

Humanity 1391

Chapter 1391 - Unique Fishing Techniques

Cao Xiang was telling the truth, but not the whole truth.

At least one thing Lu Ye knew was that if the Merchants Guild couldn't sell the spirit treasures they acquired, they would definitely melt them down to extract useful materials. Therefore, there was no way they would actually lose money; at most, it would be a break-even situation.

After bargaining with Cao Xiang for a while, he finally got an extra five hundred jades.

Handing over the two thousand jades for the bait pills, Lu Ye headed straight for the flea market, arriving at the stall selling Dragon Breath Crystals.

It was still the same vendor. Seeing Lu Ye return so quickly to purchase more Dragon Breath Crystals, he was naturally pleased and sold Lu Ye fifteen Dragon Breath Crystals at the old price.

Having left the flea market, Lu Ye only had two hundred jades left as a reserve!

But he had bought all that he needed, and it was time to make his move.

However, Lu Ye needed to carefully consider how to act without leaving any telltale signs.

While urging the power of the Talent Tree to devour the Dragon Breath Crystals, he soared towards Angling Island.

The reason anglers were concentrated around Angling Island and its surroundings was obvious: the quantity of White Spirits there was the highest, with fewer in other locations.

In the past, there were anglers who didn't believe in this and tried other places, but they ended up with no catch and rarely even saw fish nibbling on the bait.

Over time, any experienced angler would no longer try fruitless spots, which led to the current situation where anglers gathered densely around Angling Island.

Piao Ke had mentioned this to Lu Ye earlier. Otherwise, he wouldn't have known, and might have gone to an uninhabited place to fish. His plan required that what he intended to do should not be seen by others.

Now, with no other choice, he could only head to Angling Island.

After speeding down the way for nearly two days, he returned to Angling Island.

Lu Ye wasn't planning to crowd with Piao Ke again. From his observations, all the anglers here silently adhered to an unwritten rule of keeping a hundred-zhang distance from one another. Previously, with no fishing experience, Piao Ke had kindly guided him to stay within ten zhang of himself. Now, with a bit of experience gained, it would be inappropriate to squeeze in with others!

As he looked around for a suitable spot, Piao Ke's voice echoed in his ear: "Brother Taibai, head that way!"

Turning toward Piao Ke, Lu Ye saw him pointing in a direction.

"Two Shichens ago, someone left for some matter. There should be a spot there!" Piao Ke explained.

Lu Ye thanked him, flew in that direction, and shortly found a suitable location. Delighted, he settled down, took out his fishing gear, hooked up a bait pill, and cast it into the water.

After a while, sensing movement on the fishing line, Lu Ye attempted to lift the rod but ended up scaring away the nibbling fish, catching nothing.

Several times over, the situation repeated as before: either there was no catch, or the fish escaped during the struggle.

The more he fished, the more Lu Ye realized the difficulty of catching a White Spirit.

Especially during the struggle after hooking the fish, it was truly a battle of wits and reflexes. When the fish exerted force, the cultivator had to release tension; otherwise, the line might snap. When the fish stopped exerting force, the cultivator had to apply pressure and also control the force appropriately.

Only by gradually leading the fish out of the water this way would there be a chance to reel it in.

The best Lu Ye could manage at this point was ensuring the line didn't snap, but he was unquestionably inexperienced in leading the fish, something that required time to develop proficiency.

After several Shichens, one bait pill was completely used up. Lu Ye felt the time was ripe to carry out his plan.

He hadn't spent all those spirit jades just to become a luck-dependent angler; otherwise, all his efforts would be in vain.

Dozens of miles away, on a reef, a cold-faced middle-aged man sitting cross-legged looked around. Confirming no one was watching him, he dived into the sea.

The middle-aged man was, of course, Lu Ye himself, and this was his true form!

The one heading towards Angling Island was the doppelganger.

The different appearance was due to activating the Thousand Faces Spirit Runes.

This arrangement was made with the understanding that once in the sea, the fuel consumption of the Talent Tree would be immense, and the doppelganger couldn't sustain it for long. Only the true form could withstand it.

Diving a hundred zhang underwater to a depth where no traces could be seen from above, he headed towards the doppelganger's location.

The true form and the doppelganger could sense each other, making it easy for the true form to reach the area in front of the doppelganger's fishing line and bait underwater.

Initially, he intended to activate the Concealment Spirit Runes for convenience, but with the chaotic sea energy fiercely invading his body, he couldn't form the spirit runes on the surface.

Having no choice, he stood still, positioned a foot in front of the baited hook.

I am a piece of wood!

Before he arrived, there were a few White Spirits around the bait pill, occasionally nibbling on it, but they scattered when he approached.

As he stood still, slowly, more White Spirits were attracted by the scent of the bait pill and gathered around. Lu Ye concentrated and watched, clearly observing how these creatures fed on the bait and seeing the appearance of the White Spirits clearly.

The White Spirit he had obtained before had its head smashed to pieces by his punch, so he wasn't really sure what a White Spirit specifically looked like.

Looking at it now, the White Spirit's head was pointed and long, which made its mouth look like an arrow, and it seemed to have fine barghest-like teeth in its mouth, allowing it to swiftly bite off a chunk as it passed by the bait pill.

Lu Ye held his breath, waiting for the right moment.

Until at one moment, a White Spirit stopped in front of the bait pill, opening its pointed mouth, appearing as if it was about to swallow the bait pill in one gulp.

Lu Ye's hand moved like lightning, he inserted two fingers and pinched the fish's body.

The White Spirit struggled frantically, its violent movements scared off the other White Spirits, but once caught by Lu Ye, it couldn't easily escape.

His other hand reached out and grabbed it tightly.

Success!

This White Spirit was slightly larger than the one whose head he had previously smashed to bits. According to the information provided by Qiu Pingyang, this thing could easily sell for five thousand spirit jade!

The initial investment basically paid off right away.

However, Lu Ye now faced two choices: one was to directly store this White Spirit and then seek out buyers to sell it. This thing wasn't hard to sell, whether to the All Phenomena Merchants Guild or other shops, or even at the flea market; as long as it's put out there, someone is bound to buy it, and it won't be subject to price suppression because this thing is in a state of demand exceeding supply.

If Lu Ye was only making a one-time deal, this choice would undoubtedly be more convenient, without needing much consideration.

But what he's thinking is that there will be more White Spirits to sell in the future. If someone with intentions took notice of him, he wouldn't be able to explain the source of the White Spirits.

He certainly couldn't tell people that he dived into the sea to catch them...

So he needs a cover!

Lu Ye bought fishing gear and fishes here as a cover.

The White Spirit in his hand struggled fiercely; Lu Ye raised his hand, curled his middle finger, and flicked the fish's head gently, one flick after another...

Until the White Spirit was no longer struggling so much, only then did he remove the bait pill from the fishhook and hung the White Spirit onto it.

By the shore, the doppelganger started to raise the fishing rod, the fishing line was taut, clearly feeling the fish was struggling, and the anglers on both sides, and even the cultivators observing nearby, gathered their gazes over.

But everyone just watched, because on this Angling Island, with so many people fishing together, the frequency of catching fish was still high, but merely catching the fish was useless. The key was to reel it in.

Generally speaking, out of hundreds of catches, not even one might successfully yield harvest.

So everyone was used to it.

But as time passed, a surprising scene unfolded. The fish on Lu Ye's side hadn't gotten off the hook, until at one moment, a lustrous white emerged from below the sea, then someone exclaimed, "Surfaced, surfaced!"

