivators.

Previously, when Hai Tang brought Lu Ye into Mount Fangcun, the Mental Consciousness that swept over them belonged to the Peak Master of Cloud Sea Peak, Chen Xuanhai, who was on duty recently, guarding this domain.

The spirit mountaintop Hai Tang was from was one of the three major spirit mountaintops, Immortal Spirit Peak, and her master was the Peak Master of Immortal Spirit Peak, Su Yuqing, also one of the only three Sun Blaze Realm individuals at Mount Fangcun.

If it weren't for such a relationship, after Hai Tang went missing, Mount Fangcun wouldn't have stopped to wait for her, much less for a missing Constellation with no strong background.

It showed that Hai Tang was quite favored by her master.

The territory within Mount Fangcun wasn't very wide, roughly equivalent to three provinces of the Nine Provinces, but it's essential to know that this side of Mount Fangcun was only a portion of the whole. The complete Mount Fangcun, in terms of size, would certainly not be inferior to the Nine Provinces.

The flight speed of a Constellation Realm cultivator was fast, and even if the entry position into the domain was not quite right, it only took less than an hour to reach Immortal Spirit Peak.

From outside Mount Fangcun, Lu Ye only saw the tallest peak as being a few dozen zhang high, but inside, it was different; Immortal Spirit Peak was thousands of zhang high. Within the spirit mountaintop, spirit force flourished, and beside the spirit mountaintop, mountain ranges undulated.

The area of a hundred thousand miles around was considered the territory of Immortal Spirit Peak.

Hai Tang led Lu Ye to a valley at the foot of Immortal Spirit Peak and settled him in the visitors hall within the valley, with a slight apology: "Junior Brother Lu, there are some rules on Master's side. Without her permission, outsiders are not allowed to step foot on Immortal Spirit Peak. Please wait here for now. I'll go and meet Master to report the matter of your Senior Sister."

"Thank you, Senior Sister Hai Tang."

Hai Tang left, and Lu Ye quietly sat in the visitors hall waiting.

He had attempted to explore the battlefield marking upon entering Mount Fangcun, but to no avail, already beyond the coverage of Nine Provinces Heaven's Augury. So, he couldn't detect anything useful.

He also thought of exploring with Mental Consciousness, but being a guest here, it was a bit inappropriate. Thus, he had to leave the matter to Hai Tang to handle.

Hopefully, there would be a good outcome.

Chapter 1316 Lu Yiye's Noble Character

While waiting, people occasionally peeked in through the hall's entrance, not out of malice, but seemingly driven by curiosity.

After all, a place like Mount Fangcun rarely saw guests, usually only some clueless outside cultivator accidentally stumbling in and getting captured by Sun Blaze Realm border guards.

Plus, Hai Tang's status on the Immortal Spirit Peak wasn't low, and those cultivators who shared the same spirit mountaintop wished to see what kind of guest she had brought back.

However, upon seeing the guest, they were greatly disappointed and quickly lost interest, dispersing.

Faced with these onlookers, Lu Ye could only pretend he didn't notice, quietly waiting.

Hai Tang headed straight up the Immortal Spirit Peak, visiting her mentor Su Yuqing in the hall.

The Mental Consciousness of a Sun Blaze Realm cultivator was immensely powerful, and she had already sensed it when Hai Tang brought Lu Ye into Mount Fangcun.

Previously, when Hai Tang was missing, she had personally gone out to investigate and discovered traces of the Ghost Ship, understanding in her heart that her most outstanding disciple might have inadvertently entered the Ghost Ship. Otherwise, she wouldn't have failed to find Hai Tang's trace. But even as a Sun Blaze Realm expert, she dared not enter the Ghost Ship to rescue, as doing so meant adhering to its rules, negating her realm's advantages.

Most likely, she would fail to rescue her disciple and get caught herself.

Heartbroken, she had to make the decision to give up, thinking she would never see this disciple again, but unexpectedly, Hai Tang returned on her own, and brought back a human male.

Su Yuqing was still somewhat puzzled; had she misjudged the situation? Was it possible her disciple was not trapped in the Ghost Ship? If so, why couldn't she find Hai Tang?

In the hall, Hai Tang's eyes were red. The miraculous escape on the Ghost Ship had left her deeply terrified. While around Lu Ye she could suppress her emotions, upon seeing her most revered mentor, she could no longer contain them.

Just like a child bullied outside returning home and seeing their parents, her heart was filled with grievances, but ultimately, she was of Constellation Realm and wouldn't cry like a child.

Seeing her like this, Su Yuqing sighed, having been prepared to scold her a bit, but now couldn't say anything harsh, raising a hand, "Rise."

A gentle force lifted Hai Tang up.

"Where did you run off to? Why couldn't I find you?" Su Yuqing asked.

She was quite curious; theoretically, with her Sun Blaze Realm's Mental Consciousness, she should easily find Hai Tang unless she hadn't run far. Yet searches had been unproductive, leading her to conclude in light of finding Ghost Ship traces.

Hai Tang hung her head, "This disciple is unworthy, worrying Master; I was out collecting spirit jade and accidentally entered the Ghost Ship, becoming trapped."

Su Yuqing was astonished, "You were indeed trapped in the Ghost Ship?"

So her deduction was correct.

"How did you escape?" She knew her disciple's foundation well, not bad but definitely lacking the ability to get out on her own from the Ghost Ship. Otherwise, she wouldn't have given up waiting, affirming her conviction of her disciple's entrapment and death if caught; Mount Fangcun would have sailed away, else she would have waited longer.

"Luckily, this disciple was saved by another, making the escape possible; it was that Junior Brother Lu who returned with me."

"Tell me in detail!" Su Yuqing was intrigued; at her level of cultivation, few things piqued her interest anymore. But matters concerning the Ghost Ship warranted scrutiny, especially how this 'Junior Brother Lu' managed to rescue someone; what sort of skills did he wield?

Before, she secretly probed Lu Ye's cultivation, discovering him to be merely Constellation Early Stage. Something a Sun Blaze Realm couldn't achieve was accomplished by a Constellation Early Stage—curious indeed.

Internally wondering whether she had misjudged.

With this thought, her Mental Consciousness flickered, extending outward, reaching the valley visitors hall where Lu Ye was, carefully probing once more to confirm he was just Constellation Early Stage.

In the visitors hall, Lu Ye tensed up, noticing a Sun Blaze Realm consciousness examining him. Yet, it wasn't concealed but an openly straightforward probe.

He realized it was likely Hai Tang's mentor observing him.

Thankfully, the observation came quickly and left just as fast.

