

Humanity 1321

Chapter 1321 Senior Sister and Junior Brother Reunited

Su Yuqing orchestrated everything, speaking as if it were true. If Chen Xuanhai were here, he would definitely argue with her.

Lu Ye quickly said, "Senior, you're too serious. I'm already immensely grateful that you could mediate for my senior sister. How dare I have any complaints! Is there any way to resolve this situation?"

Su Yuqing shook her head. "Difficult! Of the three Sun Blaze cultivators in this domain, Chen Xuanhai is the oldest. As you know, old men have stubborn ideas, and it's hard for outsiders to sway them once they've decided something. I can only say I'll discuss with him more to let you take your senior sister away sooner."

"Then I must trouble you, Senior," Lu Ye showed gratitude on his face.

Although for now, he couldn't take Nian Yuexian away from Mount Fangcun, avoiding a hundred years of servitude wasn't so bad. As for the future, he could only plot slowly.

His relationship with Hai Tang was good, and Hai Tang's master seemed willing to help. At worst, he'd compensate with some spirit jade and apologize to Chen Xuanhai. He had to take Nian Yuexian out; he couldn't leave her here alone.

After discussing serious matters, Su Yuqing asked Lu Ye some questions, though they weren't confidential. They were mainly about his background and master, even about his age.

Lu Ye answered them all one by one.

During the chatter, Lu Ye could feel this Sun Blaze realm powerhouse's admiration for him. Naturally, he attributed it to rescuing Hai Tang from the Ghost Ship.

If he were in someone else's shoes, seeing someone save someone he cared about would definitely make Lu Ye view them favorably as well.

About an hour later, Su Yuqing suddenly looked up in a certain direction. Her gaze seemed to pierce through the Void. After a few breaths, she retracted her gaze and smiled slightly, "You should go, Hai Tang has brought your senior sister back."

Lu Ye quickly stood up, "Thank you, Senior. As for what's next..."

Su Yuqing reassured him, "Don't worry. I'll do my utmost."

Lu Ye descended the Immortal Spirit Peak, rushing swiftly back to the previous valley. From afar, he saw Hai Tang and a woman standing side by side.

Who else could it be but Nian Yuexian?

Nian Yuexian had evidently learned the situation from Hai Tang. Seeing Lu Ye hastily approaching, she turned her head with embarrassment.

Back when Lu Ye joined the Bingzhou guard and went to Cangyan Mountain Pass, he only had True Lake cultivation, while she was Divine Sea, already a renowned Divine Sea in the Nine Provinces, with an immense gap between them. Lu Ye had been quite troubled by her.

But in just these few years, everyone stood at the same starting line. Now that she was in distress, Lu Ye came tirelessly to rescue her.

And he actually found the place; when she was captured, Nian Yuexian thought she was truly destined for a hundred years of hardship and labor here. She also tried to resist, but this domain had Sun Blaze cultivators in charge, with quite a few Moon Jade ones as well. How could she possibly resist? She had to resign herself, but didn't expect such a turning point.

In this situation, Nian Yuexian felt as if she, with her mischievousness, was rescued by a child, leaving her somewhat unable to maintain her composure.

She was one of Feng Wujiang's era, and Lu Ye was Feng Wujiang's little junior brother. In her mind, she did always regard Lu Ye as a kid.

"Senior Sister Nian," Lu Ye approached, carefully observing Nian Yuexian, "Are you alright?"

Though both Hai Tang and Su Yuqing had assured that Mount Fangcun wouldn't mistreat outsiders, it's always best to check and confirm.

Nian Yuexian tilted her head, thinking for a while before saying, "I'm alright."

"That's good," Lu Ye nodded and looked at Hai Tang, "Thank you, Senior Sister Hai Tang."

Hai Tang waved her hand, "Not at all. It was just a trip." She glanced at Lu Ye, then Nian Yuexian, sensing the awkward atmosphere, she found an excuse to leave, "Master is calling, I need to go. You and Junior Brother should have a chat first."

Saying this, she took out a jade talisman and handed it to Lu Ye, "This is my audio talisman. If Junior Brother Lu needs anything, contact me through this talisman at any time."

Lu Ye solemnly accepted it.

Local cultivators of the Nine Provinces can contact each other through the battlefield marking. However, in this vast stellar space, ninety percent of the domains don't have such convenient methods, as they lack a Heaven's Augury like Number Nine. Generally, other methods are used to get in touch.

Lu Ye had previously encountered audio transmission stones, made from special materials, and he could craft them himself.

However, audio transmission stones had limited range; not suitable for Constellation Realm cultivators. For Constellation cultivators, audio talismans were the most common method used for contact in the stellar space now.

Lu Ye stored the audio talisman, glanced left and right, confirmed no one was around, then gestured Nian Yuexian inside the hall.

Seeing his sneaky behavior, Nian Yuexian didn't know what he intended to do. She followed curiously.

Once inside, Lu Ye asked, "Senior Sister, did no one really mistreat you?"

Nian Yuexian found it amusing yet felt Lu Ye's care, nodded, "No, I was just arranged over there to mine spirit ores. I was two days away from claiming my monthly pay, but you interrupted, so I worked for nothing this month."

Lu Ye was amused by her: "How much is your monthly stipend here?"

"Ten pieces of spirit jade."

"Not bad." Lu Ye originally thought that even if there was a monthly stipend, it would just be a token gesture. He didn't expect it to be ten pieces. According to his previous calculations, ten pieces of spirit jade would be enough for a Constellation Early Stage cultivator to have surplus for a month of cultivation.

"How did you find your way here, and how did you come to know Hai Tang?" After chatting for a while, Nian Yuexian's embarrassment dissipated. Things had already progressed to this extent; feeling awkward wouldn't help. Anyway, only Lu Ye knew about her embarrassing state; once they left, she'd just make sure he kept his mouth shut.

She had a cool and detached personality, not prone to many questions, but this situation truly intrigued her.

"It's a long story." Lu Ye sighed lightly.

"Then make a long story short!" Nian Yuexian glared at him, assuming the demeanor of a senior sister.

"Alright, alright." Lu Ye didn't dare to dawdle in front of her. In the past, Nian Yuexian provided him with numerous blessings at the Cangyan Mountain Pass. When he faced danger at the Gushan City Pass, it was Nian Yuexian who came out to save his life. In Lu Ye's heart, although Nian Yuexian never officially joined the Bi Xue Sect, she was truly one of his senior sisters.

Immediately, he recounted the various coincidences of his journey, leaving Nian Yuexian amazed.

She too had set out from the Nine Provinces to explore the surrounding stellar space, but the journey was mostly spent in desolation, unlike Lu Ye's adventures. At the very end, she stumbled upon a drifting little mountain, intending to search for spirit jade, but instead collided into Mount Fangcun.

"So, you saved Hai Tang, which led you to my clues. Following Hai Tang's lead, you ended up here." Nian Yuexian said, acknowledging the many coincidences involved. Without any one of them, she might have never met Lu Ye.

"That's why, good deeds are rewarded!" Lu Ye felt deeply.

"What's the situation now? Can we leave at any time?" Nian Yuexian asked. Although serving here comes with a stipend, there was little time for her own cultivation. Thus, even with spirit jade, it wasn't very useful. Not just for her, but for all the Nine Provinces Constellation cultivators, the priority was to enhance their cultivation as soon as possible.

If leaving was possible, Nian Yuexian had no desire to stay.

Lu Ye showed a hint of worry: "It's not that simple. According to Hai Tang's master, the one who captured you doesn't wish to let you go. It's a rule set by their ancestors that any cultivator entering this domain must serve for a hundred years. Some abide by ancestral rules stubbornly without flexibility. It was only due to Hai Tang's master's intervention that you were temporarily freed."

Nian Yuexian recalled Chen Xuanhai's appearance seriously and nodded: "The Sun Blaze who captured me is indeed quite old, seemingly not someone easy to converse with."

"Don't worry, Senior Sister. Hai Tang's master said she'll continue negotiating. She wants both of us to leave safely."

Regarding this matter, Lu Ye wasn't overly concerned. Chen Xuanhai is a Sun Blaze, and Su Yuqing is also a Sun Blaze; they should be able to discuss things well among themselves.

Of course, the premise is that Su Yuqing is willing to put in the effort.

If she merely dismisses him casually, the subsequent situation might not be easy.

But considering Su Yuqing's previous appreciation of him, Lu Ye felt that she wouldn't be someone who shows one face publicly and another privately.

"With nothing else to do, Senior Sister, focus on cultivation. Let's wait for news." Lu Ye said.

"That's all we can do." Nian Yuexian nodded.

Lu Ye handed her a storage sack.

Nian Yuexian took it suspiciously, opened it, and found it filled with spirit jade, nearly a thousand pieces, startling her: "Where did you get so much?"

She had collected all along her journey, but the spirit jade she obtained wasn't even half of Lu Ye's.

And this was only what Lu Ye had given her; he surely had even more for himself.

"I went out with Senior Yang Qing before and acquired them unexpectedly. Use them first, Senior Sister. If you need more, let me know."

Previously, Lu Ye had only mentioned things at the Reincarnation Tree to Jian Guhong and Wuchang, but these details had been spread at the Nine Provinces Constellation level through Jian Guhong. Everyone knew about Lu Ye's exploits at the Reincarnation Tree.

So hearing him say this, Nian Yuexian understood it clearly, accepted the storage sack without being polite, and said, "Then I'll keep it."

Immediately, the two of them each sought a room for cultivation.

This valley is under the Immortal Spirit Peak's territory, typically uninhabited, used merely for hosting guests, with complete facilities. Additionally, under Hai Tang's arrangements, there are more than ten True Lake Realm disciples available for service here, though Lu Ye hasn't had a reason to trouble them before.

He didn't rush into cultivation but took out the audio talisman Hai Tang had given him to research.

For Nine Provinces cultivators within the Heaven's Augury's coverage, communication was easy. But once out of that coverage, they needed a new way to communicate. This audio talisman undoubtedly seemed promising, and Lu Ye wanted to know if he could refine it with his own capabilities.

Chapter 1322 The Old Stubborn's Condition

For several consecutive days, Lu Ye had been studying audio talismans, gaining insight into their various mysteries. These audio talismans were quite popular throughout the starry sky and were not too difficult to refine. Anyone with some skill in the Path of Spirit Runes could create them, as they involved fairly complex spirit rune constructions.

Lu Ye's mastery in the Path of Spirit Runes naturally met the requirements for refining audio talismans. However, what he currently lacked was the materials. He had never seen the type of jade stones needed to refine the audio talismans.

It seemed that it was not an ordinary jade stone, at least something not found in the Nine Provinces.

This was easy to handle. He decided to communicate with Haitang to see if she could help him acquire some. He could pay the appropriate amount of spirit jades, treating it as a purchase.

Putting thought into action, he sent out a communication. Shortly after, Haitang replied, telling him to wait in the valley, and she would arrange for someone to deliver the materials. As for the spirit jades,

Haitang said there was no need for them, saying such jade stones were not so precious as to require taking Lu Ye's spirit jades.

Lu Ye did not insist and waited patiently.

At Immortal Spirit Peak, in a secret chamber, having finished communicating with Lu Ye, Haitang sighed softly. She had originally planned to visit Lu Ye and his fellow disciples frequently over the next few days. After all, Lu Ye was a guest she had brought, and as the host, she couldn't justify neglecting her guest. Such was not the way of the Dwarf Race.

However, her master had given strict orders, requiring her to remain in seclusion for cultivation to prepare for the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet in a few months, with no permission to leave without orders.

Reluctantly, Haitang had no choice but to comply.

In the valley, Lu Ye did not have to wait long before a cultivator in the Divine Sea Realm flew down, delivering a storage ring. Lu Ye inspected it and found that it contained the type of jade stones he needed, and in large quantity, sufficient for him to indulge greatly.

It indeed seemed that these were not very precious items.

With that, he began refining audio talismans in earnest.

The initial attempts were not smooth, as there was a learning curve to everything. After several days of effort, he finally managed to refine his first audio talisman.

Excited, he found Nian Yuexian and handed the audio talisman to her. Then the two of them positioned themselves apart and started to experiment with communicating via the audio talisman, as a sort of trial.