The doppelganger had been prepared with a landing net long ago, almost as soon as the lustrous white appeared, the quick eyes and fast hands scooped it with the net.

The weight in his hand sank, and when he retracted the landing net, there was notably a lively White Spirit inside!

Lu Ye maintained a calm expression, stepped forward and removed the fishhook from the White Spirit's mouth.

Seven or eight figures already flashed over, surrounding him, these were exactly some of the cultivators who had been watching here earlier.

Seeing this situation, Lu Ye wasn't panicked, because during a previous chat with Piao Ke, he learned about some happenings here.

The cultivators watching around this Angling Island weren't just those who were idle looking for fun or preparing to enter this field, but also some from major forces squatting here specially responsible for purchasing the freshly caught White Spirits.

The few gathered around here were undoubtedly those responsible for this task from various major forces.

Among them, an elder cupped his fists at Lu Ye, smiling, "This Fellow Daoist looks unfamiliar, are you new here?"

Lu Ye nodded, he couldn't hide this from the people squatting here year-round. Previously, when Lu Ye wandered over, he had met some of them.

"Is this fish for sale?" the elder asked again.

"For sale!"

The elder nodded, said no more, and looked at the White Spirit in Lu Ye's hand, "This fish, I'll offer four thousand six hundred jade, Fellow Daoist, what do you think?"

"Not suitable!" Lu Ye looked at the others, this old guy was clearly trying to bully him for being new without understanding the rules, and four thousand six hundred jade was indeed a bit low.

The elder laughed, "So someone has guided Fellow Daoist, if that's the case, let's go by the rules then."

The so-called rules meant a live auction; these major forces responsible for purchasing fresh White Spirits here weren't harmonious altogether. Each time a White Spirit was caught and put on sale, they would each offer a price, highest price wins.

Chapter 1392 - Turbulent Fishing Conditions

These people have been trading White Spirits here for years, so their price estimates for this item are quite precise, ensuring that the price is usually fair.

And if luck is on your side, you might even sell it for a higher price than usual, like Qiu Pingyang before. When he needed to host distinguished guests, he was in urgent need of a White Spirit. If he had participated in the auction then, he would have definitely offered a higher price.

Seven or eight people chimed in one after another, and the price of the White Spirit kept rising steadily, until finally, someone offered 5,300 jade, marking the end of the auction.

Lu Ye handed the White Spirit over to that person and received 5,300 jade, concluding the transaction.

There's no need to worry about losses, because auctions like this rarely result in losses. Plus, it saves the trouble of finding a buyer yourself, even though this item sells well. Returning to All Phenomena Island would take Lu Ye quite some time.

The seven or eight people gathered nearby dispersed, waiting for other opportunities. The cultivator who obtained the White Spirit called over a ferryboat and quickly left, clearly intending to process it soon. The fresher the White Spirit, the tastier it is, and its value for elixir creation increases. Although it won't spoil in a storage ring, it's still best not to keep it too long.

So generally, once a White Spirit is out of the water, it will either be eaten or made into an elixir within two or three days. No one keeps it for any longer.

Lu Ye tidied his fishing gear and reattached a bait pill to the hook.

A sarcastic voice came from a hundred feet to the left: "A newbie's luck sure is amazing!"

In the angler's community, there's an odd legend: newbies always have great luck and usually make a catch easily. Of course, it's not always true. Take that specter from the Specter Race, for instance—after

getting into this line on a whim, she never felt the joy of fishing even until bankruptcy. She only experienced boundless anxiety, pain, regret, and remorse...

Lu Ye had only been here for less than half a day and already made a catch. To the veteran anglers, what else could it be but luck?

Cast the line into the water, and the main body quickly retrieves the bait pill from underwater, leaving an empty hook, and swiftly swims away.

Having caught one fish already, it would be unwise to catch a second one in a short time, so the main body couldn't stay underwater, taking the bait pill with it to avoid unnecessary waste.

This thing is worth a hundred jade, after all.

Dozens of miles away, the main body returned. As it headed out to sea, someone passed by nearby, but they didn't find it strange. Cultivators are numerous in the All Phenomena Ocean, and some are curious about the deep sea. As long as they don't linger, there's generally no problem.

Holding a piece of spirit jade in each hand, Lu Ye sat down, calming his mind for cultivation while also working on the Defense Spirit Runes he hadn't finished before.

This is quite good.

When the main body remained in the sea, it was equivalent to passive cultivation, and the efficiency was very high. The only cost was the consumption of the Talent Tree's resources.

Returning to this reef, he continued cultivating. This way, his cultivation not only didn't lag but was even faster than normal.

The doppelganger fished over there, and when the time was right, it could catch one, meaning spirit jade would never run out!

Lu Ye suddenly realized that the All Phenomena Ocean is truly a great place!

But he knew he couldn't stay this comfortable forever.

No one is foolish, especially not in the cultivator community, where each might have lived countless years. Each is as sharp as a tack. Even if he catches a White Spirit every few days, over time, this will inevitably draw attention. It doesn't make sense for so many anglers to fish, and only Li Taibai has consistent catches.

So Lu Ye planned to both fish and catch, occasionally capturing a few White Spirits and not putting them on the hook, but instead having the main body change appearance and take them back to All Phenomena Island to sell. This plan would be more sustainable and discreet.

In the days that followed, without the help of the main body, the doppelganger indeed got no catches, and even broke a set of fishing lines, suffering significant losses.

Of the three sets of fishing lines the specter sold him, only one set remained!

Feeling the time was right, the main body went into action once again.

Just like last time, it lurked beside a hook with a bait pill, waiting for the right moment to strike, capturing a White Spirit, and stunning it a few times so it wasn't as lively, making it easier to reel in.

The whole process went smoothly. When Lu Ye's second White Spirit emerged from the water after several days, the anglers on both sides were dumbfounded.

They had been struggling here for over ten days, with only one fish each to barely break even, while Lu Ye, in just a few days, had caught two.

Could a newbie's luck really be this good?

The cultivators responsible for purchasing White Spirits gathered around again. This time, the White Spirit was much larger than the last, selling for nearly 6,000 jade.

If the previous one only broke even, then this one was pure profit.

In just a few days, earning over 6,000 jade was undeniably satisfying for a solitary person like Lu Ye.

Several days later, when Lu Ye harvested his third White Spirit and sold it for over 5,000 jade, the anglers on both sides could no longer sit still.

Watching others reap rewards was quite vexing.

The anglers on both sides seemed to know each other and exchanged words via Mental Consciousness, after which Lu Ye saw them moving together toward his position from the left and right.

Soon, with a tacit understanding, they cast their lines into the water, ten feet away from Lu Ye.

The one on the left was the previously sarcastic young man with a large, prominent mole beside his nose, and the one on the right appeared to be an elder around fifty years old.

Noticing Lu Ye's gaze, the young man couldn't even bother acknowledging Lu Ye, acting oblivious.

The old man chuckled and said, "Let's fish together, let's fish together. Fellow Daoist, it seems like the fish situation on your side is thriving; you can't catch them all by yourself."

This feels a bit shameless...

Everyone is spaced a hundred feet apart, and it's not like these two haven't hooked any fish—they just can't pull them up. There's no reason for them to crowd me.

Lu Ye thought it was probably envy and frustration at play. The way these two were acting was definitely bullying towards him, the newcomer.

If it were combat, Lu Ye wouldn't hesitate; he'd just swing his blade.