The other's actions were normal; Lu Ye found nothing amiss, since he was a guest, after all.

In the Immortal Spirit Peak hall, Hai Tang recounted her various encounters on the Ghost Ship in detail, initially brief but now elaborating thoroughly per Su Yuqing's instructions.

Upon hearing that Junior Brother Lu Ye had finally passed the test of the Ghost Ship after nineteen reincarnations, even someone like Su Yuqing couldn't help but show a surprised expression.

Although she had never been to the Ghost Ship, she knew something about it, and with her disciple's recent account, she naturally understood that the greatest challenge for a cultivator trapped inside the Ghost Ship was the spirit force reserve!

Her own disciple had only managed seven reincarnations before exhausting all her spirit force, unable to continue any further.

That "Junior Brother Lu" managed nineteen reincarnations, not only without depleting his spirit force but also without any impact on his cultivation. Such a spirit force reserve is terrifying indeed!

An Early Stage Constellation cultivator cannot possibly possess such a spirit force reserve; he must have a method to rapidly recover his spirit force!

Hearing that Lu Ye managed to control the Ghost Ship to take down three opponents, and struck out with a final blow that released a golden exotic beast, swallowing a Moon Jade Realm practitioner and several Constellations whole, Su Yuqing was even more astonished.

She carefully inquired about the appearance and aura of that golden exotic beast from Hai Tang.

Hai Tang was naturally forthcoming.

Seeing Su Yuqing's pensive expression, Hai Tang cautiously said, "Master, I observed that the golden exotic beast doesn't seem to be Junior Brother Lu's own ability, but rather some secret technique sealed within his weapon by a powerful figure!"

Su Yuqing nodded, "I naturally know it is a sealed secret technique, but such a method... I am not capable of achieving it!"

Hai Tang was surprised, "Master, you cannot accomplish this?"

Su Yuqing sighed, "Ordinary seals are not an issue, but the internal rules of the Ghost Ship are special; without a master of Divine Skills, a sealed secret technique cannot exert its corresponding power within the Ghost Ship. This young fellow surnamed Lu... has a powerful figure behind him."

Moreover, a figure undoubtedly more powerful than her.

Hai Tang couldn't help but show a confused expression; as far as she knew, Junior Brother Lu hailed from the Nine Heavens World, which had just been promoted to a large domain, with only a group of Early Stage Constellations within, lacking even a Moon Jade, so where did this powerful figure come from?

"Continue," Su Yuqing's words interrupted Hai Tang's contemplation, "He passed the test of the Ghost Ship and naturally could leave; how did you manage to leave?"

Hai Tang said, "It was Junior Brother Lu who took me out..." She then recounted the events of selecting treasures in the treasure vault and Lu Ye's final choices.

Hearing that the boy surnamed Lu was willing to forgo the million spirit jade value of the Dayan Spirit Pearl just to bring Hai Tang out of the Ghost Ship, Su Yuqing couldn't help but be dazed.

To someone of Sun Blaze Realm, a million spirit jade is naturally not a big deal, but for an Early Stage Constellation cultivator, this is a huge fortune.

Furthermore, the Dayan Spirit Pearl cannot simply be measured by spirit jade scarcity; it greatly assists cultivation and is a precious item that cannot merely be stumbled upon.

In this world... there truly are individuals with such high moral integrity?

"I didn't expect Junior Brother Lu to make such a choice; I had already resigned myself after failing the Ghost Ship's test, thinking I would die on that ship and never escape in this life. Who knew Junior Brother Lu would choose me, fought the fog in the treasure vault with reason, and brought me out. But because of this, Junior Brother Lu couldn't take any treasures from the vault."

Su Yuqing looked at her disciple with a peculiar expression, "Does he fancy you?" Otherwise, how could he make such a choice upon brief acquaintance? Any rational cultivator would choose the Dayan Spirit Pearl in such an environment, wouldn't they?

Hai Tang shook her head, "It's not like that, Master. I've spent several days with Junior Brother Lu and can confirm, he is a person of upright character! The reason he chose to save me is because I initially offered him some help; it was also because of me that the third battleship was defeated. Junior Brother Lu is someone who repays kindness."

Su Yuqing understood that, although her disciple was not particularly worldly, she was not foolish either, and her judgment of people was accurate. Since she said so, it was correct; the boy did not choose based on beauty, but genuinely wanted to save her.

For a moment, her fondness for the boy surnamed Lu grew extremely strong. Nowadays, there are fewer and fewer juniors of such character.

If Hai Tang had merely returned with a friend, Su Yuqing might not have bothered too much, but knowing these complex inner workings, she felt it was necessary to meet the young man.

Regardless, since her disciple survived because of him, she should reward him with some substantial benefits to complete a cycle of cause and effect.

Yet before she could speak of it, Hai Tang continued, "Master, Junior Brother Lu came to Mount Fangcun with me this time because he seeks assistance."

"What assistance?"

Hai Tang said, "Three months ago, Junior Brother Lu received news that his senior sister disappeared. Later, when we investigated, we discovered the presence of Mount Fangcun lingering in that location, allowing me to find my way back. Junior Brother Lu suspects that his senior sister might have accidentally stumbled into Mount Fangcun and gotten trapped here, so he wishes to ask Master to investigate whether it's true, and if so, to allow her to reunite with Junior Brother Lu."

Chapter 1317 Su Yuqing's Thoughts

"Three months ago..." Su Yuqing pondered slightly, "I wasn't aware of this matter. Recently, your Master Uncle Chen Xuanhai has been overseeing the place. If outsiders have intruded, he would be the one to deal with them. Let me inquire about it."

As she was someone who saved the life of her family's disciple, she wasn't considered an outsider. Even if she had indeed fallen into Mount Fangcun, releasing her directly wouldn't be an issue.

Saying this, she flicked her fingers, and a spirit light shot out towards the outside.

"I've talked so much, yet forgot to ask: what is the name of that lad surnamed Lu, and where does he hail from?" Su Yuqing asked, as she was getting ready to meet Lu Ye and naturally needed to find out about his background.

Such a young man, with upright character and noble disposition, possessing remarkable skills, and having powerful figures backing him, is bound to achieve greatness over time. As his disciple's master, Su Yuqing was glad to see her disciple become friends with someone like him.

"His name is Lu Ye from the Nine Heavens Realm!"

"Lu Ye from the Nine Heavens Realm..." Su Yuqing nodded slightly, then, as she was contemplating which domain the Nine Heavens Realm belonged to, a sense of familiarity suddenly arose in her heart, and her expression changed: "Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens Realm?"