Everything went smoothly. Although this method of communication was not as convenient and swift as the battlefield marking transmission, it had one significant advantage; it was not restricted by Heaven's Augury's coverage.

The transmission distance also far exceeded that of the audio transmission stone, although Lu Ye was uncertain about the exact maximum range, as it needed further verification in the future.

In any case, when it came to communication, the Nine Provinces were now connected with the starry sky, and in future travels, they would not appear ignorant if they encountered cultivators from other domains using audio talismans.

The following period saw Lu Ye continually refining more audio talismans, partly to hone his skills and partly to prepare for the constellations of the Nine Provinces.

In this way, half a month's time swiftly passed, and Lu Ye had amassed a large batch of audio talismans, enough for the Nine Provinces Constellations to have one each, with spares to spare. There was still more than half of the jade stones Haitang had sent remaining.

Refining the same item over a long period inevitably grew dull, and what puzzled Lu Ye was the lack of any news from Haitang's master.

Though he understood that good things often underwent setbacks, a pressing practical issue was that Mount Fangcun was continuously on the move.

He and Nian Yuexian couldn't remain in this place for too long. If they stayed too long, they might not be able to find their way back home, even if they left Mount Fangcun.

Therefore, it was best to resolve Nian Yuexian's matter promptly.

While others were aiding him, it wasn't polite for him to urge hastily. But after so much time had passed, shouldn't there be some news by now?

Communication between those in the Sun Blaze Realm shouldn't be this complicated.

Lu Ye sent another communication to Haitang and soon received a response.

However, Haitang's tone carried a bit of helplessness: "Junior Brother Lu, wait for me there for a moment, I will personally come to speak with you."

Previously, Su Yuqing had instructed Haitang to focus on cultivation, yet also told her that if Lu Ye sought information, she should explain matters to him face-to-face. However, the specifics of the situation, Haitang did not yet know, as she still needed to consult with Su Yuqing.

Emerging from seclusion, she met with her master and listened to guidance. Haitang, heavy-hearted, descended from Immortal Spirit Peak.

Arriving at Lu Ye's residence, she exchanged formalities with Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian.

Lu Ye asked, "Senior Sister Haitang, is there some difficulty?" Haitang's expression was noticeably troubled, which made Lu Ye uneasy.

For Su Yuqing to personally intervene, yet to no avail—what kind of obstinacy did that Master Uncle Chen possess?

Haitang looked at Lu Ye, then at Nian Yuexian, her expression apologetic, and said softly, "My master said she had already negotiated with Master Uncle Chen. Initially, Master Uncle Chen was rigidly adhering to the ancestral rules. But ultimately, he was persuaded by my master to allow Fellow Daoist Nian to leave."

If it were just this, Hai Tang wouldn't have such a worried look on her face. Lu Ye calmly asked, "Is there another condition?"

Hai Tang bit her red lips and slowly nodded.

"Tell me." Lu Ye said, "If it's not something too unreasonable, my Senior Sister and I will surely give it our all."

Hai Tang hesitated for a while before speaking: "Master Uncle Chen said that since ancient times, those who intrude have all had to serve a hundred years on Mount Fangcun, even those from the top domains have had to follow this rule, and there's no precedent for breaking it. This precedent cannot be set, otherwise, in the future, no one will take Mount Fangcun seriously, so he proposed a compromise."

"I'm all ears."

Hai Tang looked up at Nian Yuexian: "Master Uncle Chen said, if Fellow Daoist Nian can find a man on Mount Fangcun to become her Dao companion, then she'd be considered one of our own, and the rules for outsiders naturally wouldn't apply."

Upon hearing this, Nian Yuexian turned around and left, her voice drifting over, "I'd choose to serve the hundred years here." Finding a Dao companion on Mount Fangcun was absolutely out of the question for her.

Lu Ye turned his head to watch her departing back, and only after a long time did he withdraw his gaze, saying in a deep voice: "Is there no other way to make an exception?"

Hai Tang's face showed deeper guilt: "Junior Brother Lu, I'm sorry, I thought this wasn't too troublesome, who knew Master Uncle Chen Xuanhai would... it's really confusing how things turned out this way. When I met with my master earlier, and she told me these things, I knew the situation wasn't good, and I almost felt too ashamed to face Lu Ye."

But she had no choice, she had to brace herself and come.

Lu Ye waved his hand: "It's not related to you, Senior Sister Hai Tang, please don't blame yourself. But under such conditions, forgive my Senior Sister and I for not being able to agree!"

Were it not for the fact that his strength was indeed inferior, upon hearing that condition, Lu Ye would have stormed Cloud Sea Peak, eager to see what kind of strange thing Chen Xuanhai was to propose such a condition. But Constellation versus Sun Blaze, the disparity in power was too great. Even if Lu Ye really went, it would be to no avail.

If Nian Yuexian is not allowed to pass, Lu Ye couldn't leave alone. He thought silently, if it comes to that, he would stay here with Nian Yuexian for the hundred years. After all, he was considered a guest of Mount Fangcun and could come and go freely without much delay in cultivation.

"Junior Brother Lu, don't worry. I'll go plead with my master again! I must ensure both you and your Senior Sister leave safely!" Hai Tang could not remain any longer, said a sentence, then soared into the sky straight to Immortal Spirit Peak.

After Hai Tang left, Lu Ye stood in place in silence for a long time before turning to come to Nian Yuexian's room, raised his hand, and gently knocked on the door.

Obtaining permission, he pushed the door and entered.

Nian Yuexian was sitting cross-legged on a meditation mat, seemingly in cultivation.

Seeing her like this, Lu Ye was slightly relieved. Being able to cultivate meant that what happened earlier hadn't disturbed her state of mind.

It seemed so. Already being at the Constellation Realm, such words could not shake one's state of mind.

Lu Ye sat down before her, opened his mouth, but swallowed the words back down.

There were things he wanted to ask but didn't know how, regretting running over.

Nian Yuexian glanced at him, "If you have something to say, just say it. As a man, don't be so hesitant."

Lu Ye felt embarrassed and spoke, "Senior Sister, I want to ask, about my Senior Brother...that...that..."

"You're asking whether I still admire your Senior Brother, right?" Nian Yuexian continued the sentence herself.

Lu Ye chuckled, "That's what I meant."

Nian Yuexian didn't hesitate: "In our time, your Senior Brother was the most dazzling figure in the Nine Provinces, the brightest star in the sky. Which young girl wasn't enamored? Women do admire heroes and look up to strongmen; it wasn't just me, there were many you know and don't know, who were deeply fond of your Senior Brother."

"Let's just talk about you." Lu Ye looked at her.

"I was no different." Nian Yuexian showed a rare smile, her eyes flickered with memories, "At that time, I followed your Senior Brother, I and Mount Tai were considered his left and right arms, Mount Tai had brotherly affections with him, I am a woman, naturally I had some other thoughts. Those were beautiful times, unforgettable times. But your Senior Brother eventually chose another woman to marry and bore a daughter. In the last battle, your Senior Brother also died, of course, now we know, his death was a ruse. But at that time, even his body was found by Mount Tai, who would have known he was alive, living in another domain."

"Decades have passed, time can change many things. Some have forgotten your Senior Brother, while others still remember him. But these are ultimately just memories, even if he resurrected and returned, memories are just memories, do you understand?"

Lu Ye roughly understood Nian Yuexian's feelings, nodded, "I understand."

Nian Yuexian spoke very clearly. To her, Feng Wujiang was just an episode in her memory. Some things were set, she would not cling to the past. Memories are indeed beautiful, but people cannot live in memory forever, that will only make one complacent.

Chapter 1323 When There's Trouble, She Steps Up

This aligns with Nian Yuexian's principle as a sword cultivator; the sword of a sword cultivator always presses forward.

Cultivators practice for long years; who doesn't have a few special people or events in their memories? But these people or events eventually should not become stumbling blocks for cultivators. Instead, they should be a source of motivation. In times of distress, recalling these memories and thinking of the pure innocence of the past brings a knowing smile.

"Junior Brother, don't believe everything people say!" Nian Yuexian suddenly spoke again.

"What?" Lu Ye looked at her in confusion.

Nian Yuexian said, "As you mentioned, if Su Yuqing were really willing to exert all her efforts to mediate, Chen Xuanhai wouldn't refuse her entirely. After all, in Mount Fangcun, there are just three Sun Blaze warriors, and they should know each other well. Moreover, Chen Xuanhai couldn't possibly have been unaware of our reaction to such conditions. Clearly, he's being somewhat unreasonable. Think carefully now, what did Su Yuqing actually say to you at the time?"

Lu Ye showed a contemplative expression, recalling what Su Yuqing had said at the time. After a moment, he replied, "She didn't make absolute promises, just said she would discuss it thoroughly with Chen Xuanhai. Does Senior Sister mean... Hai Tang's master didn't exert all her efforts?"

Nian Yuexian said, "Maybe I'm judging a noble person with the heart of a villain, but I still feel something is off."

Just as Lu Ye was about to say more, suddenly there was a violent earthquake, and wild, fierce energy ripples came from outside. Instantly, even within the layers of restriction, Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian felt like ships adrift at sea, their bodies unstable and their minds shaken.

Their faces changed in unison, and they quickly flashed outside.

Looking up, they saw two streaks of light colliding furiously in the distant sky, causing a heaven-and-earth-shattering scene. Within those two streaks, the aura of a Sun Blaze Realm expert was distinctly emanating.

Mount Fangcun is being invaded? Lu Ye immediately thought.

But soon, he realized he was wrong because one of the Sun Blaze Realm figures in combat suddenly shouted, "Chen Xuanhai, you old stubborn mule, when will you open an orifice?"

As soon as the words fell, another earth-shattering noise followed.

A dignified voice immediately responded: "Ancestral rules are ancestral rules; without them, where would ethics and morals be?"

A booming retaliation ensued.

Lu Ye was dumbfounded.

Nian Yuexian also looked stunned, "Junior Brother, this is..."

Lu Ye's eye twitched, "It seems Hai Tang's master is attacking Cloud Sea Peak."

This woman... She's quite fierce. Before, Lu Ye had thought about attacking Cloud Sea Peak, but it was just a thought. Who knew Su Yuqing not only thought so but actually did it?

From their conversation, it was clear that the conflict arose because of Nian Yuexian's matter, leading to the fierce battle here.

Just now, he had been discussing with Nian Yuexian about this, suspecting that not all efforts had been put in. But now, it seems that wasn't the case?

After saving Hai Tang, Su Yuqing is willing to completely break ties with Chen Xuanhai to repay the debt of gratitude for saving Hai Tang's life. To say she didn't exert all her efforts would be too much.

Hai Tang's master indeed possesses great responsibility! To teach a disciple like Hai Tang, the master can't be far off, and she truly came forward when there was an issue.

For the three Sun Blaze Realm powers in Mount Fangcun, they are the three pillars and haven't turned red ever, let alone engaged in such a fierce battle. Instantly, the entire Mount Fangcun, with its thousands of spirit mountaintops and countless cultivators, showed worried expressions, all unable to fathom what was happening.

In the midst of the fierce combat, another Sun Blaze Realm expert's aura appeared, this time from Woo Qimo, who called out from afar: "Both of you, hold on, can't we all sit down and talk it out instead of resorting to arms like this?"

Su Yuqing's furious voice came through: "This old fogey knows nothing about human relationships and stubbornly adheres to ancestral rules. I'll enlighten him today!"

Chen Xuanhai refused to back down: "Ancestral rules, if broken, would leave no rules in the future."

"Both of you, calm down; many disciples are watching and laughing." Woo Qimo tried to mediate.

Another Sun Blaze Realm joined the fray, seemingly to intervene, but the situation grew even more chaotic. The entire Mount Fangcun was filled with the energy waves of Sun Blaze Realm clashes, yet fortunately, these three were somewhat restrained, preventing serious consequences.

In the valley, Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian watched silently. After a long time, Nian Yuexian sighed: "Junior Brother, I might have misunderstood Hai Tang's master."

Others have fought to this extent for her matter, truly devoted and putting in all their efforts.