But since everyone was just fishing, fighting would ruin the mood and likely provoke anger from others.

The main point was these two probably had other acquaintances. If Lu Ye really fought them, he'd be at a disadvantage. He only knew Piao Ke, a casual acquaintance, and couldn't expect him to jump in to help.

In the end, the hundred-foot distance was just an unspoken rule; no one was required to follow it.

Lu Ye glanced at the old man and then looked away without saying much.

The old man and the young man with a mole exchanged a knowing look, smiling slightly with a sense of smugness.

Deep under the sea, the original body shifted, slowly searching for the location of the old man's bait pill...

Honestly, if the old man weren't so close to the doppelganger, it wouldn't be easy for the original body to find his bait pill. The sea water of the All Phenomena Ocean suppressed Mental Consciousness too much. A Constellation Mid-Stage like Lu Ye could only extend his Mental Consciousness three inches away from his body, making it practically useless underwater.

The depths of the ocean were also pitch dark. The original body could easily find the doppelganger's bait pill location because they had a connection, and the doppelganger could provide accurate guidance.

If they were truly a hundred feet apart, Lu Ye would most likely have to rely on luck to find someone else's bait pill.

But since they were so close, it was much easier to locate it.

After finding the old man's bait pill, the original body gently pinched it and then suddenly exerted force.

The old man immediately sensed something. His fishing skills were undoubtedly exceptional; he raised the pole slightly without using much force at all.

Yet, the moment the fishing line went taut, his expression changed. Before he could adjust, the line snapped.

Staring at the broken line, the old man wasn't upset; instead, he was exhilarated: "A big catch!"

Only a big catch would tug so powerfully. If he managed to reel it in, it would easily sell for over ten thousand spirit jade, maybe even more.

He quickly took out another set of fishing lines, baited it again, and cast it into the water.

The original body had already moved to the other side, found the bait pill of the young man with a mole, and similarly grabbed and yanked it.

As a result, the young man with a mole faced the same treatment as the old man!

His expression also became excited, secretly imagining the joy of landing a big fish.

For the next half-day, the old man and the young man with a mole kept raising their poles, but invariably, the bait pills would either go missing, or the fishing lines would break.

Most of the time, it was the bait pills that went missing...

The main reason was that Lu Ye didn't know how many sets of fishing lines they had, so he couldn't snap too many. Otherwise, if they run out of lines and stopped fishing, he wouldn't be able to get more bait pills.

These experiences only made the old man and the young man with a mole more convinced that they encountered a big catch, as ordinary White Spirits nibbled cautiously on bait.

Only those kinds of unusually large catches would gulp down the bait whole, given their large mouths.

But as time passed, their expressions shifted from excitement and anticipation to disappointment and despair...

Until a certain moment, the old man looked at the empty hook, full of melancholy: "Why is today's fish activity so aggressive?"

He had exhausted all the bait pills he brought. In less than two hours, he had lost over three thousand spirit jade.

This was something he had never encountered in his decades of fishing.

He looked at Lu Ye with curiosity: "Little friend, haven't you had any action on your side?"

He and the young man with a mole had surrounded Lu Ye, and while the two of them continually raised their poles, Lu Ye's side was unusually calm, with not even a nibble, which was clearly suspicious.

Lu Ye lightly lifted his rod, revealing an empty hook, and said nonchalantly, "I was so preoccupied with my thoughts that I forgot to bait it."

The old man blinked, unsure if Lu Ye was telling the truth or lying. But judging by his and the young man's experiences, Lu Ye not baiting his hook undoubtedly spared him from a disaster, at least avoiding unnecessary loss.

The old man left in low spirits; he needed to return to All Phenomena Island to buy more bait pills.

The young man with a mole persisted for a bit longer but inevitably met the same fate as the old man. Before leaving, he was visibly furious!

For anglers, nothing is more frustrating than knowing there's a big catch, yet somehow being unable to reel it in!

Chapter 1393 - Sun Blaze Falls

Half a year flashed by.

In the circle of anglers, Lu Ye gradually became known, because on average, he could reel in a catch almost every few days.

This was rare among anglers and couldn't simply be attributed to luck. In the eyes of other anglers, Lu Ye had undoubtedly mastered the essence of angling, surpassing his predecessors. In terms of angling skills alone, he had left them far behind.

There were indeed a few others as skilled at angling as Lu Ye in the circle, all of whom had made their fortunes through angling to support their cultivation needs.

Yet, by comparison, these individuals had been cultivating this field for several decades or even centuries. For someone like Lu Ye, a young novice angler, it was truly a rarity.

This situation was naturally by Lu Ye's design. Otherwise, he could catch as many White Spirits as he wanted, but that would inevitably attract envy.

Now the situation was quite favorable; with several elders ahead, although Lu Ye's gains made others envious, they were not overly conspicuous.

Besides the White Spirits caught through angling, Lu Ye would occasionally grab one directly and have his true self take it back to All Phenomena Island to sell. The selling price was not much different from auctioning it on the island, just requiring more time for the round trip.

Moreover, nowadays he didn't need to fly himself. There were plenty of ferryboats on the All Phenomena Ocean. He could call one up at will, only needing to pay a few spirit jades.

The buyers of his fish varied. Sometimes, Lu Ye would take the fish to the All Phenomena Merchants Guild to sell. Other times, he'd randomly choose a shop to walk into and ask if they purchased fish. Generally speaking, those capable of setting up shop on All Phenomena Island would not refuse his sale.

He seldom went to the flea market, that place was bustling with a complex crowd, many not affluent. The hustle and bustle made it unsuitable for selling.

Combining fishing and grabbing fish, Lu Ye managed to secure at least one White Spirit every three days. Over the past half-year, the number of spirit jades passing through his hands totaled no less than three hundred thousand.

For a Constellation Mid-Stage cultivator, three hundred thousand spirit jades was an unimaginably vast fortune, more than enough to ensure he had no worries before advancing to the Moon Jade stage if spent solely on cultivation.

However, in reality, the spirit jades didn't stay in Lu Ye's pocket for long. Basically, every time he obtained some jades, he would go and buy Dragon Breath Crystals or similar fire-type treasures to replenish the fuel reserve for the Talent Tree.

Whether grabbing fish or angling, the true self needed to delve deep into the All Phenomena Ocean, with each stay not being short, which led to massive fuel consumption for the Talent Tree.

In Lu Ye's storage ring, the spirit jades generally maintained a state of just one thousand.

Only once did he save up over thirty thousand spirit jades and bought a small starboat.

For a Constellation, if capable, equipping a starboat was necessary for travel convenience. However, this was very expensive. Without any background, it was difficult for a Constellation to amass enough capital just by relying on themselves to search for spirit jades.

It seemed like he had labored hard for half a year without any substantial harvest, but in reality, his cultivation progress over these six months was considerable. Each deep dive into the All Phenomena Ocean amounted to a passive fast-paced cultivation.

For a cultivator, what could be more important than cultivation?

Though with the same amount of spirit jades, normal cultivation would enhance one's cultivation more than delving into the ocean, it consumed many times more time.

Lu Ye's approach was equivalent to spending spirit jades to buy time, allowing him to ascend to the Constellation Late Stage faster than other cultivators. However, the spirit jades spent might be ten times or even several tens of times more than others.

But as long as there were White Spirits to fish for, none of this was a problem. In the All Phenomena Ocean, White Spirits were inexhaustible. Even if Lu Ye caught as much as Sun Blaze here, so what?