Hai Tang blinked, not understanding why her master suddenly reacted so strongly, but she corrected, "Master, it's Lu Ye, not Lu Yiye."

Su Yuqing seemed not to hear, and her Mental Consciousness surged again, extending outward.

Meanwhile, in the visitors hall within the valley, Lu Ye frowned, why is it endless? Just now, there was a Sun Blaze Realm's Mental Consciousness probing, and now it happens again. Are they afraid I'm doing something shady here or what?

He didn't know that Su Yuqing's earlier probing was out of one consideration, while the current probing was out of another.

A moment later, the probing sensation disappeared.

In the Immortal Spirit Peak Great Hall, Su Yuqing was almost certain that the Lu Ye from the Nine Heavens Realm brought back by her disciple was indeed the young man she had heard of.

Because the cultivation matched!

Speaking of which, her knowledge of the name Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens Realm was a coincidence. Over six months ago, while passing near a top-tier domain, she visited an old acquaintance from that domain and stayed for a few days. During idle chat, that acquaintance mentioned a curious event: the last Divine Sea competition at the Reincarnation Tree.

It was said that during that Divine Sea competition, a Divine Sea Level 8 cultivator from the Nine Heavens Realm single-handedly eradicated the Blood Race, exterminating the Divine Sea Realm juniors participating from the Blood Race. Not only that, even the Insect Race suffered greatly at his hands, though it wasn't to the extent of extermination, but close enough.

Later, this Divine Sea Level 8 junior, despite having cultivation weaker than everyone else, overwhelmed top-tier domain geniuses, brutally killed a Stone Race prodigy, and even the rising stars of the Yellow Dragon Realm dared not face his edge squarely. In the end, he valiantly took first place, earning widespread astonishment.

And this junior was none other than Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens Realm!

Now, the Blood Race and Insect Race have jointly issued a starry bounty order, promising generous rewards for anyone who can kill Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens Realm, with rewards tempting even Sun Blaze Realm cultivators.

It can be said that the Blood Race and Insect Race suffered great losses due to this Lu Yiye in the Divine Sea competition, losing face completely. They are now willing to pay any price for revenge.

For someone like Su Yuqing, a Sun Blaze powerful figure, such junior competitions are mere curiosities. Though she was surprised by Lu Yiye's profound background at the time, she didn't dwell on it too much.

Throughout history, many races' prodigies have emerged. To venture in the stellar space, fraught with danger, the more extraordinary the cultivator, the harder it is to find space to grow. Often, those who don't make a splash in their younger years rise to a high position in the end.

Yet she never expected the protagonist of that curious story to come to Mount Fangcun!

Although the names were different, the domains matched, and the names differed by only one character, the cultivation also matched, which was enough.

It was said that the one who took Lu Yiye to the Divine Sea competition was a reclusive powerful figure, who directly tossed a 9-star treasure into the treasure pond at the Reincarnation Tree, ending up with a huge windfall.

A powerful figure who can casually produce a 9-star treasure is naturally not to be underestimated. With such a powerful figure, the golden exotic beast secret technique sealed within the blade can be explained; it must have come from that powerful figure's hand.

She didn't know that regarding Lu Ye, all other assumptions were correct except the sealed blade assumption, which was an oversight resulting from a fortunate mistake.

At this moment, a Liu Guang rapidly entered from outside, which was the reply from Chen Xuanhai.

The Liu Guang fell into Su Yuqing's hands, and after a slight investigation, she understood.

Hai Tang asked, "Master, is Junior Brother Lu's sister in our Mount Fangcun?"

Su Yuqing glanced at her and nodded, "She is. Three months ago, she inadvertently stumbled into this place and was captured by Chen Xuanhai."

Hai Tang immediately became nervous, "Is she injured?" If she was injured, it would be difficult to explain to Junior Brother Lu.

"No injuries sustained," Su Yuqing shook her head, "You should know the regulations of this domain, intruders are merely punished with a century of hard labor and aren't subjected to any harsh treatment. That woman is now mining a vein, and she even receives monthly wages."

Hai Tang immediately felt relieved. Although Mount Fangcun would detain intruders, they indeed would not mistreat them. As a top domain, Mount Fangcun naturally has various precious mineral veins that require careful extraction. Those with low cultivation can't handle this task; those at the Constellation Realm are the best suited for it.

But who in this domain at the Constellation Realm doesn't need to cultivate? Who has the time to do these trivial tasks? It's just right for intruders to serve as laborers.

However, Mount Fangcun never overdoes it. Though mining veins is laborious, monthly wages are also paid, equivalent to a mandatory employment relationship.

After a hundred years, they can regain their freedom.

This is precisely why, even though Mount Fangcun has strong Sun Blaze Realm guards at all times, it never warns intruders in advance. The Sun Blaze Realm guards would rather someone intrude to serve labor rather than scare them away with an early warning, as it brings no benefit.

"That's wonderful," Hai Tang said gladly. She was worried something might happen that she couldn't explain to Lu Ye. Now knowing Junior Brother Lu's senior sister is unscathed, she felt relieved and pleaded, "Master, can you get her out? Junior Brother Lu has shown me kindness, and since she is his senior sister, she should be considered as my guest. I should treat her with courtesy, and not make her suffer through labor."

The reasoning is sound. Before knowing Lu Ye's true identity, Su Yuqing didn't mind fulfilling her disciple's request; it was merely about liberating someone. As one of the only three Sun Blaze Realm individuals in this domain, she certainly had that authority.

But after learning Lu Ye's true identity, Su Yuqing naturally had more in mind.

It's not about capturing him to claim the Blood Race and Insect Race's bounty. These two races are notorious across the stellar space and have long been eyeing Mount Fangcun, and the Dwarf Race has never had a harmonious relationship with them. It's already generous enough not to trip them up, let alone do them any favors.

Moreover, as a Sun Blaze Realm individual in a top domain, Su Yuqing isn't lacking in those bounties.

She was considering something else.

After closely scrutinizing her disciple standing before her, hmm, outstanding beauty, graceful bearing, an uncommon beauty wherever she goes. Her own aptitude is also quite good; her future achievements won't stop at the Constellation, Moon Jade at the very least, and whether she can advance to Sun Blaze depends on her own fortune.

Seems feasible?

Her master remained silent but examined her, making Hai Tang a bit puzzled. Is there something on her face?

After a while, Su Yuqing finally said, "There isn't much issue with that woman. I'll greet Chen Xuanhai later and have him release her."

Hai Tang was overjoyed: "Thank you, Master!"

Su Yuqing gestured, "Come here!"