Lu Ye silently nodded, feeling a twinge of guilt in his heart, resolving to properly thank them later. Regardless of whether the matter succeeds or not, Su Yuqing's character is beyond reproach.

The entire Mount Fangcun, everyone knew that the three Sun Blaze Realm were fighting fiercely, but no one saw that above the cloud cover, three figures quietly stood: Su Yuqing, Chen Xuanhai, and Woo Qimo.

Below, in the dispute, it wasn't even their true bodies, merely a body talisman from each of them.

Chen Xuanhai's eyebrows furrowed into a character like the river, his expression helpless: "Fellow Daoist Su, is it really necessary to go this far? It's not as if we can't speak to him directly."

Su Yuqing smiled slightly: "Speaking to him directly might be feasible, but there's no guarantee he'll give it his all. After all, it's a matter of the Dwarf Race, and not much of a concern for him. By putting on this act, it shows him my sincerity. Bringing up the matter again, it becomes a natural course."

Chen Xuanhai sighed: "What a pity, an old man's lifetime of reputation!"

After this affair, he feared he would truly be labeled as an old fossil.

Woo Qimo laughed from the side: "The three of us, Sun Blazes, teaming up here to put on this show, it's already giving that kid plenty of face. If he dares to utter a single 'no', I'll twist his head off."

Su Yuqing sighed: "Ultimately, it's the younger generation's incompetence. Otherwise, we wouldn't be troubled with this."

But the matter of the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet is too important. If not for this, the three Sun Blazes wouldn't need to be entangled in such nonsense. Let's just hope everything proceeds as planned.

Here, one played the black face, the other played the red face. Though the method was somewhat old, its execution was so realistic that the effect would surely not be lacking.

Woo Qimo said: "However, Fellow Daoist Su, by doing this, you truly have to match up your disciple Hai Tang with him, are you willing to?"

Su Yuqing said: "I'll say it again, if Hai Tang can really form a good match with him, it's not a bad thing for her. Just wait and see. In time, this kid will certainly become something great, and moreover, Hai Tang herself does not reject this matter."

She had asked Hai Tang, otherwise, she wouldn't have acted thus. If her disciple was unwilling, how could she coerce her?

A confrontation among Sun Blaze Realm cultivators finally ended under Woo Qimo's "strenuous mediation". Su Yuqing left a harsh word and angrily flew back to Immortal Spirit Peak.

In the valley, Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian exchanged a glance, neither knowing what to say.

After a long moment, Lu Ye finally said: "We must find an opportunity to thank Senior Su."

Nian Yuexian nodded silently: "I'll go with you next time. If it really doesn't work out, then don't force it, after all, it's just a hundred years."

Originally, it wasn't a big deal, but now that it had stirred up internal strife among the Sun Blaze Realm in Mount Fangcun, both Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian felt uneasy.

Little did they know, it was all a meticulous performance aimed at them. One could only say that the older ginger is spicier, especially at the level of those in the Sun Blaze Realm. When willing to lower themselves to act, people like Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian in the Constellation Realm could not discern a single flaw.

The stellar space is full of mysteries and perils everywhere!

A day later, Hai Tang arrived.

Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian received her together. When asked about the previous day's events, Hai Tang told them truthfully. She didn't know much either; Su Yuqing's various plans weren't shared with her because Su Yuqing knew her disciple's nature, and facing a benefactor like Lu Ye, she couldn't hold back what she knew, so Hai Tang knew very little. All she knew was that her master had a clash with Chen Xuanhai yesterday, which was broken up by Woo Qimo.

Lu Ye sighed: "It seems Senior Su went to a lot of trouble. Senior Sister Hai Tang, could you convey to Senior Su that I would like to pay a visit and thank him personally?"

Hai Tang said: "No hurry, I actually came to discuss something related to Fellow Daoist Nian's departure."

"Is there a turn for the better?" Lu Ye's spirits lifted; if so, Su Yuqing's actions yesterday were not in vain. After the big fight yesterday, Su Yuqing left a harsh word and returned to Immortal Spirit Peak, and he thought there was no more hope.

"Yes." Hai Tang nodded.

"I would love to hear the details." Lu Ye looked at her intently.

Hai Tang glanced at him, a blush flashing in her eyes, which Lu Ye failed to notice, but Nian Yuexian saw clearly, feeling curious and wondering why Hai Tang was embarrassed.

After calming herself, Hai Tang said: "Yesterday, Master and Master Uncle Chen had a negotiation and reached an agreement. If Junior Brother Lu is willing to do a favor for Mount Fangcun, regardless of the outcome, you can then take Fellow Daoist Nian with you!"

Lu Ye raised his eyebrows but did not immediately agree. Instead, he cautiously stated: "If it's within my capabilities, naturally there's no problem, but if it's beyond my ability, I will have to refuse."

Hai Tang said: "Of course, it's within Junior Brother Lu's capabilities, and there will be no life-threatening danger."

Lu Ye smiled and said: "Then I'd like to hear more about it." Such a fortunate turn, indeed, Su Yuqing's actions yesterday were not in vain.

"It's like this—in just over two months, Mount Fangcun's Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, which takes place once every fifty years, will begin. There's an original participant from this realm who encountered a mishap in cultivation and cannot join, so we're short of people. Master Uncle Chen says that if you're willing to help fill in the numbers, he will agree to let you take Fellow Daoist Nian away afterward."

Chapter 1324 A Compromise Solution

"Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet? Combat with the human race?" Lu Ye asked.

Anything labeled with the term Martial Arts Meet must be related to combat, if that's the case, Lu Ye surely won't have any issues here, but he needs to first understand the level of his opponents. If he were to face Moon Jade, that's definitely out of the picture.

"It's not just pure combat; Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet has a very complex set of rules," Hai Tang explained, "but there's definitely no worry about safety."

"Senior Sister Hai Tang, please explain in detail," Lu Ye said. This opportunity was hard-earned by Su Yuqing and Chen Xuanhai tearing down their facades, so naturally, it needs to be cherished.

Hai Tang then began to tell Lu Ye about the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet: "Junior Brother Lu, you noticed before entering Mount Fangcun that our Mount Fangcun is not complete."

Lu Ye nodded; he had indeed discovered this at the time because Mount Fangcun showed obvious signs of rupture. Later, through Hai Tang's explanation, he knew he was not mistaken; the complete Mount Fangcun is supposed to be a stellar space supreme treasure, mysterious beyond imagination but for some unknown reason, it has been split into three parts.

The domain where Hai Tang resides is considered the Eastern part of Mount Fangcun, furthermore, there's also the Southern and Western parts, all referred to as Mount Fangcun, and those living inside are the Dwarf Race, each wandering in stellar space.

Lu Ye does not know what kind of background other top-tier domains possess, but judging by this domain alone, although there are numerous Constellation and Moon Jade realms, the amount of Sun Blaze Realm is clearly scarce, totaling only three, which does not fit the background that a top-tier domain should possess. Some large domains have more Sun Blaze than this one.

But actually, the power of the Dwarf Race is split due to the trisection of Mount Fangcun; if it were in a complete state, the entire Dwarf Race holding Sun Blaze Realm wouldn't be less than ten, which meets the standard of a top-tier domain.

There is also another mystery, which is although Mount Fangcun is split into three, wandering separately in stellar space, their connection never breaks due to the distance between them.

Simply put, Mount Fangcun, this stellar space supreme treasure, even split into three, still possesses a mysterious way of interconnection.

Using this method, all divisions can easily contact each other; if they are willing to pay a certain price, they can even achieve the teleportation of cultivators, enabling mutual visits.

The Blood Race once coveted this domain, and when the domain passed through a certain piece of stellar space, they launched a massive surprise attack by powerful forces. Based solely on the force of this domain, the battle would have been ominous, but due to the timely support of the other two divisions, the Blood Race was repelled in the end, forcing them to pay a very heavy price.

From that battle onward, no other race in the vast stellar space dared to covet Mount Fangcun.

On the surface, it just needs to deal with one division, but once the battle begins, it has to face three divisions; who can withstand that?

When the Dwarf Race faces external threats, they can quickly unite, because everyone knows that, even if Mount Fangcun is split into three, it still maintains a mysterious connection; if one division is occupied by a Foreign Clan, the remaining two won't have any good outcomes, and they would be defeated one by one.

Yet internal strife exists within the Dwarf Race, contending over the domain's level of background.

Mount Fangcun originally was a whole, and the background is fixed, but after splitting into three, its inherent background followed the domain's split.

The key is that this split is not static.

Because of the mysterious, unobservable connection, Mount Fangcun's background flows like moving water, at times flowing towards the Eastern division, at times towards the Southern division, and other times towards the Western division.

This causes unequal distribution of background.

More importantly, the flow of this background can be controlled artificially...

A domain's background implicates the domain's level and strength; even if they are all part of the Dwarf Race, no one wants the domain they belong to have weakened background.

So, many tens of thousands of years ago, a fiercely intense and prolonged battle erupted among the three divisions of the Dwarf Race on Mount Fangcun.

This battle was unlike the common combat, rather it was a contention among various powers over domain background! In such a battle, the three divisions' powerful forces don't even need to confront each other, they all sit within their own domain, controlling the background's flow within the domain.

Just like villagers in the mortal world fighting over water sources during a drought, everyone digs water storage pools near their homes, trying to keep as much water as possible in their own pools while also stealing from the other two's pools.

This is a kind of fighting method unseen by outsiders.

Hai Tang is unclear about the eventual outcome because it has been many years, but that battle lasted for a full century. During that century, regardless of Sun Blaze, Moon Jade, or Constellation, all took part; the entire tribe's cultivation was thus delayed.

External rumors said internal disharmony within the Dwarf Race attracted the Blood Race's covetous eyes, leading to war against the Blood Race!

Using that battle as a prelude, the three Sun Blaze tribes finally had the opportunity to sit down and properly discuss, deciding on the matter of the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet.

It can be said that this is an event with a long-standing tradition among the Dwarf Race, held every fifty years. During the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, all tribes of the Dwarf Race would emulate their ancestors, competing for the domain's legacy, so that their respective domains could enjoy better treatments in the next fifty years.

When a domain's legacy is strong, the nature's spiritual energy within becomes purer and more abundant, facilitating the cultivation for the lower-tier cultivators, and the domain can also produce more spirit ores, Spiritual Medicine, and even spirit jade.

Therefore, the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, which occurs every fifty years, is almost the most important thing to the three Dwarf tribes and their primary concern.

The most recent Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet is scheduled to begin in a little over two months.

For Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian, who came from the Nine Provinces, such an event is undoubtedly novel. Although the Nine Provinces is not lacking today, it pales in comparison to a domain like Mount Fangcun, which has transformed from a stellar space supreme treasure.

So he asked, "Is this Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet something that involves the Constellation Realm?"

Otherwise, why would they come find him?

Hai Tang nodded: "The ancestors who set this rule unanimously believed that the number and quality of Constellations most reflect a domain's strength and, due to the unique environment of the Black Abyss, only the upper three realms can operate within it, thus this rule was established."

Lu Ye nodded in agreement. A domain's strength can indeed be glimpsed at from the quantity and quality of Constellations, as Constellations are, after all, the starting point for venturing into stellar space.

Of course, there should be other considerations; at the very least, it wouldn't be appropriate for Sun Blaze Realm participations. If the Martial Arts Meet happens every fifty years and is all composed of Sun Blaze Realm, then it would always be the same people participating, soon becoming monotonous to watch.

Moon Jade Realm also isn't suitable, as their conflicts generate too much disturbance, so Constellations are the best choice.

"For the martial arts meet, how many people generally does each tribe send?" Lu Ye further inquired, becoming faintly aware that the participating number might not be small. Previously, Hai Tang mentioned a scheduled participant had an issue with their cultivation in the Constellation, causing a shortage of people!

As a top-tier domain, Mount Fangcun should have countless Constellations at its disposal. If not for the need for many participants, how could there be a manpower shortage?

"Nine people!"

Upon hearing this, Lu Ye couldn't help but frown, it didn't make sense. How could Mount Fangcun struggle to gather even nine Constellations when the Nine Provinces currently have approximately a thousand?