No one came asking him for angling techniques; such matters were one's own secrets and also a way to make a living, with no reason to share with others.

It was those stationed here from various significant forces that had shown some intent to recruit him.

For the major forces behind these cultivators, White Spirits had a precious rarity, and they could absorb as many as available. On Angling Island, not only were there those stationed to buy fish, but many were their people specifically responsible for angling.

If they could recruit Lu Ye, they would have a stable channel for acquiring White Spirits in the future.

Such recruitment was quite relaxed; if Lu Ye accepted, not only could he receive a certain number of spirit jades monthly as a salary, but the White Spirits he caught could also be purchased at market price, though only by the force recruiting him.

Essentially, he would become that force's exclusive angler.

Naturally, Lu Ye declined such recruitment; cultivators dreaded restriction, and no matter how relaxed, restriction was still restriction, especially when he didn't worry about spirit jades.

Over the course of half a year, Lu Ye got to know quite a few anglers, though they were mostly just nodding acquaintances. He became slowly familiar mainly with Piao Ke.

Occasionally, when Lu Ye made an ostentatious trip to All Phenomena Island to buy a bait pill, this guy would help claim a fishing spot for him, waiting for Lu Ye's return.

He was also an old angler, generous in lifestyle, and many anglers had benefited from his generosity, so others gave him that little bit of respect.

On this day, while the doppelganger was fishing with Piao Ke separated by a hundred meters, a beautiful female cultivator passed by, and unsurprisingly, Piao Ke's gaze clung to her like a leech, provoking a fierce glare from the female cultivator.

Piao Ke wasn't embarrassed; instead, he gave the female cultivator a gentle smile.

As he explained it, "In the face of the vast waters, others take just one sip, but I always scoop up a ladle..."

Yet to be fair, this guy was handsome, with a likable smile and notable cultivation, which attracted quite a few female cultivators. Often, Piao Ke would interrupt a fishing session to tell Lu Ye there was something he needed to take care of, leaving for at most half a day and returning refreshed.

As for what others went to do, Lu Ye didn't know.

Over here, Piao Ke was habitually flirting with the female cultivators passing by, while beneath the sea surface, his true self had already caught a White Spirit and was attaching it to Piao Ke's fishhook.

When he first met this guy by chance, he had explained many fishing commonalities to him and even helped him buy fishing gear at a lower price, also gifting him two bait pills. Lu Ye hadn't forgotten this favor.

So over the past half year, Lu Ye would occasionally "help" him catch a fish, anyway, his true self intended to hang fish on the doppelganger's side; it was just a convenient thing.

Watching the beautiful female cultivator leave reluctantly, suddenly, a violent spirit force fluctuation came from a distance.

Piao Ke's hand shook, and the fishing line snapped...

He couldn't care less about the fishing line; he flew into the sky, looking towards the source of the commotion.

Lu Ye also flew up, standing beside him to look in that direction.

The distance was too far to see any specific situation, only knowing that a strong person was at work over there!

"Sun Blaze!" Piao Ke's face was astonished, "It's a Sun Blaze taking action!"

On the All Phenomena Ocean, such fights are very common, but they are basically limited to the Moon Jade level and below. At least, since Lu Ye came here more than half a year ago, he had never seen a Sun Blaze make a move, nor even met a strong person from the Sun Blaze Realm.

Because there are only two or three Sun Blaze powerhouses from the home galaxy stationed permanently in the entire All Phenomena Ocean, Sun Blaze powerhouses from other star systems are not allowed to stay here for long periods, and if they pass by, they leave quickly.

Beneath the Sun Blaze, there are also strict limits on the number of Moon Jade cultivators from various star systems allowed to come here. This is a means for the All Phenomena Galaxy to manage the All Phenomena Ocean, and it's also a rule implicitly accepted by the four galaxies.

Strong persons from the four galaxies come here to occupy the Spirit Island, dividing up resources that should belong to the All Phenomena Galaxy, which is not quite in agreement with the principle of fairness. So even if the rules on the All Phenomena Ocean side are somewhat unreasonable, they won't easily break them; instead, they even help maintain them.

If everyone follows the rules, then everyone benefits, but if someone breaks the rules, it will only provoke conflict among the star systems, and no one will gain anything.

So, feeling the Sun Blaze powerhouse making a move at this moment, all the cultivators on Angling Island were incredibly amazed, having no idea what was going on.

Lu Ye had been here for a short time, but others had been here for many years, and in their memory, there had never been a precedent for a Sun Blaze making a move in the All Phenomena Ocean.

Suddenly, from that direction came a sharp shout: "Bold!"

Another voice shouted: "Stop at once!"

Soon, even more intense sounds of fighting broke out, and every cultivator on Angling Island had an expression of grave seriousness.

If at first they only sensed the traces of one Sun Blaze making a move, now there were not just one, but three or four...

The origin of the first Sun Blaze was unknown, but the ones who acted afterwards were definitely Sun Blaze from the All Phenomena Galaxy. They were stationed here, noticed the anomaly, and naturally had to act.

During the confrontation, the originally calm sea surface rippled, then transformed into waves crashing out from the direction of the confrontation, showing how fierce Yu Bo was.

All of a sudden, the aura of a strong person abruptly disappeared.

Piao Ke's eyes nearly popped out, and Lu Ye also narrowed his eyes. They turned their heads to look at each other, both seeing the shock in each other's eyes.

If they sensed correctly, a Sun Blaze... had fallen!

In other words, during the engagement just now, a Sun Blaze had been killed.

How long has it been? From the time the two sides started fighting over there until now, it's only been a few dozen breaths, and a Sun Blaze has died. However, it's unclear whether it was the troublemaker who made the first move or the home galaxy's Sun Blaze stationed at All Phenomena Island.

The aftermath of the confrontation hadn't ended yet.

Piao Ke couldn't help but shrink his neck: "The sky is falling!"

It's confirmed that the fallen one was from the All Phenomena Galaxy's Sun Blaze because if it were the troublemaker who had fallen, the confrontation should be over by now.

Since the fighting was still ongoing, it meant that the troublemaker hadn't been killed.

This being the All Phenomena Galaxy and this place being the All Phenomena Ocean, resulting in their own Sun Blaze being killed, is akin to getting slapped on your own doorstep; how can the All Phenomena Galaxy let go of this lightly?

If it were only a Constellation and Moon Jade that had died, it wouldn't have too far-reaching an impact, but since it was a Sun Blaze, it carries an entirely different meaning.

"Hahaha, the All Phenomena Galaxy is only so much!" An old, hearty laugh suddenly came from the direction of the confrontation, getting closer, "Remember this, this is only the interest!"

"Not good!" Piao Ke exclaimed in a low voice, "They're coming toward us!"

As soon as the words fell, from the corner of his eye, he noticed Lu Ye already descending downward, cursing under his breath at Li Taibai's lack of loyalty, hurriedly heading down as well.

Chapter 1394 - Fishing Off-Season

The Constellations reacted rather swiftly; just as they sensed the Sun Blaze's confrontation, everyone flew into the air to watch, but now realizing something was amiss, they rapidly descended like dumplings to avoid being caught in the crossfire and being casually slain.

If they were casually slain, there would be no place to reason with.

As Piao Ke descended, Lu Ye had already launched array banners in all directions, driven by spirit force, constructing spirit runes, forming an array in an instant!

Piao Ke, without hesitation, squeezed beside Lu Ye, and as Lu Ye set up the array, he also summoned a protective spirit treasure, casting it over the surroundings, and immediately, a layer of light curtain flowed.