Hai Tang promptly stepped forward and stood before Su Yuqing, who took up her hand and gently asked, "What do you think of Lu Yiye?"

Hai Tang didn't know why her master asked this, so she answered honestly, "He's very good."

Su Yuqing continued, "Have you ever been offended by him during the months you interacted with him?"

"Never!" Hai Tang shook her head, "Junior Brother Lu is upright, he has never had a sinister look in his eyes when looking at me, let alone been disrespectful."

"Then... do you think he's someone you can entrust yourself to?"

Hai Tang was slightly startled and thought seriously before speaking, "If I had to choose someone to entrust myself to in the future, Junior Brother Lu is indeed a very good candidate. But Master, there's nothing between us, and I have been recovering from injuries all these months, and Junior Brother Lu has taken good care of me." She carefully glanced at Su Yuqing: "Why does Master suddenly ask this?"

Su Yuqing said, "The cultivation path is long, and many obstacles lie ahead. A person always needs something to care about so their heart doesn't feel empty, and it helps them go further. Therefore, even after achieving cultivation, many choose Dao companions to support each other on the cultivation path. You've been a Constellation for many years, and it's about time you chose a Dao companion."

Although she had some intuition about it, Hai Tang was still surprised when Su Yuqing voiced these thoughts: "Master, you don't mean for me to form a Dao bond with Junior Brother Lu, do you?"

"What do you think?"

"No, no!" Hai Tang hastily waved her hands, "Junior Brother Lu has no such intentions towards me, if Master brings it up suddenly, it would surely make things difficult for him."

Su Yuqing caught the implication and smiled slightly, "So, there's no problem on your end."

Hai Tang blushed slightly, "I don't have such feelings for Junior Brother Lu, but he did save my life. If he truly had such a thought, I... wouldn't refuse."

Feeling somewhat puzzled, it's not that the Dwarf Race doesn't have people who form Dao bonds, but usually, it's an intra-clan matter. Rarely do they form Dao bonds with other clans. Not sure why Master suddenly had this notion.

Chapter 1318 Recruiting Outside Help

"That's settled. You go ahead and invite him, and say I wish to meet him!" Su Yuqing gently patted Hai Tang's hand.

Hai Tang looked at her with a touch of pleading: "Master, you cannot mention this to him."

If Junior Brother Lu really agrees, that would be fine, but if he doesn't agree, she would lose face before him in the future.

Su Yuqing understood her concerns and smiled slightly: "I won't mention it. However, what I told you just now, you can't tell him either. Just pretend you don't know."

"Can't tell him anything at all? What about Junior Brother Lu's senior sister..."

"I have arrangements for this matter, and it won't be difficult for you."

With a hint of doubt, Hai Tang descended from Immortal Spirit Peak and found Lu Ye waiting in the valley.

"How did it go?" Lu Ye asked anxiously.

Although he previously deduced that Nian Yuexian was most likely trapped in Mount Fangcun, he wasn't completely confident. If Nian Yuexian wasn't here, it would be troublesome.

In this vast stellar space, he wouldn't know where to find her afterwards.

Hai Tang lowered her head, her gaze slightly evasive, and didn't directly answer Lu Ye's question, only saying, "Master asked me to take you to see her."

She had to obey her master's orders and couldn't directly inform Lu Ye about his senior sister's situation, so she felt a bit guilty towards Lu Ye.

Lu Ye nodded: "Of course."

He had considered whether to pay a visit to the master here, but they were Sun Blaze, and he was just a Constellation. Visiting without being invited would be somewhat presumptuous; now that he was summoned, there was no issue.

As Hai Tang flew towards Immortal Spirit Peak, Lu Ye, preoccupied with thoughts of Nian Yuexian, didn't notice Hai Tang's slight odd behavior.

As Hai Tang left the Spirit Mountaintop Great Hall, Su Yuqing flicked two spirit lights out in different directions with a finger.

In no time, the space before her twisted, and two illusory figures suddenly appeared. The one on the left had a celestial aura, spirited and vigorous, appearing like an elderly man in his sixties. If a Constellation from this home world was present, they would recognize this person as Chen Xuanhai, one of the three pillars of Cloud Sea Peak.

The one on the right was a young man with a striking appearance, handsome and elegant, unmistakably Woo Qimo from Misty Peak.

Neither of them was physically present; they appeared only as manifestations of their Mental Consciousness.

"What is it?" As soon as he appeared, Chen Xuanhai asked.

The three Sun Blaze from Mount Fangcun would only gather like this if something significant was happening, as Su Yuqing could easily communicate through audio transmission in Boundless World instead of inviting them directly.

It had to be something big, prompting the three Sun Blaze to convene, since this made discussing matters easier.

Su Yuqing didn't mention Lu Ye's situation, but looked at Chen Xuanhai: "I want the outsider woman you captured before March."

"No problem," Chen Xuanhai agreed immediately, slightly puzzled: "But why do you need this person?"

Su Yuqing chuckled: "It's coincidental that today, my disciple Hai Tang returned with a human male, and you two surely already know."

Chen Xuanhai nodded, while Woo Qimo became intrigued: "Wasn't your disciple said to have fallen into the Ghost Ship? Did you misjudge earlier?"

They all knew about Hai Tang's disappearance and Su Yuqing's search, especially Su Yuqing deducing the dire situation of Hai Tang falling into the Ghost Ship. Yet unexpectedly, after several months, Hai Tang had returned unharmed, accompanied by a human male.

Su Yuqing replied: "My judgment was correct; she indeed fell into the Ghost Ship."

Chen Xuanhai raised his eyebrow: "She managed to escape?"

He was aware of Hai Tang's capabilities, as well as the Ghost Ship's oddities, so he found it puzzling how Hai Tang could escape with her abilities.

Woo Qimo was equally astonished: "Impressive indeed. I wonder what good fortune she brought back from the ship?"

Su Yuqing shook her head and sighed: "My disciple is talented but not capable of such feats. She escaped entirely thanks to a benefactor's help!"

With a thought, she conveyed all the information she gathered to these two.

After a short while, Chen Xuanhai and Woo Qimo understood the events leading up to this.

Chen Xuanhai realized: "I see. No wonder she brought back a human male, owing such a monumental favor."

Woo Qimo also said, "This young man is quite a character. To actually be willing to give up the Dayan Spirit Pearl—if it were me in my younger days, I definitely wouldn't have made such a choice."

Even though his cultivation far surpassed Lu Ye, at this moment he couldn't help but admire Lu Ye. Such a person who is grateful and pays back kindness is always worthy of others' admiration.