Of course, this is related to the Nine Provinces' specific situation, being a newly upgraded large domain, naturally leading to a Constellation birth boom due to many Divine Seas accumulating power over time.

However, once this boom period passes, the frequency of Constellations emerging in the Nine Provinces will decrease significantly, eventually stabilizing at a steady rate.

Upon noting his puzzlement, Hai Tang explained: "Though it's only nine people, not every Constellation is eligible to participate. The Black Abyss is extremely unique, and any person can only enter it once in a lifetime; a Constellation who has entered once can never enter a second time under any circumstance. Therefore, the Constellations entering the Black Abyss for the martial arts meet are generally newly ascended within the last fifty years."

Lu Ye suddenly understood. This clarified a lot. While this domain has a decent number of Constellations, few are eligible to enter the Black Abyss. This is because most Constellations who ascended fifty years ago have already entered the Black Abyss. However, he quickly realized another issue: "This isn't absolute, right? If, in the previous fifty years, there were ten or more Constellations born in this domain, then only nine would need to enter, leaving one or two to wait for the next fifty years."

"Indeed, that is correct. So, most clans entering the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet are Constellation Early Stage, some are Constellation Mid-Stage, and occasionally, there are Constellation Late Stage."

Lu Ye nodded. Under such rules, it would surely be the case that Constellation Early Stage cultivators are predominant, which highlights the difference in the foundational power of the three tribes of Mount Fangcun.

The stronger the foundation, the more Constellations there are, thus providing more opportunities for selection, increasing the chance of having Constellation Late Stage cultivators participate.

"Has this tribe's... performance always been poor?" Lu Ye had a vague sense that even just gathering enough manpower for the martial arts meet was challenging, clearly due to an inadequate foundation. This means that from the previous fifty years, there were no Constellations reserved for use in this tribe, and only nine Constellations have emerged in the last fifty years, just meeting the participant requirement.

Hai Tang blushed slightly, lowering her head: "We always end up at the bottom, basically every time."

In the competition between the three tribes, ranking last once or twice doesn't matter, but consistently being at the bottom over time will inevitably impact the complete development of the domain's cultivation system, leading to a vicious cycle of weakening and not having enough manpower to participate.

Of course, this tribe hasn't always been last; they won a second place once two hundred years ago, but it wasn't of much use. To improve a domain's overall environment, fifty years is hardly enough.

After hearing Hai Tang's explanation, Lu Ye understood the significance of this matter to the tribe. If not for this, Chen Xuanhai, that old stubborn man, might not have agreed so easily.

Chapter 1325 Anyway, I Don't Lose Out

As for why they chose me instead of other foreign Constellations detained at Mount Fangcun, Lu Ye guessed it was related to his performance on the Ghost Ship.

Hai Tang surely wouldn't hide what happened on the Ghost Ship from Su Yuqing, and Chen Xuanhai probably heard about it too, leading him to make such a decision.

After all, the trials of the Ghost Ship were extremely harsh; for me to pass it suggested, to outsiders, I must have exceptional qualities.

"No problem, I accept!" After understanding various aspects of the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, Lu Ye readily agreed.

There was no reason not to, it was merely a competition under complex rules, and besides, those competing were only at the Constellation Realm, so there's no need to fear anything.

Hai Tang still kept her head low and said softly, "There's one more thing I need to clarify with Junior Brother."

"What is it?"

Hai Tang's face suddenly flushed, hesitating for a while before speaking, "Black Abyss is a bit special. Our Dwarf Race can enter freely, but if other races wish to enter, they must carry the aura of our Dwarf Race, or else they won't be able to enter and thus cannot participate in the Martial Arts Meet."

Lu Ye was puzzled, "Carry the aura of your Dwarf Race? How is that accomplished?"

While he was still wondering, Nian Yuexian, who hadn't spoken all along, suddenly had a realization. She looked carefully at Hai Tang's complexion and said lightly, "Co-cultivation?"

The minds of women are ultimately finer than those of men, coupled with Hai Tang's current state, Nian Yuexian immediately speculated.

Lu Ye turned to look at her, surprised by how astoundingly Nian Yuexian spoke.

Unexpectedly, Hai Tang nodded, her face turning red enough to bleed, "Yes, it must be co-cultivation, so Master meant that Junior Brother Lu could choose a suitable person at Immortal Spirit Peak as a Dao companion, then... then co-cultivate, so... so he could enter Black Abyss."

She spoke hesitantly, leaving Lu Ye dumbfounded, unable to comprehend why the topic had suddenly shifted here.

Beside him, Nian Yuexian smiled meaningfully with a slight curve to her lips.

"Junior Brother, take your time to think it over. Once you've decided, send me a message!" Hai Tang left this statement behind and fled.

Lu Ye raised his hand, wanting to stop her and ask more questions, but thought better of it, wearing a worried expression. How did the talk about the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet lead to Dao companions?

Nian Yuexian squinted at him, "Congratulations must be in order for Junior Brother, for such a fortuitous event."

Lu Ye replied in annoyance, "Senior Sister, please don't tease me. How is this a fortuitous event?"

"Getting a Dao companion for nothing, isn't that a good thing?"

"I never said I would agree!" Lu Ye argued.

Nian Yuexian was surprised, "But does Hai Tang's beauty not please Junior Brother's eyes?"

Lu Ye, distressed, said, "This has nothing to do with beauty, alright? Besides, she only said I could choose a Dao companion at Immortal Spirit Peak, she never said I had to choose her!"

Nian Yuexian snorted lightly, "In this vast Immortal Spirit Peak, you only know Hai Tang, if you truly have to choose a Dao companion, who else could it be besides her? Are you going to choose Su Yuqing? If I'm not mistaken, Su Yuqing's words must have been hoping you would pair with Hai Tang, but Hai Tang was too shy, so by the time it reached you, it was presented differently."

Lu Ye naturally considered this, or else Hai Tang wouldn't have suddenly flushed when speaking earlier.

But for him to choose a Dao companion at Immortal Spirit Peak and co-cultivate was truly something he hadn't considered.

It's not that he has no thoughts about beautiful women; after a passionate encounter with Hua Ci, Lu Ye already knew its wonderful pleasures. But if he really made such a choice, what will happen afterward? As Dao companions, they must remain loyal.

But he intends to return to Nine Provinces, surely not planning to take Hai Tang back there? Su Yuqing probably wouldn't agree, and Hai Tang might not want to leave her home either.

Yet staying at Mount Fangcun doesn't appeal to Lu Ye either.

Thus, this matter of Dao companionship is indeed rather difficult.

Frowning and pondering, Lu Ye said, "Senior Sister, don't you find this matter quite peculiar?"

Nian Yuexian snorted lightly, "Seems you are not swayed by beauty. By the looks of it, you have noticed the peculiarity too."

"So, Senior Sister also thinks this way." Lu Ye originally wondered if he was overthinking it, but seeing this now, he realized it was not excessive thinking at all—it's real.

The Dwarf Race's Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet had been decided long ago, and now, with less than two months until such an event, Su Yuqing suddenly wants him to choose a Dao companion and help participate in the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, which seems a bit rushed.

"Where do you find it strange?" Nian Yuexian asked.

Lu Ye answered, "Previously, when I wanted to take Senior Sister away, Chen Xuanhai's condition was for Senior Sister to find a Dao companion here, making her not an outsider and exempt from ancestry restrictions. We refused, yet now they're asking me to choose a Dao companion. Given this, isn't it possible that the Dwarf Race originally intended for Senior Sister to participate in Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet? The plan fell through, and now they're targeting me."

Nian Yuexian slowly shook her head, "It's unlikely to be that way. I'm a newly-advanced Constellation, my foundation is not stable, Chen Xuanhai surely sees that. What can I achieve in Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet? For the native Dwarf Race, the event is significant, they wouldn't choose participants so rashly."

Lu Ye pondered and felt that it might indeed be the case, "So, I was overthinking?"

Nian Yuexian said, "Have you ever considered that Chen Xuanhai asking me to choose a Dao companion is just a tactic?"

"What do you mean?"

"Just like when you go shopping, the seller first offers a price that you will definitely refuse, and then offers a price you might accept. Which one will you choose?"

Lu Ye was enlightened. Asking Nian Yuexian to choose a Dao companion was the price meant to be refused, while asking him to choose a Dao companion was a more acceptable price, after all, men and women are ultimately not the same.

I have to admit, such tactics are effective because when Hai Tang mentioned the matter, Lu Ye actually seriously considered it but deemed it inappropriate.

Of course, at this moment, it was not yet time to respond to Hai Tang.

If that's the case, then the previous matter of Nian Yuexian choosing a Dao companion among the Dwarf Race didn't truly matter to Chen Xuanhai because he knew Nian Yuexian wouldn't agree. That was just the price set to be refused, and from that moment, he had already set his sights on me.

Nian Yuexian's Mental Consciousness surged, silently transmitting, "Junior Brother, do you think Hai Tang's master is aware of these twists and turns?"

Lu Ye was about to say that she probably wouldn't know, but upon reconsideration, there were only three Sun Blaze members in the headquarters, and they had been interacting for many years, each knowing the other's background. When Chen Xuanhai twitches, Su Yuqing would probably know what he plans to do.

Could Chen Xuanhai be plotting without Su Yuqing knowing?

He suddenly recalled an event: when he first arrived in the headquarters domain, Hai Tang led him to Immortal Spirit Peak to meet Su Yuqing. But halfway, Hai Tang suddenly disappeared, and a fat man blocked the way, fighting him.

The other party appeared non-malicious, just a simple probe.

That clearly was a test of his strength.

Later, when meeting Su Yuqing, this woman asked many fragmented questions, including the matter of Dao companions.

These signs, viewed individually, revealed nothing, but if connected, the space for imagination expanded.

Lu Ye vividly remembered, when he met Su Yuqing, the clear look of appreciation in her eyes. Looking back now, it didn't seem like simple appreciation for a family disciple's savior, more like a mother-in-law looking at a son-in-law!

"I fell into their trap!" Lu Ye gradually understood.

It's likely not only Chen Xuanhai set his sights on him, or rather, from the start, it was Su Yuqing who did!

If that's true, then the previous fierce battle between Su Yuqing and Chen Xuanhai becomes intriguing.

The actions of these old folks indeed shouldn't be judged by appearances.

Lu Ye felt a vague regret. Had he known, when sparring with that fat man halfway up Immortal Spirit Peak, he would have performed poorly, which would have avoided many subsequent troubles.

It was due to his outstanding performance that he drew attention.

But at that moment, while recognizing the fat man's blockade as a test, he mistakenly thought he needed to pass this test to ascend the peak further, so how could he hold back?

Overall, the Dwarf Race at headquarters bore no ill will towards him; Lu Ye could sense this, although being calculated wasn't very pleasant.

"Senior Sister, should I just randomly choose a woman from Immortal Spirit Peak? After all, I don't lose out!" Lu Ye said.

"If you can overcome your internal barrier, go ahead, I won't stop you," Nian Yuexian said with a curl of her lips.

"What barrier do I have? At that time, I could take what I want and deny it, put my pants on and walk away," Lu Ye said defiantly.

Nian Yuexian looked at him with a teasing expression, encouraging, "Then go ahead, I'll wait for your good news."

"Go then!" Lu Ye snorted and flew skyward, heading straight for Immortal Spirit Peak.

But shortly after flying a section, he turned around and flew back.

"Forget something? Drop your shame?" Nian Yuexian teased.

Lu Ye blushed, "Upon careful thought, this really doesn't seem right. Let me ponder it further."

He dashed into his room, set the restriction, and carefully contemplated.

Nian Yuexian glanced in his direction thoughtfully, then took out her audio talisman and sent a message.

The talisman was refined by Lu Ye for her, and she had limited contacts, besides Lu Ye, only Hai Tang. She had previously exchanged contact imprints with Hai Tang.

Soon receiving a reply, she shot skyward.

At the foot of Immortal Spirit Peak, Nian Yuexian met Hai Tang, who was waiting there, nodded slightly, "Thank you, Fellow Daoist!"

Hai Tang looked uneasy. Even though she previously told Lu Ye he could choose any woman from Immortal Spirit Peak as a Dao companion, the true meaning behind her words, Nian Yuexian and Lu Ye likely understood, as none of them are fools.