The others were employing various methods to protect themselves.

A blazing aura rapidly swept over from the direction of the previous confrontation, moving so fast that even the ferryboat couldn't compare.

In an instant, a shadow flew over Angling Island, not employing any methods, yet its body emitted a violent aura that permeated the surroundings, compressing the Void. The light curtain structured by Piao Ke's protective spirit treasure and Lu Ye's protective array groaned under tremendous pressure, creaking!

Lu Ye looked up to see who exactly was causing trouble over the All Phenomena Ocean, and even killed a Sun Blaze of this home galaxy!

In a fleeting glance, he vaguely saw an old man with a pale face and wild hair and beard.

The old man swiftly flashed and flew over Angling Island, quickly departing!

Two breaths later, two figures flew past, one after another, clearly Sun Blazes of this home galaxy chasing after him, not knowing if they could catch up.

The entire Angling Island fell silent, everyone was stunned.

After a long time, they slowly came back to their senses. Lu Ye withdrew the big array, and Piao Ke retracted his spirit treasure, both revealing lingering fear.

Fortunately, they reacted quickly and immediately took measures when they realized something was wrong; otherwise, the overwhelming aura from the three Sun Blazes flying overhead could have injured the two of them.

"One against three, and even killed one Sun Blaze, what is this person's origin?" Piao Ke was full of shock, yet amidst the shock, there was some awe.

The situation was evident; over the All Phenomena Ocean, the home galaxy had three Sun Blazes guarding, and the troublemaker killed one, then was pursued by the remaining two.

Being all Sun Blazes, even if their cultivation varied, achieving such results in this environment is extremely challenging.

Lu Ye had no way of knowing the person's origin; matters at the Sun Blaze level were beyond what a Constellation like him could investigate, and he also lacked channels to do so.

However, from what the old man's previous words implied, it was clearly a conflict with the All Phenomena Galaxy. In the stellar space, grudges are avenged, resentments are settled; fighting and killing are all too normal.

What was abnormal was this was a confrontation at the Sun Blaze level, and it happened in the All Phenomena Ocean.

Lu Ye thought this matter would surely stir some turmoil, but to his surprise, after a Sun Blaze from the home galaxy was killed, the All Phenomena Galaxy did not take any outrageous actions, nor did they sense any tracing activity.

The whole All Phenomena Ocean was as it was before.

However, this matter clearly couldn't just end like this; Lu Ye guessed the All Phenomena Galaxy must be exerting strength secretly.

Piao Ke even speculated that the killer had already been eliminated by the All Phenomena Galaxy, hence the lack of movement.

Lu Ye believed this wasn't the case because if the troublemaker were killed, the All Phenomena Galaxy would surely publicize it widely to save face, but since they didn't, it showed the troublemaker was still alive and well.

Ultimately, these matters were too high-level for someone like him, with no foundation and no channels, to understand.

He continued to linger on Angling Island.

No news came from Cao Xiang, and although the All Phenomena Merchants Guild had comprehensive intelligence, it wasn't easy to gather information unless intersecting with a specific galaxy.

Doppelganger angling, while his true self sat meditating on some reef island, alternating between cultivating and deriving spirit patterns.

Over six months, a new protective spirit rune based on the Sacred Guard had taken shape, meeting Lu Ye's needs overall, enough to support Constellation Realm confrontations.

Lu Ye named it the Sacred Guard!

This was the third new spirit rune he derived himself on the Path of Spirit Runes, using the Talent Tree, besides the Void and Divine Sharp Edge.

Next, he planned to derive the As-Close-As-Siblings!

The reason for choosing this spirit rune is naturally due to the array disc. Before reaching Constellation Realm, the As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc had played a massive role, whether in the Insect Race secret realm blood battle or the expedition to the Blood Refinement World, the array disc had significantly reduced the losses for the Nine Provinces.

But upon reaching Constellation Realm, the scope for maneuverability expanded, and the effect of the array disc was invisibly weakened, except in ground battles like at Black Abyss, guarding the camp. In Constellation-level confrontations, the existing As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc had become a hindrance.

Currently, the Nine Provinces lack high-end combat power, being entirely at Constellation Early Stage. Even though Lu Ye left behind a few purple talismans and some Jade Talismans, how many crises can they withstand?

Expecting these Constellation Early Stage cultivators to ascend to Moon Jade is unknown how many years it would take.

Therefore, the most significant weakness of the Nine Provinces at present is the lack of the ability to compete with strong individuals! Not to mention confronting Sun Blaze, they need at least the capital to confront Moon Jade.

The As-Close-As-Siblings Array Disc is a hope, provided that Lu Ye can derive a larger coverage of the As-Close-As-Siblings Spirit Runes to meet the teleportation needs during combat at the Constellation Realm.

Given his current attainments in the Path of Spirit Runes, coupled with several previous successful experiences, Lu Ye felt it wouldn't be difficult, just that it would take some time.

In fact, he already had some insights into this new As-Close-As-Siblings Spirit Rune and could make successful derivations within a few months, as he now had ample time to do so.

Two months later, on Angling Island, Lu Ye stood with his rod, furrowing his brows.

Something seemed amiss; ordinarily, while fishing here, no matter what spot he chose, at most half an hour would pass before fish took the bait, but today, several hours had passed with not even a nibble.

The main body swam for a while underwater without seeing any trace of the White Spirit.

Yesterday was not like this; just yesterday, Lu Ye had caught a White Spirit and sold it.

It was as if overnight, the White Spirit vanished without a trace!

What puzzled Lu Ye further was that the anglers started to pack up, shaking their heads in disappointment, and flew away from Angling Island.

Piao Ke was not here, likely flirting with some female cultivator elsewhere.

Lu Ye sent a message to inquire about the situation, and Piao Ke responded shortly after.

"It seems the fishing off-season has arrived."

"What is that?" Lu Ye felt a bad omen.

"In the mundane ocean, fish move with the current, migrating from one spot to another during specific seasons. Although the White Spirit isn't an ordinary fish, it has similar traits and collectively disappears for a period every few years, which is known as the fishing off-season!"

Lu Ye was utterly flabbergasted: "Where have they gone?"

"No one knows. During previous off-seasons, anglers searched everywhere for their tracks but found nothing, leading to the speculation that during the off-season, they head to the deep sea."

"How long until they return?" Lu Ye was counting on them for cultivation, yet the good days suddenly ended?

"It's hard to say; sometimes they return in a few months, sometimes it takes years, even decades. I'm busy now but will chat with you later!"

After ending the communication with Piao Ke, Lu Ye pondered for a long time.

He had thought he could leisurely cultivate, advancing to the Late Stage, then Moon Jade, and then Sun Blaze here in the All Phenomena Ocean...

In the rich resource environment of the All Phenomena Ocean, his special fishing techniques could easily meet his needs.

But as fate would have it, they suddenly entered the so-called fishing off-season.

It wasn't Piao Ke's fault for not telling him beforehand, since the off-season cannot be predicted. Even its duration varies, and before the collective disappearance of the White Spirit, no one knows when it will start; only seasoned anglers can judge by certain signs when it arrives.

Those disappointed anglers packing up and leaving are undoubtedly seasoned anglers, aware that the off-season has arrived, hence not wasting their efforts here.

Not giving up yet, Lu Ye searched underwater, even deepening over a thousand miles, but he saw no White Spirit, not even a Spectral Shadow.