"The key is that this young man is perceptive, finding a glimpse of possibility and even succeeding," Chen Xuanhai also praised without reservation. In that environment where treasures abound, who would care about others' life and death? Naturally, snatching a piece of treasure is the priority, yet Lu Ye was able to think of taking Hai Tang away. He sighed and said, "Indeed, the human race boasts many heroes; as long as this child survives, his future is limitless, but alas, he is not of the Dwarf Race."

Woo Qimo said, "Could this young man have anything to do with the lady who entered this domain three months ago? Otherwise, why would Su Yuqing suddenly ask Chen Xuanhai for that lady?"

Su Yuqing said, "These two have a master-disciple relationship. After the young man took Hai Tang from the Ghost Ship, he heard of his master's disappearance. After some searching, unexpectedly, Hai Tang found the way back, and he also inferred that his master might have entered Mount Fangcun."

"That's quite a coincidence," Woo Qimo laughed heartily. "Given such a relationship, it wouldn't be appropriate to make them serve here. Let Brother Chen release them afterward; our Mount Fangcun is no Dragon Pond or tiger's den, there is no reason to treat guests like this."

Chen Xuanhai nodded, "I'll handle this matter."

Woo Qimo said again, "But Fellow Daoist Su, you wouldn't have called us over just for these things, right?"

Listening for novelty is fine, but it's not enough to gather the three Sun Blaze beings of Mount Fangcun.

Su Yuqing said, "Naturally, it's not just these. I called you both for the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet; in three months, it's time for the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet. Do you have any strategies?"

When she said this, Woo Qimo felt a toothache and shrugged, "No strategies!"

Chen Xuanhai also sighed, "Every Martial Arts Meet, we end up last. For hundreds of years, the best result was only second place, leading to our domain's cultivation environment worsening, and the younger disciples becoming more incompetent. If this vicious cycle continues, the future of our domain is indeed worrisome."

Woo Qimo cursed, "It's because those brats aren't up to it; they let others show off every time! We've provided so many good things over the years, yet haven't seen them hold their heads high." Saying this, Woo Qimo suddenly frowned, "Fellow Daoist Su, is your disciple Hai Tang the main force this time at the Martial Arts Meet? I observed her unstable aura; could she have been seriously injured on the Ghost Ship?"

The reason Mount Fangcun halted to find Hai Tang's whereabouts wasn't just because Hai Tang had a good master, but also due to the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, where Hai Tang was to play a significant role. Without this reason, a domain would never stop for one person alone—Mount Fangcun is, after all, a domain, not a spirit ark that can stop at will.

Now Hai Tang's condition is unsettling, making the already worrying future of this domain even worse.

Su Yuqing nodded, "My disciple was trapped on the Ghost Ship for several months; her foundation is damaged, but in three months, she should recover adequately."

While holding Hai Tang's hand earlier, she also took the opportunity to examine Hai Tang's condition.

After hearing this, Chen Xuanhai and Woo Qimo were slightly relieved.

Su Yuqing said, "However, even if Hai Tang completely recovers, the Martial Arts Meet will not be optimistic. Haven't they involved Constellation Mid-Stage participants every time? Not to speak of Constellation Mid-Stage, there have even been instances of Late Stage participation, yet we still rarely see Mid-Stage on our side."

Woo Qimo said, "What can we do? Only three months remain; even if the three of us exert ourselves, it's impossible to elevate the cultivation of all participating disciples. Ultimately, we'll end up last."

Chen Xuanhai looked thoughtfully at Su Yuqing, "Fellow Daoist Su, if you have a brilliant strategy, feel free to share it."

They had discussed many strategies regarding the Martial Arts Meet; there was no reason for Su Yuqing to suddenly bring them over to discuss it again, indicating some changes.

Su Yuqing smiled slightly, "It's simple, recruit external aid!"

Relying on domain cultivators was hopeless, so look to outsiders. Originally, Su Yuqing hadn't considered this, but upon learning Lu Ye's true identity, she had some thoughts. Of course, the premise is that this Lu Ye is indeed the Lu Yiye she knows!

Chen Xuanhai and Woo Qimo were struck, realizing Su Yuqing's plan: "Are you talking about that young man named Lu Ye?"

"Exactly, what say you both?"

Woo Qimo pondered, "This young man managed to escape from the Ghost Ship; just this feat alone surpasses ninety-nine percent of Constellation participants of this world. He's indeed a decent choice. What is this young man's cultivation?"

"Constellation Early Stage."

"His cultivation is somewhat lacking," Woo Qimo commented. To participate in the Martial Arts Meet, having Constellation Mid-Stage would be ideal, ensuring at least some chance of victory; even just

Constellation Early Stage wouldn't offer much advantage, as Mount Fangcun already had backup candidates.

Of course, Constellation Late Stage cannot be chosen as external aid; this is an unspoken rule among the three branches of the Dwarf Race. Otherwise, if everyone went looking for Constellation Late Stage external aid, what role would the Dwarf Race play in the Meet?

So even if external aid is imperative, at most, it involves Constellation Mid-Stage; this scenario has occurred before.

"Why choose him?" Chen Xuanhai wanted to understand the reason. Sun Blaze figures like them act with purpose. Su Yuqing must have her reason for choosing him.

Su Yuqing smiled slightly and said, "More than half a year ago, wasn't our domain near the Boundless World? I took the opportunity to visit the Water Fairy for a chat, and during our talk, I learned an intriguing story from her."

They were aware of Su Yuqing's close relationship with the Water Fairy of the Boundless World. Both women were Sun Blaze figures and had frequent interactions. Su Yuqing had indeed gone out when near the Boundless World.

Chapter 1319 This Mountain Is Mine

For a Sun Blaze Realm to describe an event as interesting, it is evidently no trivial matter, and Chen Xuanhai and Woo Qimo both revealed curious expressions.

Su Yuqing did not keep them in suspense, and candidly said: "Roughly less than two years ago, the Reincarnation Tree's once-in-a-century Taichu Realm was opened, gathering Divine Sea Realm prodigies from various domains for fierce competition."

Woo Qimo calculated with his fingers, thought it over slightly, and nodded: "It indeed opened almost two years ago." He added with some regret: "Unfortunately, my Mount Fangcun's Dwarf Race hasn't had the chance to participate in such grand events."

Logically speaking, any large domain would basically qualify to request a doppelganger from the Reincarnation Tree, not to mention a top-tier realm like Mount Fangcun, where the Reincarnation Tree never hesitates to bestow its gifts.