Chapter 1326 The Youngster Is Strong and Vigorous

Hai Tang didn't expect that the previous offhand question from her master about Dao companions would so soon become a reality.

Regarding the matter of becoming Lu Ye's Dao companion, she indeed didn't have any objections. After all, Lu Ye was the one who saved her life. Without Lu Ye bringing her out of the Ghost Ship, there would be no Hai Tang today. What's wrong with dedicating herself to him? Besides, Lu Ye's perception wasn't bad.

If she indeed became Lu Ye's Dao companion, then Nian Yuexian would be a part of her marital family. Facing her now, Hai Tang naturally felt a bit uneasy.

She didn't ask what decision Lu Ye had made; she felt embarrassed to ask, so she silently flew upwards with Nian Yuexian.

But she could clearly sense that behind her, Nian Yuexian was sizing her up, like an elder sister-in-law evaluating her future sister-in-law, seeing if she had broad hips and could bear children well in the future...

With such wild thoughts, Hai Tang became increasingly uncomfortable.

Fortunately, Nian Yuexian sensed it, moved forward a couple of steps, walked shoulder to shoulder with her, and initiated a conversation: "Yiye is still deliberating. I don't know what decision he will make. However, Fellow Daoist Hai Tang, I hope that no matter what decision he makes, it won't affect the bond between you two. It's rare to have a connection in this vast stellar space."

Hai Tang nodded continuously: "I understand what Fellow Daoist is saying. No matter what decision Junior Brother Lu makes, I have no issue on my side."

Nian Yuexian smiled slightly: "Fellow Daoist is a good woman!"

After some casual chatting, Hai Tang also relaxed, no longer as restrained as before. Being both women, naturally, they had many things to talk about once the conversation flowed. After chatting for a while, they reached the summit of the Immortal Spirit Peak.

"Master is inside. Fellow Daoist, you may go in; I've already informed the master."

"Thank you!"

Nian Yuexian expressed gratitude and stepped toward the hall.

Entering the hall, she saw the white-robed woman seated inside and respectfully saluted: "Greetings, senior."

Su Yuqing nodded slightly and gestured with her hand: "Sit down."

Nian Yuexian took a seat and spoke directly before Su Yuqing could say anything: "Junior came here just to ask senior one question face to face."

There were things Lu Ye didn't pay attention to, but as his senior sister, she had to probe beforehand for Lu Ye's sake, otherwise, she wouldn't have come to meet Su Yuqing.

Su Yuqing looked at her with interest: "What question?"

Nian Yuexian asked: "If my junior brother truly chooses a Dao companion at Immortal Spirit Peak, will he have to stay at Mount Fangcun to cultivate in the future?"

Su Yuqing thought she was going to ask something more sharp but unexpectedly it was this. She then smiled slightly: "The dwarf race at Mount Fangcun is very generous to friends and guests. All friends and guests of the dwarf race can come and go freely; our dwarf race won't interfere at all."

But Nian Yuexian wasn't satisfied with her answer and shook her head, saying: "If he truly chooses a Dao companion here, then he is neither a friend nor a guest, but half a part of Mount Fangcun."

On reflection, that's indeed the case.

Su Yuqing earnestly said: "If things truly reach that point, he can stay in the domain if he wishes. If not, he can leave with his Dao companion. Our palace won't prevent him from doing so!"

Nian Yuexian's gaze turned sharp: "Even if he chooses Fellow Daoist Hai Tang?"

Su Yuqing nodded: "Even if he chooses Hai Tang. Of course, whether Hai Tang is willing to leave with him, that will depend on her own wishes. Although I am her master, I won't command her to do anything."

Nian Yuexian said: "Senior is a good master!"

Su Yuqing gave a self-deprecating smile: "If I were truly a good master, I wouldn't use my own disciple to scheme."

Though she didn't clarify, she knew Nian Yuexian could understand. In fact, Nian Yuexian coming to Immortal Spirit Peak at this time already explained a lot.

But everyone is a cultivator, some things are obvious without needing to be said.

Su Yuqing sighed: "No matter what, the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet is the most important issue for the domain. If not for the lack of talent here, it wouldn't need to be this troublesome." She then turned serious: "However, there is still one thing I need to inform you, although I use my own disciple to scheme, not just anyone is qualified to make me do that. Hai Tang is a very nice child. If she can thus obtain a good home, I, as her master, would be gratified."

Nian Yuexian's eyes flashed with insight: "On the way here, I specifically asked Fellow Daoist Hai Tang about the Divine Sea struggle of the Reincarnation Tree. But Fellow Daoist Hai Tang said that the situation at Mount Fangcun is special, without a doppelganger of the Reincarnation Tree, so the dwarf race did not participate in such grand events, and they know little about the previous Divine Sea struggles. Did Fellow Daoist Hai Tang deceive me?"

Su Yuqing looked at Nian Yuexian with appreciation: "You're a clever young lady to have thought of this!"

Nian Yuexian said: "It's not that I'm clever, it's just because I couldn't make sense of it. My junior brother is only at the Constellation Early Stage, what virtue or skill does he possess to be valued by you so much that you'd find ways to have him help participate in the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, even willing to let your disciple become his Dao companion? Aren't you afraid of entrusting him wrongly? How can senior be sure that once Fellow Daoist Hai Tang becomes his Dao companion, she would indeed have a good home."

"Hai Tang did not deceive you." Su Yuqing explained, "In fact, both Chen Xuanhai and Woo Qimo were unaware of the previous Divine Sea struggle. I only know due to a chance incident."

Nian Yuexian understood: "So, when Hai Tang brought him back, senior knew then that my junior brother was Lu Yiye of the Nine Heavens World."

"To be able to overpower the crowd with cultivation inferior to all others during the Divine Sea struggle, even those genius demons from top domains couldn't compete with him, such juniors are rare. If Hai Tang follows him, she certainly wouldn't go wrong, so he is qualified to participate in the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet."

"In that case, I understand," Nian Yuexian nodded slightly. This conversation with Su Yuqing had resolved her greatest confusion.

Ultimately, it was all due to Lu Ye's show of prowess at the Reincarnation Tree back then.

Slowly rising to her feet, Nian Yuexian bowed once more, "Thank you, Senior, for solving my doubts. I shall take my leave!"

"Hold on a moment," Su Yuqing called out to her, "From your understanding of your junior brother, what choice do you think he will make?"

Nian Yuexian thought for a moment and replied, "Actually, we are not from the same school, so I don't know him too well, but if I were to boldly speculate, I think he would refuse."

Su Yuqing frowned, "He wouldn't lose anything, why would he refuse?"

Agreeing to this would gain him a beautiful and skillful Dao companion, while also achieving eternal peace with the Dwarf Race—where could you find such good fortune?

"Conscience!" Nian Yuexian smiled slightly, "He indeed wouldn't lose anything, but if he truly agreed, where would he go from there? Staying at Mount Fangcun is against his wishes, and he couldn't bear to take Fellow Daoist Hai Tang away. After all, to the Dwarf Race, Mount Fangcun is home, and who would wish to leave home to follow an outsider to another domain? Senior, Junior Brother mentioned the Ghost Ship to me before, and you know the choice he made in the end. If he were heartless, he could have easily chosen to take a treasure instead of picking Fellow Daoist Hai Tang."

Nian Yuexian left lightheartedly, leaving Su Yuqing frowning in contemplation.

In all her calculations, she suddenly realized she had overlooked one crucial factor—Lu Ye's own moral standards.

This was originally a shining point of human nature, but now it had become the biggest obstacle in her plans—a situation laughably absurd.

But speaking of which, if Lu Ye didn't possess such integrity, Hai Tang wouldn't have safely escaped from danger, and none of the subsequent events would have unfolded.

This matter had become somewhat contradictory.

However, the more it was so, the more she hoped that Hai Tang could become his Dao companion, not just for this Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, but for Hai Tang's future.

With extraordinary aptitude, strong personal capabilities, and such benevolence, where could one find a man like him?

But now she had to consider another problem: What if Lu Ye indeed refused?

If that was the case, all her previous schemes and designs would come to naught.

Using force was impossible; you can't forcibly make a cow drink water, and it's unrealistic to use force against someone at the Constellation stage.

As she continued to ponder, Hai Tang sent a message saying Lu Ye wanted to meet her.

Has a decision been made?

Su Yuqing had no reason to refuse; she too wanted to know if Nian Yuexian's bold speculation was correct.

Moments later, Lu Ye, having received a reply, flew to the top of Immortal Spirit Peak led by Hai Tang.

He didn't know Nian Yuexian had already visited earlier, for when he came to a resolution and stepped out, she had long left.

A short while later, he was seated on the same meditation mat where Nian Yuexian had sat, across from Su Yuqing not far away.

"Have you made a decision?" Despite her Sun Blaze cultivation, Su Yuqing couldn't help but feel a bit anxious when asking this question.

Lu Ye seriously replied, "Indeed, I must ask for Senior's forgiveness. I am willing to participate in the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet for our domain, but as for choosing a Dao companion here, I fear I must decline your kind offer."

"May I ask why?" Su Yuqing inquired.

Lu Ye said, "As Dao companions, we should support one another. If I were to choose a Dao companion here, I wouldn't have the heart to take her away, nor could I stay to accompany her. Chances are, we may never meet again, imposing on her lifetime—my heart wouldn't be at ease."

His answer was identical to Nian Yuexian's prediction!

This response should be commendable, but at this moment, Su Yuqing wished Lu Ye had given a different answer.

With a sigh in her heart, a sense of powerlessness arose.

Looking at Lu Ye with complex emotions, she didn't expect him to suddenly change his tone and say, "Therefore, I thought of a compromise. Senior, do you think it's appropriate?"

Su Yuqing was curious, "What proposal?"

"Senior Sister Hai Tang mentioned that to enter the Black Abyss, one must possess the aura of the Dwarf Race. In that case, it isn't strictly necessary to select a Dao companion, right? As long as I cultivate alongside a woman from the Dwarf Race, Senior, could you find me a suitable widow? I'm strong and healthy, it wouldn't be a problem."

Su Yuqing's eye twitched slightly, suddenly realizing this kid might not have as lofty virtues as imagined...

Chapter 1327 Not a Fruitless Visit

The suitable candidate for widowhood... This is clearly a case of trying to shirk responsibility after the fact. How can someone who speaks such nonsense claim to be of noble character?

If it weren't for previous events, Su Yuqing would have scolded him immediately.

She said angrily, "Do you think any random person can fulfill the conditions by cultivating with you? If that were the case, it wouldn't be so troublesome!"

Lu Ye pondered, "Does it have to be..."

Su Yuqing nodded, "It must be a woman of pure body who can deploy a unique secret technique of our Dwarf Race during her first cultivation with you. Only then can your body contain the aura of our Dwarf Race, fulfilling the requirement to enter the Black Abyss."

Lu Ye felt somewhat awkward: "In this case, I was rather abrupt."

He hadn't thought so much before, mainly because he wasn't aware of the intricacies. Now it seemed he had oversimplified things.

"You can consider it further; there's still two months until the Martial Arts Meet, so time is relatively abundant." Su Yuqing softened her tone. There was no helping it; she was in need of him now, and he was indeed the most suitable candidate before her. She didn't want to give up.

Lu Ye shook his head: "No need to consider, senior. If this method doesn't work, then let's forget it. Let's do everything according to the rules of Mount Fangcun."

Su Yuqing said, "Are you really willing for your senior sister to stay here for a hundred years?"

Lu Ye smiled slightly: "I trust the Dwarf Race won't harm her. At worst, I'll accompany her here for a hundred years."

A hundred years might not be considered short even for a Constellation, but with Hai Tang watching over her, at least Nian Yuexian's safety wouldn't be a concern. As for him saying he'd stay here with Nian Yuexian for a hundred years... it's just a strategic retreat!

After some deliberation with Nian Yuexian, Lu Ye roughly understood the behind-the-scenes aspects of the matter, including a fierce battle between Su Yuqing and Chen Xuanhai, which was likely a performance for him to watch.

In a performance, there's always one with a dark face and one with a light face. It's a cliché but effective.