He dared not delve deeper; a thousand miles may be insignificant in stellar space to a Constellation, but it is different in the deep sea.

Especially in the All Phenomena Ocean where the Talent Tree consumes a lot of fuel. Now unable to fish, he could no longer freely amass wealth to purchase fire attribute treasures in the future.

The anglers on Angling Island had all left, even the cultivators from various major powers who stood vigil to buy fish had departed, leaving Lu Ye alone, appearing solitary.

The main body returned, and with the doppelganger withdrawn, he felt utterly confused.

Despite the vastness of the All Phenomena Ocean, Lu Ye didn't know where to go.

A moment later, Lu Ye's expression became determined.

No matter what, the first thing is to make money!

He only had a thousand spirit jade prepared for conventional use, and at his current cultivation speed, it would be exhausted in just over two months. Without sufficient spirit jade, he couldn't meet his cultivation needs.

In other star systems, Lu Ye could delve into stellar space to find spirit jade to replenish his consumption.

But here in the All Phenomena Galaxy, with visitors from all directions and cultivators coming and going throughout, any spirit jade birthed would be quickly discovered, leaving none for him.

Though he couldn't delve into stellar space for spirit jade, in the All Phenomena Ocean, there were several ways to make money. Previously while fishing with Piao Ke, he had imparted many survival strategies, so Lu Ye now had some goals.

Adjusting his mood and fishing gear, Lu Ye took out the star map to locate a place called Zhaolai Island, then set sail on the starboat he purchased for thirty thousand spirit jade, flying in that direction.

Chapter 1395 - News of the Jade Conch

Unless you find someone to custom make it, a starboat like this one is usually a standard model bought on All Phenomena Island, meaning it's not unique and there are many identical ones.

The one Lu Ye bought isn't the cheapest, but compared to other starboats with prices easily going up to hundreds of thousands, it's not expensive either.

In size and performance, it's not as good as the Silver Fish from before.

It was only after reaching the All Phenomena Ocean that Lu Ye realized how valuable the gift Su Yuqing gave him actually was. If the Silver Fish were to be sold, it would definitely be worth more than hundreds of thousands of spirit jade. It's a pity he was short-sighted at the time and failed to notice.

Zhaolai Island, as the name suggests, is meant for recruitment and employment. It's a place where various powers and even individual groups in the All Phenomena Ocean recruit manpower.

For most Constellation Mid-Stage cultivators, it's an important way to make a living here.

The All Phenomena Ocean offers many opportunities, from paths to becoming rich overnight to gradually accumulating wealth. As long as a cultivator can endure hardships, they don't need to worry about not earning spirit jade here. Of course, how much they earn depends on their skills.

The fishing off-season has arrived, and it's unclear how long it will last. Although the Talent Tree's fuel reserves are still ample, they are not enough to support Lu Ye's long-term cultivation deep into the All Phenomena Ocean. Therefore, he must find a way to earn spirit jade. At the very least, he must meet the consumption required for his monthly cultivation.

Zhaolai Island, he heard Piao Ke mention many times, but he had been too busy fishing before to visit.

With his starboat, following the guidance of the star map, he journeyed on. In less than half a day, he reached Zhaolai Island.

From afar, he saw the bustling island, with a crowd of cultivators moving in and out of this Spirit Island like a school of fish.

Zhaolai Island is a barren island with no power occupying it. Anyone can enter and exit freely.

Upon reaching the vicinity of the Spirit Island, Lu Ye stowed his starboat and, after observing from mid-air for a while, made his way in.

Even though it's a place unmanaged and unplanned, the large number of cultivators coming and going is surprisingly orderly rather than chaotic.

The entire island has crisscrossed rows of jade tablets, which are likely materials used by spirit rune masters for practice. They're not expensive and can be found casually; one spirit jade can buy a large piece.

On each jade tablet, there are inscriptions. Passing cultivators only need a glance to know which power is recruiting and what the conditions and requirements are, all clearly written. If they meet the requirements themselves, they can negotiate with the owner of the jade tablet.

Beside some tablets, cultivators wait, either sitting or standing, probably the individuals posting recruitment information.

Beside other tablets, where there is no one, there are audio talismans left behind, allowing interested parties to contact the employer for detailed discussions.

Zhaolai Island has been around for an untold number of years, so despite being unmanaged, it has its own set of rules that visiting cultivators tend to follow.

Lu Ye moved with the flow of people to a jade tablet, looked up, and saw a line of large words on it:

Circumambulation Island is recruiting a large number of guards for the long term, with favorable treatment. Interested parties, please discuss in person!

Standing nearby was a clean-shaven man who was likely the employer posting this recruitment information. Someone was currently engaged in Mental Consciousness exchange with him. After a moment, the person shook his head and left.

After that person left, Lu Ye also stepped forward to talk to the employer for a bit but left disappointed.

The reason? The monthly salary offered was a bit low, only slightly more than a hundred spirit jade. Such a salary might meet the needs of most Constellation Mid-Stage cultivators, but it was far from enough for Lu Ye.

He continued to move on, observing one by one.

Soon, Lu Ye realized that most of these recruitment posts did not specify the salary on the tablet and required negotiation with the employer. He spoke with several people and none met his expectations.

A moment later, as he passed another jade tablet, Lu Ye's eyes lit up. This one also recruited guards, but the salary was clearly marked at a whopping eight hundred!

In comparison with the offers from other powers, this was undoubtedly a high price, yet hardly anyone seemed interested, and no one was discussing with the employer.

Lu Ye knew that anything unusual must have its underlying reasons, but he still went up to chat with the employer to uncover the mystery.

It turned out that the high salary was because the employer's Spirit Island might soon engage in a conflict with another power. They were short on manpower and urgently needed reinforcements; otherwise, they wouldn't have offered such a high price.

Upon learning about the seriousness of the situation, Lu Ye immediately lost interest.

Even though the employer said that the battle was only a possibility, not a certainty, Lu Ye had no intention of risking his life for others. As a foreign Constellation Mid-Stage, he had no interest in getting

involved in the entanglements between two major powers. Engagements like this, if won, would be fine, but if lost, it could cost his life.

Furthermore, even if they won, once this employer's power no longer needed so many guards, the monthly salary would undoubtedly be reduced accordingly.

So these eight hundred spirit jades in monthly salary may seem enticing, but it's not a sustainable path.

In the following days, Lu Ye roamed around Zhaolai Island, but no matter how much he looked, he couldn't find anything suitable for himself, which left him a bit helpless.

Previously, fishing a single White Spirit could fetch several thousand spirit jades, but here, the livelihoods he faced were mostly with a monthly salary of one or two hundred. If it were someone else, after getting used to delicacies, they might not be able to go back to eating coarse food.

However, Lu Ye came from a small place after all, so the gap in his heart wasn't that large. His requirements weren't high; he just needed to sustain his daily cultivation at best with some surplus. Yet, his cultivation consumption was a lot more than a normal Constellation, making it quite challenging to meet his demands.

Just as Lu Ye was secretly having a headache, the audio talisman suddenly had a reaction.

He took it out to check, a look of joy appearing on his face, and he immediately soared into the sky, activating his starboat mid-air, heading straight towards All Phenomena Island.

Half a day later, he arrived at the All Phenomena Merchants Guild, entering directly into the private room he always visited.

Cao Xiang was waiting. Seeing Lu Ye arrive, he stood up and greeted, "Fellow Daoist Li!"

Lu Ye responded hastily with a bow and asked, "Is the information accurate?"