Yet in reality, due to some particular reasons, Mount Fangcun has never had a doppelganger of the Reincarnation Tree, so historically, there's no precedent for the Dwarf Race participating in the Divine Sea contests of the Reincarnation Tree.

This was also why Lu Ye was surprised upon seeing Hai Tang's true form, as within the Taichu Realm, he encountered many bizarre races, yet never saw the Dwarf Race.

"So what interesting things happened in this Divine Sea contest? Could it be an unexpected dark horse appeared?" Woo Qimo asked.

"Indeed." Su Yuqing nodded and began recounting what she heard from the Water Fairy back then.

A moment later, Chen Xuanhai showed a thoughtful expression: "From what you said, it was a person named Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens World who gained fame there, and this time it's a Lu Ye who followed Hai Tang to this domain. Between these two..."

Su Yuqing said: "They should be the same person! Because Hai Tang mentioned that Lu Ye's domain of origin is Nine Heavens World, and it wouldn't make sense to have two Nine Heavens Worlds, as for the different name, there might be some other reasons, his cultivation at the Constellation Early Stage corresponds."

About two years ago, in the Divine Sea Level 8, such a prodigy should indeed have advanced to Constellation by now.

"A Divine Sea Level 8 being able to suppress many Level 9 prodigies from top-tier realms, and then swept through the Blood Race and Insect Race, if this one really is that Lu Yiye... there's potential." Woo Qimo's eyes brightened.

Typically, such prodigies capable of crossing realms to fight cannot be judged by level alone, much like Gu Yulou from the Yellow Dragon World, if he were to advance to Constellation, he would certainly still be able to fight across realms.

Lu Yiye, being able to surpass the former Gu Yulou and upon advancing to Constellation, might be even more formidable than Gu Yulou, so even though he is currently only at Constellation Early Stage, the strength he can exert should at least equate to Constellation Mid-Stage.

Chen Xuanhai felt a bit intrigued too: "The crucial issue now is whether this Lu Ye is that Lu Yiye!"

The three Sun Blaze Realm experts exchanged glances, Woo Qimo smiled faintly: "Want to verify? It's not difficult. Find someone to test him and you'll know!"

With such a significant matter, although Su Yuqing's assumptions seemed logical, to be safe, further careful confirmation was necessary.

At the mid-mountain of Immortal Spirit Peak, Lu Ye flew upwards with Hai Tang and suddenly realized something: "Senior Sister Hai Tang, I participated in a Divine Sea contest of the Reincarnation Tree about two years ago, how come I didn't see your Dwarf Race?"

If it was within the Taichu Realm, it'd be understandable, as the realm is vast and chances of encounters are slim, but at the Baiyu Platform, when Yang Qing took him to explore and broaden his horizons, Lu Ye did not see signs of the Dwarf Race.

This seemed odd, being a top-tier realm like Mount Fangcun, why wouldn't they partake in such grand events?

Hai Tang smiled slightly: "This is quite a helpless situation to explain; our Dwarf Race is really eager to participate in that Reincarnation Tree grand event, but unfortunately haven't had the chance. To partake in such events, you need to utilize the Reincarnation Tree's doppelganger for transmission, but within Mount Fangcun, the doppelganger cannot survive. This might have something to do with Mount Fangcun being a stellar space supreme treasure itself, as is the Reincarnation Tree, there might be some repulsion between the two. Many years ago, powerhouses from Mount Fangcun went seeking the doppelganger from the Reincarnation Tree, but after bringing it back, nothing ensued."

"I see!"

No wonder he hadn't seen the Dwarf Race there before; turns out there was such a reason behind it.

He asked out of concern that his identity might be exposed, after he made a name for himself through battles back at the Reincarnation Tree. If strong Dwarf Race members were present then, they might recognize him.

Now it seems he was overthinking.

As they were speaking, a mist suddenly rolled in from ahead. Initially, Lu Ye wasn't aware of anything amiss, but upon charging into the mist with Hai Tang, he suddenly realized something wasn't right.

Because in an instant, he lost sight of Hai Tang!

"Senior Sister Hai Tang?" Lu Ye halted, calling out. There was no response.

Calling again, still no response.

But this mist appeared quickly and dissipated just as fast; within just three or five breaths, the surrounding scenery reemerged before his eyes.

Hai Tang had vanished, and her whereabouts unknown, but not far ahead, there was now a new, unfamiliar figure.

The figure was broad and fleshy, yet his face didn't show heaviness, appearing fair and clean, with a kind, agreeable visage, allowing one to feel a good rapport upon seeing him.

He appeared so abruptly before him, without any signs prior to the mist's advent.

When Lu Ye saw him, this fellow was clutching his head, with a highly perplexed expression.

No way to avoid it, his master instructed him to find a reason to spar with this human here, to test his mettle. The order was abrupt, with no psychological preparation, so hastily, what shall the reason be?

Observing the human ahead, with a youthful face, clearly of a young age, yet with good cultivation, possessing Constellation strength. Naturally, without Constellation Realm, one couldn't navigate the stellar space, and thus couldn't have reached Mount Fangcun.

Suddenly unable to find a suitable reason, he could only shout loudly at Lu Ye: "Hey, that human kid, this mountain is opened by me, this tree is planted by me. If you want to pass here, haha, leave behind some road-buying money!"

In the grand hall, Su Yuqing and Chen Xuanhai, who were waiting for the show to begin, looked simultaneously at Woo Qimo. Woo Qimo was furious: "This brat, where did he learn these nonsense words? Let him test the other's skills, and now he's turned into a mountain bandit blocking the path. I'll teach him a lesson later."

That chubby guy was a disciple under Woo Qimo, one of the candidates for the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, and second only to Hai Tang in strength among everyone. It could be said that his ability had reached the pinnacle of the Constellation Early Stage, making him the most suitable to test Lu Ye.

After all, it was just a test. It's not appropriate to find someone whose strength level surpasses Lu Ye's. A contest within the same realm makes the situation clearer. If the chubby guy cannot defeat Lu Ye, it indicates that Lu Ye possesses the strength of the Constellation Mid-Stage, and he can be recruited as an external support. If Lu Ye is defeated, then there's no point in discussing further initiatives.

Meanwhile, halfway up Immortal Spirit Peak, Lu Ye's thoughts swiftly churned.

He couldn't quite understand what this situation was about. Originally, he was following behind Hai Tang, preparing to pay respect to her master. But after a fog descended, Hai Tang disappeared, and this oddball jumped out...

This obviously wasn't an accident.

There's a Sun Blaze Realm expert stationed at the mountain top. Given that he was summoned, a disciple under them wouldn't come out to block for no reason.