So, in the end, Chen Xuanhai isn't some stubborn old man holding strictly to ancestral teachings. Bringing Nian Yuexian away wouldn't be too difficult for him. It's just that, due to the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, the domain needed a reason to ask for his effort, hence the appearance of Chen Xuanhai's stubborn image.

The domain here couldn't really let him stay for a hundred years; after the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, if Lu Ye brought up the matter again, there's a high chance there won't be any resistance.

It's possible that there will be a performance of "Chen Xuanhai, the old rascal, went out to wander and hasn't returned, and Su Yuqing quietly sent Lu Ye and his senior sister out of Mount Fangcun."

Previously, while pondering in his room for a long time, what he thought about wasn't finding a widow to cultivate with, but rather these issues. Now that he's figured things out, naturally, he felt relieved.

Hearing his answer, Su Yuqing looked at him helplessly, and finally waved her hand.

Lu Ye stood up, apologized, and left.

When he returned to the valley and explained the matter to Nian Yuexian, she indicated she knew and didn't express much opinion.

Lu Ye said, "That Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet matter probably doesn't need worrying about now. But senior sister, since we've come to Mount Fangcun, we shouldn't leave empty-handed."

Nian Yuexian immediately became vigilant: "There are three Sun Blaze cultivators stationed in this domain; you better not act recklessly."

Lu Ye laughed: "What are you thinking, senior sister? Why would I act recklessly?"

Nian Yuexian frowned: "Then what do you plan to do?" Just now, Lu Ye looked like he wanted to steal something, which gave her quite a scare.

"Senior sister may not know, but previously, when I led Senior Sister Hai Tang off the Ghost Ship, returning to Nine... Heavens, I sent a message to Senior Brother Jian Guhong. He told me to definitely bring Hai Tang back. Due to Mount Fangcun's roaming nature, throughout the stellar space, the Dwarf Race is considered a knowledgeable race. Senior Brother meant that at that time, we could consult Senior Sister Hai Tang about various common knowledge regarding stellar space, saving us the trouble of exploring on our own." Speaking up to here, Lu Ye sighed: "You know what happened afterward. Now that Senior Sister Hai Tang has returned to the domain, it's impossible to bring her back, but since we've come here, we can definitely investigate on our own. There must be records of stellar space marvels and the like here. I've also heard Senior Sister Hai Tang mention these before."

Nian Yuexian realized this and understood what Lu Ye intended to do. She immediately nodded: "This is indeed worth investigating, but do you know where to investigate?"

Lu Ye confidently replied: "Find Senior Sister Hai Tang."

With that, he sent a message, and shortly after, Hai Tang arrived.

After voicing his needs, Hai Tang readily agreed: "No problem, there's a Xiyuan Pavilion in the domain here, which records such information. I can take you there."

As a newly upgraded large domain, the Nine Provinces now particularly emphasize the collection and aggregation of various information about stellar space. Jian Guhong and others established the Nine Provinces Governor's Palace especially with this in mind.

A newly promoted large domain is like this, Mount Fangcun, being such a top-tier domain, naturally shouldn't be ignorant. The intelligence and information they've gathered far surpass what the people of the Nine Provinces might achieve over dozens of generations.

Xiyuan Pavilion is where these intelligence and information are stored. It can be said that every cultivator who has ascended to the Constellation in Mount Fangcun spends a long time in Xiyuan Pavilion, familiarizing themselves with the records and information left by their predecessors as preparation for exploring the stellar space.

Xiyuan Pavilion isn't within Immortal Spirit Peak but isn't far from it, as the headquarters domain isn't very large.

At present, Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian, under Hai Tang's lead, flew outward, and after more than two hours, they descended into a valley. Within the valley was an extremely ancient hall where numerous cultivators, both Constellation and Divine Sea, moved in and out, creating a lively scene.

This is Xiyuan Pavilion, guarded outside by a Constellation cultivator, an old man with white hair.

Hai Tang led the two forward to pay respects. The old man merely glanced up at them without asking anything more and promptly allowed their passage.

For the headquarters Dwarf Race, entry into Xiyuan Pavilion requires no special conditions—one can enter anytime as long as the cultivation is reached, naturally avoiding stringent investigation.

Leading Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian into Xiyuan Pavilion, Lu Ye first saw a row of tall wooden racks. These racks were divided into small compartments, most containing a jade slip, with only a few empty.

Hai Tang introduced to the two, "Xiyuan Pavilion is divided into five levels. The jade slips on the first level record all kinds of valuable experiences from our Dwarf Race predecessors during their stellar space exploration, somewhat chaotic with various records. The second level documents information on various domains and some star maps. The third level mainly records introductions to various stellar races and a wide variety of star beasts. As for the fourth level, it records stellar marvels."

Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian looked around, dazzled by the view. Although this place isn't a treasure vault filled with gems, to them and the Nine Provinces, these things are currently most needed.

From Hai Tang's introduction, it's evident that the jade slips in Xiyuan Pavilion nearly cover everything in stellar space, and absorbing all this intelligence won't make one a stellar know-it-all, but at least will ensure future Nine Provinces cultivators won't appear clueless when navigating the stars.

"What about the fifth level?" Lu Ye couldn't resist asking as Hai Tang didn't mention the fifth level.

"The fifth level records various secret techniques, but they're not cultivation methods. They're summaries of the characteristics of secret techniques from different races made by our Dwarf Race predecessors. However..." Hai Tang looked at Lu Ye slightly embarrassed, "My master just transmitted to me saying you can't enter the fifth level unless Junior Brother Lu possesses the aura of our Dwarf Race."

Lu Ye chuckled. Su Yuqing is still trying to hold onto something here, seemingly unwilling to give up.

But having made a decision, Lu Ye wouldn't casually change his mind.

Although understanding various races' secret techniques can be useful for future preparations in case of confrontation, Lu Ye cannot be swayed for such reasons.

"Master also said the items in Xiyuan Pavilion can be explored and replicated by you two but not taken away, which is a rule in Xiyuan Pavilion, applicable to even our race's cultivators, and not targeting you two specifically."

Lu Ye nodded, "Rest assured, Senior Sister Hai Tang, we won't do such things. But, Senior Sister... Do you have spare jade slips?"

Though he carries some spare jade slips with him, the number isn't many. With such a vast amount of intelligence in Xiyuan Pavilion, a large number of spare jade slips will be needed for replication.

Hai Tang smiled, "I'll prepare more for you."

"Thank you, Senior Sister."

Hai Tang departed, while Lu Ye stood side by side with Nian Yuexian, discussing carefully, "Senior Sister, you take the top, or I take the bottom?"

"There's no difference, you choose." Nian Yuexian expressed indifference.

"Then I'll take the top, and you take the third and fourth levels."

Nian Yuexian nodded and advised, "Investigate thoroughly when replicating. Don't copy useless or outdated information to avoid misleading cultivators of this domain later."

"Got it." Lu Ye waved his hand towards her, briskly stepping onto the fourth floor.

The number of jade slips on this level is noticeably less than on the first level. In fact, while passing the second and third levels, he briefly investigated and found fewer jade slips than on the first, mainly due to different classifications.

Each jade slip on the first level equates to at least a lifetime's worth of experiences from a Constellation Realm cultivator; countless were born in the headquarters domain throughout history. Even if only some left traces here, the quantity is still considerable.

As for the second to fourth levels, since they record specific subjects, the quantity naturally decreases.

However, the space remains spacious. With a slight sense, Lu Ye detected at least twenty Dwarf Race cultivators scattered in different areas, each grasping a jade slip, immersed in exploration, including Divine Sea and Constellation cultivators.

Chapter 1328 Still Not Giving Up

In the fourth layer, Lu Ye's Mental Consciousness swept across, his heart already calculating, and he walked straight to the bottommost position, picking up a jade slip and immersing his mind to investigate.

Yin-Yang Great Millstone!

A few large characters immediately imprinted themselves into his mind.

The jade slip in the fourth layer recorded various stellar space marvels, their numbers potentially in the tens of thousands, and this particular jade slip detailed a stellar space marvel called the Yin-Yang Great Millstone.

Inside, it was detailed with the shape, characteristics, danger level of this stellar marvel, and even methods to deal with it should one accidentally fall into it, including the precise location of this marvel and even the nearby star map, it's recorded extremely detailed.

Lu Ye knew that there were all kinds of wonders in stellar space, a natural result of stellar evolution, but to speak of it, he had never seen any of them.

But this jade slip imprinted the scaled-down appearance of the Yin-Yang Great Millstone countless times, and combining it with those text introductions, Lu Ye could easily imagine the magnificence and grandeur of this marvel, and if he encountered it in stellar space in the future, he would definitely recognize it at a glance.

It must be said, such information is too important for Lu Ye and even the Nine Provinces.

He couldn't help but think that such intelligence gathering places would likely exist wherever large domains with Constellations were born, and the Nine Provinces, currently just starting out, were naturally quite lacking compared to others.

This trip to Mount Fangcun, without mentioning anything else, just this journey to Xiyuan Pavilion, was undoubtedly an unimaginably huge gain.

The valuable part is that the Dwarf Race people here didn't hoard it jealously, but allowed him to come in and replicate it, which is not treatment that just anyone could receive.

Whether it's related to him saving Senior Sister Hai Tang, or because Su Yuqing still wants him to participate in the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, Lu Ye isn't sure, but this opportunity must be well cherished.

He diligently read through it, and after thoroughly reviewing it, he took out a blank jade slip to replicate the contents.

Then he began to investigate the second jade slip, replicating it in the same manner.

While he and Nian Yuexian were busy in Xiyuan Pavilion, Chen Xuanhai and Woo Qimo were already transmitting audio to Su Yuqing to inquire about the situation.

Unless it was an ordinary matter, Sun Blaze Realm cultivators like them wouldn't pay too much attention, but when it relates to the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, they can't help but be concerned.

The situation in their domain has been persistently sluggish, and as three main pillars within, they each bear unavoidable responsibilities.

They also want to prove themselves, as after every Martial Arts Meet, the other two departments' Sun Blaze Realm milks them with sarcasm, leaving them quite infuriated.

In any case, improving the situation in the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet almost became an obsession for them.

Helplessly, the younger generation lacks promising performance, and they are left with no choice but to lament.

This time is a rare opportunity, and also a stroke of chance, so naturally, they are concerned.

Soon, they received Su Yuqing's response, assuring them everything was going according to plan, relieving them immensely.

In the Spirit Mountaintop Great Hall, as the mental exchange with the other two Sun Blaze concludes, Su Yuqing reveals a faint worry.

Reporting only the good and not the bad was her deliberate consideration, but Lu Ye's reluctance to find a Dao companion on the Immortal Spirit Peak disrupted her original plan.

She can't quite understand why he would refuse such a good thing.

It's awkward to resort to force, not to mention Lu Ye has a great favor toward Senior Sister Hai Tang, and the mysterious powerful figure backing him makes Su Yuqing reluctant to provoke.

If it weren't for these considerations, Su Yuqing would have used some particular means long ago. Assuming her position as a Sun Blaze, if she truly resorts to force, how could mere Constellations resist?

Days passed, and in the blink of two months.

Lu Ye and Nian Yuexian had returned from Xiyuan Pavilion, the two working collaboratively, directly replicating all jade slips across the four levels of Xiyuan Pavilion.

Currently, Lu Ye is reviewing the jade slips Nian Yuexian replicated, while she examines those he replicated, enabling them to gather all of Xiyuan Pavilion's intelligence completely, and when returning to the Nine Provinces, these replicated jade slips can be placed in the Governor's Hall, allowing Nine Provinces Constellations to freely examine them.

This period was very pleasant, aside from Hai Tang occasionally visiting them, there were no other trifles.

But as the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet date approaches, Hai Tang's appearances became more sparse, her last visit was ten days ago, at that time she mentioned she'd be in seclusion for a while, preparing for the meet.

Considering the days, in a few days the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet should commence, and Lu Ye feels he can mention leaving to Su Yuqing once again after the meet, if his previous assumptions are correct, Su Yuqing has no reason to forcibly keep him and Nian Yuexian.

Though he can't assist the Dwarf Race in this matter, Lu Ye can't betray his heart by doing something he doesn't want to.