Cao Xiang smiled slightly, "The source of the information is reliable. Our All Phenomena Merchants Guild has specialized personnel handling intelligence, but whether it's accurate or not, no one can guarantee that since these are gathered intel. So whether it's true or false, you'll have to verify it yourself, Fellow Daoist Li."

Lu Ye nodded, agreeing that it was reasonable. In situations like this, demanding a guarantee of accuracy from others would be unreasonable.

Cao Xiang handed over a jade slip to Lu Ye, "All the detailed intelligence is here. You can check it yourself. I apologize for the delay in this matter."

With the All Phenomena Merchants Guild's capabilities, usually gathering some information doesn't take too long, but the Jade Conch Galaxy was too remote and had no connection with the All Phenomena Galaxy, which caused the delay until today.

The jade slip contained intelligence about the Jade Conch Galaxy. Lu Ye carefully examined it, discovering that according to the jade slip, to return to the Jade Conch Galaxy, he needed to first enter a Star System named Tianyan, then cross through the entire Tianyan Star System to enter one called Yunshang, and then cross the Yunshang Star System to reach Jade Conch.

In other words, to return to Jade Conch, one must cross two complete star systems.

The information source was a cultivator from the Tianyan Star System. He had never been to Jade Conch, only heard about it from someone in the Yunshang Star System during a casual conversation. As for how the people from Yunshang knew about Jade Conch... If the two star systems were adjacent, having some interaction would be normal.

Judging from the intelligence in the jade slip, the source seems somewhat circuitous, with high credibility, but as Cao Xiang said, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and Lu Ye would need to verify it himself.

"Originally, you needed to pay an additional seven hundred spirit jades, but since this took quite a while, how about you pay five hundred instead?" Cao Xiang proactively lowered the price.

It was previously agreed that gathering the information required a thousand spirit jades. Lu Ye had paid three hundred as a deposit, leaving seven hundred unpaid.

Lu Ye didn't stand on ceremony and straightforwardly handed over five hundred spirit jades.

As a result, he only had five hundred spirit jades left on hand, making him seem even poorer.

After leaving the All Phenomena Merchants Guild, Lu Ye held his audio talisman, sent out a message, and then immediately flew away.

A day later, on a reef island in the All Phenomena Ocean, a disguised Lu Ye sat cross-legged, waiting.

A little while later, a figure flew in from the distance. Upon seeing Lu Ye from afar, a suspicious look appeared on his face. Lu Ye's Mental Consciousness surged, sending a transmission, and only then did the man fly over. Arriving near, he scrutinized Lu Ye and exclaimed in surprise, "Young friend, what secret technique is this? Even an old man like myself couldn't detect the slightest flaw and almost thought I was in the wrong place."

Lu Ye casually replied, "When you're out and not strong enough, you need some disguising methods. Old Tang, take a look at this."

Speaking, he handed over the jade slip obtained from Cao Xiang.

The arrival, of course, was Tang Jun. Since they both came to the All Phenomena Ocean, they hadn't contacted each other, and this was their first meeting since their last parting.

Tang Jun took the jade slip to examine and shortly raised his brows, "Where did this intelligence come from?"

"I sought it from the All Phenomena Merchants Guild," Lu Ye replied.

Tang Jun nodded, "I thought as much. I had considered this method before, but being Moon Jade, I'm too conspicuous. Thinking you'd use this method, I didn't proceed."

The old guy was undoubtedly cautious. Being outside, it's best to hide one's origins as much as possible to avoid attracting undesired trouble and causing disaster to one's homeland.

"Have you heard of the Tianyan and Yunshang Star Systems?" Lu Ye asked.

The old fellow had lived three thousand years, with cultivation at the Moon Jade Mid-Stage. Lu Ye didn't believe he hadn't wandered around in his youth, perhaps knowing something about these two star systems, which would lend reliability to the information.

Chapter 1396 - Arrangements

Lu Ye felt a bit disappointed as Tang Jun shook his head and said, "Never heard of it. You know, once you leave your home domain, the direction radiates outwards. Although I've been to a few nearby star systems, I can't claim to know the area around Jade Conch like the back of my hand. Perhaps over at Jade Conch World, they know more."

The Jade Conch Galaxy is named after the Jade Conch World and is the undisputed leader of the home galaxy today. Although there's no Sun Blaze, there are quite a few Moon Jade, making it much stronger than the old fellow's Qingli Dao World.

The old fellow sighed again, "In the end, our galaxy is detached from the mainstream of the stellar space. I never thought it mattered before, but coming to this All Phenomena Ocean made me realize that we are just frogs in a well." Holding the jade slip in his hand, he looked towards Lu Ye, "What do you plan to do?"

"Go back!" Lu Ye said as a matter of course. Previously, not knowing the location of the Jade Conch Galaxy was one thing, but now that he knew, he definitely wanted to return.

It's not that he missed his homeland; he hadn't been out for long, so there was no nostalgia. He was considering returning once to map the route. This way, even if that Insect Path couldn't take shape in the future, cultivators from the home domain who wanted to come to All Phenomena Ocean could fly directly. If the home world wants to develop and grow, purely admiring its own beauty won't do; it

needs to connect with the mainstream of stellar space. The All Phenomena Galaxy is a good place, and also an opportunity.

Of course, such a journey across two star systems probably won't be short. Even with a starboat, Lu Ye would need three to five years.

"Indeed, you should go back," Tang Jun nodded, "Are you going back, or am I?"

Lu Ye was taken aback, "You don't want to go back?"

Tang Jun replied, "Of course I do! I'm old, and I don't have many years left to live. If I really were to die, I wouldn't want to be buried in a foreign land. I hope to return to my roots, but first of all, we can't determine if this information is accurate. If the intelligence is wrong, if we both go, it would just waste both of our time. There's another possibility: if this information is accurate and we can return to Jade Conch, not both of us need to go. One person should go to map the path, and one should stay here to develop and accumulate resources. When our two domains' cultivators come here in the future, we can look out for each other instead of having to start from scratch."

I have to admit, the old guy's considerations were quite comprehensive. When Lu Ye got the jade slip, he only thought about hurrying back to Jade Conch.

Now, after hearing this, he indeed felt that having one person leave and one stay was the best arrangement.

"I'll go, you stay!" Lu Ye immediately made up his mind.

After all, Nine Provinces was a bit weak, and Lu Ye didn't want to reveal the exact location of Nine Provinces to others, not even to Tang Jun. In the old guy's understanding, he was just a cultivator from the Unparalleled Continent.

So if someone truly needed to return, it was best for him to go back.

Tang Jun was old and experienced; how could he not see Lu Ye's concerns? He nodded and said, "Then we'll arrange it that way! But how are you going to enter the Tianyan Star System?"

Normally, using the Insect Path is the only way. You certainly can't fly there.

Tianyan Star System has a stable Insect Path directly connected to the All Phenomena Galaxy; otherwise, Tianyan cultivators wouldn't be active here.

Cultivators from their home galaxy can naturally enter and exit the Insect Path at will, but if you're not from the home galaxy, you need someone to vouch for you!

Because on both ends of the Insect Path, strong cultivators from the Tianyan Star System are stationed. If someone tries to enter without authorization and gets killed, it's a death in vain.

Essentially, each star system has powerful supporters stationed near their Insect Paths, on one hand to protect their own cultivators from being ambushed when entering the All Phenomena Galaxy, and on the other hand to guard against others using the Insect Path to launch large-scale attacks on their star system.