Moreover, with Hai Tang gone... so everything here should be tacit consent from the Sun Blaze Realm. They deliberately had Hai Tang moved away, probably to prevent awkwardness for her.

Is this a test?

But what's the purpose?

What can be confirmed is that Hai Tang's Sun Blaze Realm master is definitely watching here at this moment.

The chubby guy shouted a bunch, seeing Lu Ye was unresponsive, then hollered again: "Kid, are your ears deaf? I'm robbing you, quickly hand over the spirit jade!"

Lu Ye raised a hand, his right hand slowly clasping the Boulder Mountain Saber, his eyelids slightly drooping, with a deep voice: "Let's go!"

"What?" The chubby guy didn't hear clearly.

But in the next instant, he understood what Lu Ye had just said, as Lu Ye transformed into a ray of light rushing straight towards him, wildly surging spirit force.

The speed was so fast that the chubby guy was shocked, shouting: "Kid, you have no principle, actually launching a sneak attack!"

But words aside, he quickly chanted a magic spell, and spells surged towards Lu Ye ceaselessly.

Upon seeing him, Lu Ye thought this guy was probably a magic cultivator, because the chubby guys he knew in the Nine Provinces were mostly magic cultivators. Only magic cultivators would have such a body type.

Now it turned out to be true, but what surprised Lu Ye was that this guy had very high achievement in magic and spells, wielding countless spells effortlessly.

What amazed Lu Ye more was the variety of spells the guy utilized.

As a rule, the spells cast by a magic cultivator are inherently limited, with the root of this limitation being their element sign.

Everyone has different element signs, and cultivating spells resonant with their own element sign often results in twice the effect with half the effort, and great power, but cultivating spells not aligned with their element sign results in the opposite.

Yet, despite his somewhat bloated appearance, this chubby guy seemed to have no weaknesses regarding element signs, unleashing spells that were colorful and dazzling.

Lu Ye dragged his saber, moving with a deft body, occasionally attacking to deflect spells he couldn't dodge in time, rapidly closing the distance.

If it were a life-and-death battle, he had a set of tactics for dealing with magic cultivators, leveraging weapon control to close in on them for suppression.

But this wasn't ultimately a life-and-death battle, and with Sun Blaze Realm surely observing in secret, some of his techniques weren't suitable to expose.

So he could only bear it head-on! This is also the most conventional way for combat cultivators to face off against magic cultivators.

Fortunately, after advancing to Constellation, his strength increased greatly, and he could handle such fierce offensives like before. Of course, this might also be related to the opponent not exerting their full strength.

Since it's a test, the opponent naturally wouldn't be likely to go all out.

With the tide of spells surging, Lu Ye seemed like a fish swimming upstream, darting through those dazzling multicolored lights.

The chubby guy was startled!

He indeed wasn't going full force. But considering the premise of the same realm's cultivation level, his tide of spells shouldn't be so easily shattered, yet this unfamiliar human kid on the opposite side pushed through head-on.

What kind of profound foundation does this require? What level of pure spirit force? And what a stubborn head?

Seeing the distance swiftly closing, he leaped up, retreating quickly while continuously urging his spells in a frenzy.

Chapter 1320 I Have a Friend

However, it was of no use. If the fat man continued standing there maintaining his spell rhythm, that would be one thing. But this retreat scattered his focus, and amidst the change in pace, errors appeared in the rhythm of the spell frenzy. Lu Ye, with his rich combat experience, managed to seize these fleeting errors precisely, and rapidly closed the distance to the fat man.

The fat man's expression began to panic, and several times he made mistakes in casting his spells, making the situation increasingly dire.

In less than ten breaths, the two were already just thirty feet apart!

Lu Ye leapt high into the air, like an eagle soaring in the sky, and as he descended, his long saber spun like the moon.

The fat man's face turned extremely pale, seeming terrified, feeling the fierce power of this strike, he cried out: "My life is over!"

Despite saying this, he ferociously punched towards the direction where Lu Ye was positioned.

With this punch, the Void trembled, and the fist thrown swiftly expanded to the size of a house, blocking out the light in the sky and concealing his own figure.

The paleness on the fat man's face vanished, replaced by a sly smile unseen by Lu Ye.

If encountering those familiar with him, his tactics would surely be ineffective. But having just faced Lu Ye for the first time today, Lu Ye knew nothing of his skills. Such a surprise attack, he was sure Lu Ye couldn't dodge.

All previous actions were merely a façade for this punch's explosion.

Who would have thought that a magic cultivator would throw a punch?

Lu Ye did foresee this, facing the sudden incoming punch. He seemed to have anticipated it, his expression unchanged. A brilliant light burst forth from the simple Boulder Mountain Saber, boosted by Divine Sharp Edge, as his spirit force and blood Qi erupted vigorously.

Cut!

The blade slashed onto the enormous fist, only a fleeting moment of stalemate, but the fist, gigantic like a house, shrank rapidly like a deflated balloon.

The immense power pressed down from above, the fat man's expression changed, his body involuntarily hunkered down, silently cursing what kind of monstrous strength it was that he couldn't resist.

The punch's force shattered, seeing that the long saber's momentum remained strong, the fat man knew if he didn't do something soon, he truly would be done for...

He hurriedly pulled out a purple talisman, slapping it onto his body, instantly, a brilliant golden light enveloped his corpulent figure.

Lu Ye's strike was initially held back, but upon seeing the opponent's actions, he decided to unleash completely.

The long saber cut down, its light as sharp as snow.

"Aiya!" The fat man exclaimed, flying far off, the golden light on his body dimmed in an instant.

He got up hurriedly, intending to battle again, but suddenly his hefty belly slackened, with faint sounds of tearing. Lowering his head showed his clothes split open, revealing his white, bare belly.

He quickly covered up, looking at Lu Ye in shame and anger: "You bastard..." He genuinely couldn't understand how Lu Ye so perfectly countered his sudden punch. By all logic, that punch should have caught him off guard.

Lu Ye quietly looked at him: "I have a friend, who on the surface is a magic cultivator, but actually is a physique cultivator, very shifty!"

And also fat...

Moreover, this fat man's acting was truly clumsy. As a magic cultivator at Constellation stage, even in dire combat situations, he wouldn't continuously fail in spell casting. Such errors only happen to Spirit Stream Realm cultivators, even rarely with Cloud River Realm ones, not to mention Constellation.

Thus, upon witnessing the fat man's actions, Lu Ye became certain this fellow was trying to lure him close to deliver a surprise.

The fat man was speechless, thinking he had left no flaw, only to find he had been guarded against all along, losing deservedly. He cupped his hand towards Lu Ye, held up his ruined garment over his belly, and flew away.