Currently, for him, there is only one troublesome matter.

Since arriving at the local domain over two months, Mount Fangcun has been moving constantly, and it's uncertain where it's headed, even if he and Nian Yuexian leave here, finding the way home would take some effort.

Nevertheless, there is always a way forward, and only at that time can it be addressed.

During his review, Su Yuqing's voice suddenly reached his ear: "Lu Ye, come to the Immortal Spirit Peak once!"

Lu Ye was momentarily startled.

Previously calling you 'virtuous nephew', now calling Lu Ye 'young lad', it seems Su Yuqing is still somewhat upset about my refusal to find a Dao companion at Immortal Spirit Peak...

Nian Yuexian noticed and looked up: "What's the matter?"

Lu Ye said, "Senior Su wants to see me."

Nian Yuexian frowned: "Is she still not giving up?"

Lu Ye sighed helplessly: "It seems so. The Martial Arts Meet is nearing; she might try one last attempt. I'll go and clarify things with her."

Nian Yuexian advised: "Be polite with your words, don't anger her."

Lu Ye nodded continuously: "I know, and Senior Su is not unreasonable." But after all, she is a woman—even in Sun Blaze, she is somewhat narrow-minded; otherwise, she wouldn't be secretly angry.

From her standpoint, my side seems ungrateful. If she was completely unreasonable, surely I'd be in trouble.

But from our two previous encounters, Lu Ye found Su Yuqing to have quite the air of a strong cultivator, so he wasn't worried about this summons.

With a calm demeanor, he flew up toward Immortal Spirit Peak.

A moment later, in that great hall again, they sat facing each other.

Su Yuqing looked at him helplessly: "If I let you choose again, would you change your mind?"

Lu Ye shook his head honestly.

Su Yuqing's eyes flashed with anger: "What's wrong with Hai Tang? In terms of cultivation, she's one small realm higher than you; in aptitude, she's extremely excellent and surely will advance to Moon Jade in the future. Also, she's my pupil; her figure and appearance are quite good. Why don't you like her?"

Lu Ye said sincerely: "Senior Sister Hai Tang is great; it's not that I don't like her. It's just that there are things I cannot do. If I truly did them, my conscience would be uneasy."

Su Yuqing snorted coldly: "The Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet is the top priority of this domain; everything else must make way for it. If you don't agree, then I will compel you!"

"Senior, a forced melon is not sweet."

"I don't care if it's sweet or not, as long as it quenches thirst!"

Lu Ye was speechless; he previously thought Su Yuqing was a reasonable person, but now it seems that a woman, no matter how high her cultivation, always has moments of being unreasonable.

"But senior, even if you truly find a way to send me into the Black Abyss, how can you ensure that I will be fully committed?"

Su Yuqing's face darkened further; this was her most troublesome problem. She indeed had considered using force, but if she did so, Lu Ye would surely harbor resentment. Once entering the Black Abyss, he might slack off or act half-heartedly. It would be better to send another Constellation who can at least fight with all their strength.

Her tone softened slightly: "Are you really so unwilling?"

Lu Ye said seriously: "It's not unwilling; it's truly impossible!"

"What if you don't need to be responsible for Hai Tang? After the Martial Arts Meet, you can act as you wish, as if Hai Tang doesn't exist."

Lu Ye shook his head: "That would be too unfair to Senior Sister Hai Tang. Senior, you don't do such things as a mentor!"

The powerful aura of Sun Blaze realm suddenly spread, causing the entire hall to seem frozen. Su Yuqing stared at Lu Ye intensely: "Are you lecturing me?"

Lu Ye felt all his bones creak and his seated posture involuntarily curved forward, biting his teeth, word by word: "I dare not, but I always thought you were a good mentor. Now it seems knowing a person is not the same as knowing the heart!"

"You're insolent!"

Lu Ye's posture bent even lower, his forehead almost touching the ground, yet he still held on stubbornly, his face flushed and neck bulged: "Speak what should be said, do what can be done. If there is injustice in the world, then let a lowly ant be insolent for once!"

The oppressive immense force slowly dissipated, and Lu Ye straightened his posture again, eyes bloodshot looking at Su Yuqing. His eyes were not reddened from emotions, but rather filled with bloodshot due to the pressure from the other party's aura.

Su Yuqing no longer showed anger or ferocity from before; instead, she looked at him with a seemingly amused expression: "You know, the more you act like this, the more pleasing I find you. The more I want you and Hai Tang to form a union."

Lu Ye had a helpless expression: "Senior, you shouldn't play like this."

Su Yuqing sighed: "In the end, Hai Tang doesn't have this fortune. If you don't want it, I won't force it!"

"Thank you, senior, for understanding." Lu Ye breathed a long sigh of relief, thinking that this matter may be over?

But unexpectedly, Su Yuqing changed her tone: "However, the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet still requires your effort!"

Lu Ye frowned: "Senior, you just said you wouldn't force it, don't slap your own face so quickly, right?"

"Of course not!" Su Yuqing snorted coldly, and as she said this, she turned her jade hand over, revealing a crystalline, translucent orb the size of a dragon's eye in her palm.

Lu Ye focused his gaze but found nothing significant, yet, being something taken out by a Sun Blaze realm cultivator, it certainly wasn't an ordinary item.

He respectfully asked: "Senior, what is this?"

Chapter 1329 Conditions

In the grand hall, Lu Ye humbly asked for advice, feeling somewhat confused about why Su Yuqing suddenly brought out such a pearl.

Upon hearing his question, a slightly unnatural expression flashed across Su Yuqing's face: "You don't need to know what it is, just know that by consuming this pearl, you qualify to enter the Black Abyss."

Lu Ye was speechless: "Since you have such means, why make it so complicated before."

He didn't have to choose a Dao companion from the Immortal Spirit Peak, which was what was said on the surface, but if Lu Ye really had to choose, he could only choose Hai Tang.

Then he was strung along for two months; if the date of the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet wasn't approaching, he might not have taken out this pearl.

Su Yuqing didn't look at him, just stared at the pearl in her hand, saying faintly: "If so, are you willing to help our domain participate in the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet?"

"That's naturally no problem." Lu Ye readily agreed, though he thought that even if he proposed to leave after the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, he wouldn't be much obstructed. But since our domain placed so much importance on the meet, he should lend a hand if he could.

Anyway, he gained a lot from this trip to Mount Fangcun, as the four-level jade slip at Xiyuan Pavilion was of great significance to the current Nine Provinces.

After thinking for a moment, he spoke up again: "However, I do have a request."

"Speak!"

"After the Martial Arts Meet, I would trouble you, senior, to send my senior sister and me back to the location where my senior sister fell at Mount Fangcun." This way, it would save him the trouble of finding the way home, and save quite a bit of time as well.

"Okay!" Su Yuqing readily agreed, as this was not difficult for her, then shifted her focus: "You have a request, I have a request too."

"I am all ears!"

"First, do not mention the pearl to anyone! Second, I will publicly declare that you and Hai Tang are now Dao companions. Of course, this is false, only known to you, me, and Hai Tang. You can explain to your senior sister after leaving Mount Fangcun, but within Mount Fangcun, this must not be disclosed to anyone."

Lu Ye frowned, a bit unsure of Su Yuqing's intentions.

Su Yuqing didn't intend to explain much, but considering for a moment, she still said: "The Dwarf Race knows that to enter the Black Abyss, one must bear the aura of the race. When you enter the Black Abyss in the future without a Dao companion, there's no way to explain it to the outside, hence you must publicly claim you and Hai Tang as Dao companions. You don't need to take it seriously; it's just an excuse."

Lu Ye understood, nodding slightly, acknowledging, it must be said that Su Yuqing had thought of things thoroughly.

A bit worried, he said: "This won't affect Senior Sister Hai Tang's reputation, will it? What if she wants to become Dao companions with someone else later on..."

"Future matters, we discuss in the future."

Lu Ye said no more.

Su Yuqing continued: "There is one more thing I need to clarify with you before you decide whether to go to the Black Abyss. I believe Hai Tang already mentioned that the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet is not life-threatening."

"Indeed!" Hai Tang did say that, and she also mentioned that the meet is not just about pure combat, but a contention under a set of complex rules.

"In general, there is indeed no mortal danger, as it is a contention within the Dwarf Race. If there are frequent deaths, it is detrimental to the unity within the race. This is the result of the predecessors' efforts and also due to the special nature of the Black Abyss."

"Generally?" Lu Ye keenly sensed something.

"The normal situation is when our race's cultivator enters the Black Abyss, or someone who has cultivated jointly with our race and bears our race's aura enters the Black Abyss."

Lu Ye understood: "Entering the Black Abyss by taking advantage like in my case is an abnormal situation!"

Su Yuqing gently nodded: "So if you enter the Black Abyss, others will possess the Undying Body, but only you, will face real death!"

"Understood!" Lu Ye realized.

Su Yuqing said with surprise: "Even so, are you still willing to help our domain participate in the Martial Arts Meet?"

She thought, even if Lu Ye was truly willing, he would surely weigh things before giving an answer. After all, entering the Black Abyss as she planned inherently had more disadvantages than other people, and he probably wouldn't agree. To her surprise, Lu Ye immediately replied as if he hadn't thought much: understood...

This kid, what's his problem, he'd rather risk his life than choose a Dao companion on the Immortal Spirit Peak.

Lu Ye said: "Where in this world is there something completely risk-free? Like the Taichu Realm, fraught with dangers, thousands of geniuses across domains went in, only a hundred or so came out alive. The risks of the Martial Arts Meet surely can't exceed that, right?"

Honestly, although he had heard from Hai Tang that the meet posed no mortal danger, Lu Ye never took it to heart, as he inherently never considered this issue. To him, if he was truly participating, then it was to go all-out. He wouldn't overthink whether there was mortal danger or not.

Cultivators tend to overthink and thus get confused, so often those with a simple mindset have fewer obstacles on the cultivation path.

Su Yuqing was slightly taken aback, vaguely enlightened, but couldn't immediately put her finger on the exact thing.

There was a light feeling in his palm when the crystal-clear orb fell into Lu Ye's hand. He casually pinched it between two fingers, failing to notice the slight tension in Su Yuqing's expression, as though the orb held great significance for her.

Without waiting for her to speak, Lu Ye casually tossed the orb as if it were a sugar bean, consuming it whole.

Su Yuqing's expression suddenly became unnatural. Lu Ye wasn't sure what the orb even was, but she couldn't explain it in detail, so she only said, "This orb is very important to me, it's not meant for you. Remember to return it to me after the Martial Arts Meet."

"Understood!" Lu Ye responded, thinking that since he'd already swallowed it, would she not mind if he regurgitated it to return it later?

But Su Yuqing had initially said that this thing needed to be ingested.

Yet, it was apparent this orb was extremely important, considering a Sun Blaze Realm would go so far as to request its return.

"There are five days remaining until the Martial Arts Meet. Here are the various rules of the meet; take a close look and familiarize yourself with them." Having said this, Su Yuqing handed Lu Ye a jade slip.

Lu Ye accepted it, didn't immediately investigate it, and nodded, saying, "Then I shall take my leave."

"No need to return to Sleeping Dragon Valley. Since I need to publicly announce your union with Hai Tang as Dao companions, going back there would not be appropriate. Stay here for now."

Clearly, this was to create a false impression for others.

Lu Ye understood and did not refuse, following Su Yuqing's arrangement.

Soon after, Su Yuqing led Lu Ye to a secret chamber and settled him there.

Before leaving, Su Yuqing advised, "The orb you swallowed needs you to refine it with all your strength for five days; only then will you qualify to enter Black Abyss."

"I understand," Lu Ye replied earnestly.

Su Yuqing departed, and Lu Ye activated the chamber's restriction, sat cross-legged on the ground, attempting to refine the mysterious orb he'd swallowed while immersing his mind, exploring the contents of the jade slip.

A short half-day later, Lu Ye was well-acquainted with the various rules of the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet. Though Hai Tang had mentioned that the meet was a contest under specific complex rules, no matter how complicated these rules were, for someone like him at the Constellation stage, they were just something to memorize with a single glance.