In the hall, Su Yuqing's eyes flashed with brilliance, Woo Qimo pondered silently, and Chen Xuanhai slightly nodded: "This guy's offense is very sharp, the Great Phenomenon Talisman isn't so easily broken, if he were an external aid, he'd surely be a great choice."

Defeating a Peak Constellation Early Stage cultivator effortlessly undoubtedly shows his mid-stage Constellation combat strength. Such strength is precisely what's desperately needed in this realm, Hai Tang alone cannot achieve much, but with assistance, the situation changes.

Woo Qimo frowned: "But after all, it's just our wishful thinking, whether he's willing to help is another matter."

"It's all in the effort. Besides, isn't his senior sister still in this realm?" Su Yuqing smiled faintly.

Chen Xuanhai said: "Fellow Daoist Su intends to manipulate his senior sister? That might be inappropriate. Besides, he has a life-saving grace towards Hai Tang and currently counts as Hai Tang's guest."

Su Yuqing said: "Hai Tang is my disciple; naturally, I won't put her in a difficult position. Rest assured, I won't force him into anything. It all has to be voluntary in the end."

Woo Qimo chuckled: "Back to the topic. To win a beauty's heart, a good thing like this, he likely wouldn't refuse it, right?" Turning to Su Yuqing: "But... Fellow Daoist Su, are you truly willing?"

Su Yuqing stated: "If Hai Tang can find a good match, how could I be unwilling? Moreover, Hai Tang herself doesn't reject this matter. However serious it may be, the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet is what's most important right now."

"Then I'll leave it to you." Chen Xuanhai nodded and his form dissipated.

Woo Qimo followed and left.

In the hall, only Su Yuqing remained.

Regarding the various things discussed with Woo Qimo and Chen Xuanhai, Su Yuqing did not deceive them. However, she didn't mention the powerful figure behind Lu Ye, not intentionally to hide anything, but because she felt it was unnecessary to say.

That powerful figure not only could easily present a 9-star treasure, but also could seal a secret technique to help defeat enemies on the Ghost Ship. Such a high-ranking individual made Su Yuqing feel inferior.

Lu Ye himself had great potential, backed by strong support. Such a rising star is well worth befriending. If this matter could indeed be facilitated, it certainly wouldn't mistreat her disciple. Of course, the main point is that her own disciple didn't reject this side.

If Hai Tang had even slightly expressed negativity previously, she wouldn't have developed these thoughts.

At the mountainside, Lu Ye waited for a while. Not seeing anyone, he started to step upward.

Before long, he reached the top of Immortal Spirit Peak. As he looked up, he saw only a great hall standing there, with a hidden presence inside.

Though the presence was ephemeral, it gave off a vast feeling, making it clear in his mind that inside the hall must be a Sun Blaze.

And the one present here is undoubtedly Hai Tang's master.

Straightening his attire, Lu Ye stepped in, seeing a woman seated cross-legged in the empty hall.

At a glance, he couldn't discern her age. She seemed like a vibrant young woman, yet might be in her early thirties. Her temperament was pure, yet full of charm, possessing a beauty beyond compare, and was dressed in a snow-white palace outfit. Even seated, her graceful figure couldn't be concealed.

Hai Tang was undoubtedly a beautiful woman, but compared to the woman in front of him, she lacked much charm.

Lu Ye stepped forward respectfully: "Junior Lu Ye, pays respect to the Senior!"

Su Yuqing smiled faintly, raising her hand: "No need for formalities, please sit."

Lu Ye complied honestly and sat down.

The hall was vast, with Su Yuqing examining Lu Ye from head to toe, remaining silent for a time. Lu Ye sat upright, his expression clear, watching back. Internally curious, he wondered why Hai Tang's master examined him with such a peculiar gaze.

After a while, Su Yuqing smiled and said, "Hai Tang has already told me about her previous experiences. My dear nephew, to disregard countless treasures and bring Hai Tang out of the Ghost Ship, such grace is like a rebirth. I must thank you greatly."

Lu Ye quickly replied, "Senior Sister Hai Tang greatly assisted me on the Ghost Ship. In the end, it was entirely due to her efforts that I could pass the trial. Without Senior Sister Hai Tang, I fear I'd also be trapped now. We merely helped each other, bringing her out was only right."

Su Yuqing was undoubtedly satisfied with his attitude, her demeanor becoming even kinder: "That's true, but under such circumstances, how many could make the same choice as you? You made the choice, thus you are Hai Tang's savior."

Lu Ye's heart skipped a beat, fearing she might say that being a savior meant he should propose something, which would be troublesome...

Fortunately, Su Yuqing had no intention of saying such things.

Lu Ye did want to ask about the plump man that blocked his way earlier, but as the topic wasn't broached, he chose to act as if that hadn't happened.

Going straight to the point: "Senior, I came with Senior Sister Hai Tang actually to seek a favor!"

Su Yuqing said: "Is it regarding your Senior Sister? Hai Tang has already talked to me about it."

Lu Ye's expression became solemn: "May I ask, Senior, if my Senior Sister has ever come to Mount Fangcun?"

Su Yuqing nodded slightly: "Three months ago, indeed there was a human race woman who trespassed into our realm and was captured by the Peak Master of Cloud Sea Peak, Chen Xuanhai. But rest assured, our realm has never been harsh to foreign cultivators, only making them do some labor. After Chen Xuanhai captured her, he arranged for her to mine spirit ore in a vein. I have already spoken to Chen Xuanhai to have her released and Hai Tang is currently picking her up."

Lu Ye let out a long breath, the burden in his heart lightening, quickly standing up to bow deeply to Su Yuqing: "Thank you, Senior."

Su Yuqing smiled: "You are Hai Tang's benefactor, thus a guest of Immortal Spirit Peak. The woman is your Senior Sister and naturally deserves different treatment, but..." Saying this, Su Yuqing showed a troubled expression.

"Is there any issue?" Lu Ye asked.

Su Yuqing said: "You may not be aware, among the three Sun Blazes of this realm, Chen Xuanhai is the most stubborn and unyielding. Any foreign cultivators who trespass must serve for a hundred years, a rule set by the ancestors, passed down for countless thousands of years. My intention was that since the woman is your Senior Sister, she should be treated as a guest of this realm, free to come and go. But Chen Xuanhai, that old fool, clings to the ancestral rules stubbornly. I can't do anything about it. After much persuasion, she finally avoids the servitude, and though she can reunite with you, she can't leave this realm right now. I must apologize to my dear nephew about this."