Indeed, it wasn't very simple, because this meet differed from Lu Ye's expectations, emphasizing the cooperation within teams; of course, individual strength was also important.

No wonder the meet required the participation of nine people. Such a contest couldn't really be played with fewer participants.

The more he understood these rules, the more Lu Ye anticipated this Martial Arts Meet. Such an interesting event, had it not been a chance encounter, he might never have come across it again in the future.

However, for now, the situation in this main domain was at a disadvantage, as among the predetermined candidates, only Hai Tang was at the Constellation Mid-Stage, and everyone else was uniformly at the Constellation Early Stage.

This was thanks to the emergence of someone like Hai Tang in this generation. Previously, participants from the main domain at least had all been at the Constellation Early Stage because only a few Constellations were born every fifty years, with no extra choices available.

In contrast, the other two Dwarf Race troops, due to their domain's stronger foundation, produced more Constellations. While their teams might include some at the Constellation Early Stage, there's always at least one at the Constellation Mid-Stage, and occasionally a Constellation Late Stage appears!

The three-way contest was basically between the South and West troops, with the East troop merely along for the ride, which would explain why the three Sun Blazes of the main domain were willing to lower their status to act, hoping to involve Lu Ye in the affair.

To them, any chance to change the main domain's situation in the meet was worth an attempt.

Through the previous probing by that chubby cultivator, the three Sun Blazes had confirmed that although Lu Ye was only at the Constellation Early Stage, he definitely possessed Constellation Mid-Stage strength, which was an extremely rare aid for the main domain; the supposed lack of personnel might just be an excuse.

Having familiarized himself with the rules, Lu Ye simulated various possible situations and response strategies for the Martial Arts Meet.

If he hadn't agreed, it would be one thing, but since he had agreed, he naturally had to give it his all, not to mention that he found the matter quite intriguing himself.

The audio talisman he kept close suddenly reacted, and upon checking, it was a message from Nian Yuexian.

Seeing he'd been away for so long, Nian Yuexian was worried, unclear about whether he'd encountered some trouble.

Lu Ye quickly responded, informing her that he was going to participate in the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet and indicating that the situation was complex. He'd explain clearly once he was out of Mount Fangcun.

Half a day later, a message appeared on Immortal Spirit Peak.

Lu Yiye from the Nine Heavens World and Hai Tang from Immortal Spirit Peak had formed a joyous union, joined in matrimony.

Upon hearing this news, Nian Yuexian was momentarily stunned. She didn't believe Lu Ye would agree to such a matter, yet Immortal Spirit Peak had disseminated this news, making it somewhat intriguing.

However, since Lu Ye had already mentioned the complexity of the situation, Nian Yuexian realized that the matter was likely not as simple as it appeared on the surface.

She didn't send another message to inquire. Since Lu Ye had said he'd explain after leaving Mount Fangcun, there was no need to ask anything at this moment.

Chapter 1330 - Broken Apart

On the other side, after hearing about this matter, Chen Xuanhai and Woo Qimo also felt relieved, and they sent messages to Su Yuqing, praising her for handling the situation well.

Su Yuqing replied briefly, but she couldn't help feeling a bit aggrieved in her heart. Those two old guys only saw that she handled things well, but they didn't know how much she had sacrificed.

That bead wasn't something that could be casually given to others. If Lu Ye hadn't been so impervious, she wouldn't have used such methods.

She could only hope that everything would go smoothly.

In the secret room, after finishing his communication with Nian Yuexian, Lu Ye focused his mind to inspect the bead he had swallowed.

This thing must be extremely important to Su Yuqing, otherwise, someone of her Sun Blaze Realm wouldn't have handed it over without asking for it back. But Lu Ye was curious as to why it allowed him to enter the Black Abyss.

The Black Abyss is a very special place. Only the cultivators of the Dwarf Race or those with the aura of the Dwarf Race can enter. Lu Ye was of the human race and hadn't co-cultivated with any Dwarf Race member. In other words, refining this bead could imbue him with the aura of the Dwarf Race?

Upon careful inspection, Lu Ye keenly detected a trace of Su Yuqing's aura within the bead.

Originally, this shouldn't have been a matter of concern, as the bead was given to him by Su Yuqing, naturally stained with her aura.

But the more he probed, the more Lu Ye felt something was off.

This aura was more than just a surface stain. It seemed more like the condensation of Su Yuqing's own aura! It was as if the entire bead was her aura condensed through methods unknown to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye suddenly realized why refining this bead could allow him to enter the Black Abyss.

By refining the bead, it was as if he was integrating Su Yuqing's aura into himself. Although it wasn't co-cultivation, it met the conditions to enter the Black Abyss.

This aura was harmless to him, so there was no abnormal reaction from his Talent Tree.

It was a clever trick, which explained why the rules of the Undying Body in the Black Abyss didn't affect him.

The aura inside the bead was extremely concentrated, even though Lu Ye had been refining it for more than half a day, his progress was slow, causing him some concern. At this rate, when the time came, would he really be qualified to enter the Black Abyss?

Su Yuqing had previously urged him to refine it with all his might, probably worried about this very issue.

If this continued and he couldn't enter the Black Abyss at the crucial moment, it would be hard to explain.

He had to speed up the refining process!

Having made up his mind, Lu Ye immediately mobilized the power of the Talent Tree. Instantly, invisible roots extended, penetrating the bead from all directions.

In an instant, Lu Ye felt the efficiency of his refining process sharply increase.

Feeling the change, Lu Ye nodded in satisfaction. This way, in a few days, he was sure to enter the Black Abyss. Now, he had to consider what to do after entering there.

Almost at the same time Lu Ye activated the Talent Tree, Su Yuqing, who was sitting in meditation, suddenly felt a disturbance in her heart, vaguely accompanied by an ominous feeling.

She frowned and pondered for a moment, then sighed, thinking she was just too anxious because of the bead.

But now that the bead had been given to Lu Ye, it was impossible to ask for it back. As long as that kid didn't discover the bead's secrets, all would be fine.

She didn't know, however, that it was because she had urged Lu Ye to refine it with all his might that things were slowly spiraling out of control!

She had her own considerations for such an instruction because Lu Ye was only in the Constellation Early Stage. If he didn't refine it with all his might, the efficiency would be limited, and he might not meet the conditions to enter the Black Abyss.

How could she have known that Lu Ye possessed the divine object that was the Talent Tree? She told him to give it his all in refining, and that's exactly what Lu Ye did. Now, his refinement efficiency far exceeded Su Yuqing's expectations, and would ultimately lead to some unforeseen consequences.

In the secret room, Lu Ye wore a relaxed expression, even having the leisure to browse the jade slips he copied from the Xiyuan Pavilion.

However, this leisure was disrupted two days later.

A slight crack sound came from his abdomen. Although it was faint, Lu Ye heard it clearly.

He was slightly taken aback, then quickly focused his mind to investigate. What he saw shocked him!

The bead Su Yuqing had given him had developed a tiny crack!

Lu Ye was greatly alarmed!

He never fully understood the nature of this bead, but he had some guesses about its value, especially since it had to be returned.

But now, this thing was cracking!

What should he do?

Lu Ye was momentarily at a loss. He hadn't done anything to the bead other than refining it as instructed by Su Yuqing, yet this change occurred. Why?

Was it an accident, or was it supposed to happen?

After a brief contemplation, Lu Ye felt it was likely an accident. If it were meant to happen, Su Yuqing would have warned him. Since she didn't, it meant this shouldn't have happened.

But at this moment, it truly cracked open.

This thing is really too fragile, isn't it?

Lu Ye quickly restrained the power of the Talent Tree.

Yet it was to no avail; accompanied by a slight and dense crackling sound, the surface of the orb was covered in spiderweb-like cracks in the blink of an eye.

From those cracks, faintly, multicolored spirit light began to emanate.

The situation was dire!

Lu Ye's expression changed as he immediately stood up, ready to find Su Yuqing to ask about the situation, since the orb was given by her, she must know exactly what was happening.

However, the change was too swift; after those cracks appeared, it swiftly burst apart, scattering in all directions, resembling petals blooming into a flower.

With the blooming spirit light, a figure sat serenely amidst the flower's center.

Lu Ye gazed inwards, momentarily dumbstruck, because the figure sitting on the lotus throne was clearly Su Yuqing, except she was shrunken down a millionfold.

The most crucial part was, this Su Yuqing... was completely unclothed!

Lu Ye could instantly tell that this wasn't Su Yuqing herself, but rather seemed like a doppelganger, albeit a bit different from what he understood about doppelgangers. Recalling the orb earlier, he surmised that the orb should be the concentrated result of a secret technique Su Yuqing cultivated.

But given the current situation, he witnessed something he shouldn't have... Lu Ye hesitated, not knowing what to do.

Amidst this hesitation, the Su Yuqing within the flower's center suddenly dissipated like snow under the blazing sun, transforming into a trickling spirit stream that spread everywhere.

Lu Ye's face changed dramatically as he felt a volcano erupting in his abdomen, a violent and powerful energy surge made him groan, blood streaming from his mouth and nose.

He immediately sat down cross-legged, frantically harnessing the Talent Tree's power to refine the rampaging energy within his body.

Almost at the moment the orb shattered and the diminished Su Yuqing imprinted into Lu Ye's view, Su Yuqing's actual self sensed something.

Even with the restriction isolating them, they were not far apart. If the orb hadn't shattered, it wouldn't have mattered, but with the orb broken, she instantly sensed it.

Her expression changed greatly; she couldn't comprehend why this happened. In her estimation, Lu Ye, who was only at the Constellation Early Stage, couldn't possibly break the orb's exterior even if he used all his strength to refine it, let alone see the secret inside. Thus, to her, using this orb actually posed no

risk. However, her mind was somewhat troubled; Lu Ye might not know the secret within the orb, but she herself was always aware.

But for the sake of the Martial Arts Meet, she had no choice but to act this way.

Yet, the securely foolproof matter unexpectedly had a mishap.

Her silhouette blurred, quickly arriving outside Lu Ye's seclusion chamber. She intended to break the restriction and force her way in, but still retained a shred of rationality, knowing that such an action would surely alert the disciples. That would cause Immortal Spirit Peak cultivators to gather, and the scene would be uncontrollable.

With a wave of her hand, she released a Spirit Talisman that instantly formed a barrier, enveloping the surroundings, isolating inside from outside.

Only then did she strike out a palm, shattering the chamber's door and breaking the restriction.

She stepped inside and immediately saw Lu Ye, who looked like a boiled shrimp, his entire body reddened, blood Qi surging.

The last shred of her luck shattered loudly; the situation indeed unfolded into the scene she least wanted.

The way Lu Ye looked was obviously due to bearing too much energy impact all at once. His body contained far too enormous and unresolved power, he sat there bleeding from all seven orifices, even spirit light leaked from his mouth and nose!

Su Yuqing trembled with anger, she even had the impulse to kill Lu Ye with a palm.

She knew well enough that inside the orb was sealed a third of her cultivation, such violent and massive energy was absolutely not something a Constellation Early Stage could withstand. If she lost that third of energy, her entire strength would inevitably plummet, and maintaining the Sun Blaze Realm would be questionable.

At this point, she didn't even have the mind to worry about whether Lu Ye had seen the secrets inside the orb; compared to losing a third of her cultivation, everything else was trivial!

For a moment, she stood in place, staring fixedly at Lu Ye, her expression fluctuating continuously.

The instant Su Yuqing stormed in, Lu Ye sensed her presence, but at the moment, his body couldn't move, nor could he speak. He could only fully activate the Talent Tree's power, even so, it was inadequate.

The energy within the orb was far too massive and not something he could casually refine at his current realm. If his body was a small pond, the energy exploding within him now was a colossal lake; the spirit force being extremely concentrated, entirely different from his own spirit force. Despite operating the Talent Tree to devour and refine, it amounted to a drop in the ocean.

He clearly felt the intent to kill, yet was unable to react in any way.

He couldn't help but curse inwardly, "Su Yuqing, what have you done? The orb had such danger and you didn't explain it clearly to me. Recently, I've been desperately refining to avoid missing the Black Abyss Martial Arts Meet, following Su Yuqing's instructions, and it turned into such a blunder."