If ever the Jade Conch Galaxy's Insect Path stabilizes and safely allows passage, the Jade Conch side will also need to deploy strong cultivators to station at the entry and exit points of the Insect Path. All passing cultivators would have to undergo inspections, and only after passing inspections would they be allowed passage.

Lu Ye had no connections with people from the Tianyan Star System, nor did he know any cultivators from there, so naturally, there was no one to vouch for him.

"Do you have a way?" Lu Ye asked.

Tang Jun shook his head, "I'm powerless."

"Then I'll figure it out myself."

Raising his eyes to look at the old guy, Lu Ye lowered his eyelids and said, "Old Tang, this journey will take at least a few years. The road isn't safe. Do you have anything to assist me, like a starboat or a world-stabilizing treasure?"

Tang Jun gave him a sidelong glance, "I've already given you my storage ring. What more do you want? Besides, don't you still have the red talisman on you? With the Dwarf Race's red talisman, even if the Moon Jade oppresses you, you can fight back and kill them!"

Lu Ye said, "You can't put it like that. Mainly, as you said yourself, you don't have many years left. If you pass away before I return, wouldn't your belongings be easily taken by others? After all, we came from the same star system. If you hand these inheritances to me, I'll take them back to the Qingli Dao World. It would be considered passing the legacy."

Tang Jun snorted, "Don't worry, I guarantee I won't die before you return!"

"At least give me some travel expenses. I won't have much time to search for spirit jade on my way, and I don't have any spirit jade left on me either."

The old fellow was somewhat speechless, hearing about travel expenses for the first time, but he thought about how Li Taibai indeed needed to inform Qingli Dao World if he really returned to Jade Conch. He took out a storage ring and handed it to Lu Ye, "That's all there is. Take it or leave it!"

"When an elder offers, how can I decline? How could I not accept?" Lu Ye accepted the storage ring and glanced inside, discovering it contained nearly two thousand spirit jades. This old fellow was quite generous, and Lu Ye silently noted this favor.

"I'll leave a jade slip for you. If you return to Jade Conch, when you go to Qingli Dao World, hand the jade slip to Wu Zhuo. He will coordinate with you." Tang Jun handed over another jade slip.

Wu Zhuo was the third Moon Jade of Qingli Dao World.

Lu Ye took it and carefully stored it away: "Is there anything else to convey?"

Tang Jun's expression was solemn as he looked at him: "Don't die on the way."

In the ever-changing world, the once-hostile old and young now shared the same fate in an unfamiliar place. Now, with aligned interests, Tang Jun naturally wished for Lu Ye's smooth journey.

Lu Ye leaped up, his laughter resounding: "Don't die before I return!"

How to enter the Tianyan Star System is a problem. The best way is naturally to befriend a cultivator from the Tianyan Star System, gain their trust, and have them vouch for you for a safe entry. However, these cultivators from various star systems don't have their origins engraved on their foreheads; how would Lu Ye know who is a Tianyan cultivator?

Seeking intelligence from the All Phenomena Merchants Guild is one way, but just one piece of information would cost a thousand spirit jades, which Lu Ye was reluctant to spend. Even if he found a Tianyan cultivator, why would they befriend or trust him?

He could try his luck at the Insect Path leading to Tianyan, as there must be a Moon Jade expert guarding there. Honestly stating his intention to borrow the path through Tianyan might be feasible, but it's more likely to be rejected.

After much consideration, there was only one plan!

Zhaolai Island!

Lu Ye had stayed at Zhaolai Island for several days before. The recruitment there wasn't only for guards recruited by various Spirit Islands but also included various other information, including transporting resources.

On the All Phenomena Ocean side, transactions were frequent, and the flow of resources was immense daily. Some brought local specialties here to sell, while others purchased resources to transport back to their home domain.

It's not necessarily safe on the road; there are all sorts of people here. Lu Ye, upon arriving at the All Phenomena Galaxy, even encountered a group trying to rob him.

Therefore, for resource transportation tasks, escorts are needed. If the local forces have enough manpower, there's no need to hire outsiders. Otherwise, they can only find people from Zhaolai Island.

Lu Ye intended to look for Tianyan cultivators recruiting personnel here.

The probability wasn't high, but it was better than gambling in front of other people's Moon Jade.

He thought even if there was hope, it would take a long time. If not feasible, he would have to gather intelligence from the All Phenomena Merchants Guild, find a Tianyan cultivator, and try to build a connection.

Who would have thought he'd find the recruitment information he needed on a jade tablet within just half a day after arriving on Zhaolai Island?

As he expected, people needed to recruit a few individuals to escort a batch of resources back to a certain domain within the Tianyan Star System, and then transport another batch back to the All Phenomena Ocean.

Standing beside the jade tablet was a middle-aged man who hadn't activated spirit force, so his cultivation level was unclear, but he appeared to be a Constellation.

Lu Ye stepped forward and clasped his fists: "Greetings, Fellow Daoist."

The middle-aged man glanced Lu Ye up and down, speaking bluntly: "Round trip for one thousand five hundred jade, five hundred as a deposit, one thousand as the remainder. If satisfied, we discuss further; if not, we part ways!"

One thousand five hundred jade wasn't a low price, as a round trip would take at least four to five months. Averaged out, it was three to four hundred spirit jades a month, higher than the monthly wages for guards on general Spirit Islands. After all, traveling through stellar space posed greater risks.

Lu Ye had seen plenty of recruitment information before and knew this price was reasonable. Moreover, he wasn't here for spirit jades. He nodded immediately: "Agreed!"

After discussing some details with the middle-aged man, they exchanged audio talisman imprints, agreeing that he would contact Lu Ye when it was time to depart. Then Lu Ye left Zhaolai Island.

The task required a round trip, meaning even if Lu Ye went to the Tianyan Star System, he had to return. This didn't align with his planned itinerary. In the end, even if he successfully entered the Tianyan Star System, it would be difficult to disentangle from them and act alone, risking hostility and making future borrowing of Tianyan's path difficult for those from the Jade Conch Galaxy.

Lu Ye planned to spend the next few months building a good relationship with the middle-aged man. If he could gain his guarantee, become familiar in front of the Moon Jade expert guarding the Insect Path, then all subsequent issues would be resolved.

The man didn't keep Lu Ye waiting long; just two days later, he sent a message. When Lu Ye arrived at the agreed location, he found two others besides the middle-aged man.

Chapter 1397: Lure and Deceit

A group of four, apart from Lu Ye and the middle-aged man who posted the recruitment information, also included an elder and a flat-headed young man.

They exchanged names with each other.

Lu Ye naturally gave the name Li Taibai, the middle-aged man's name was Zhu Yuan, the elder was called Fan Yunhua, and the flat-headed young man referred to himself as Jia Yu.

No one delved into the truth of these names; for cultivators traveling outside, it's common to hide their real names and origins. After all, this was just a short-term collaboration, and even the employer Zhu Yuan was in no position to dig deep into the backgrounds of those he recruited.

Pay money for labor, do the job for payment, that's how it goes.

However, what puzzled Lu Ye slightly was that he had the lowest cultivation among the four, with the other three all in the Constellation Late Stage.

That being said, when Zhu Yuan recruited him, he didn't seem to ask about his cultivation level either, promptly offering a price of fifteen hundred jade, and then they reached an agreement after a few exchanges.

This might be his way of doing things, or perhaps he has keen eyesight and saw that Lu Ye's cultivation wasn't low. Either way, since he had joined this small group, they would be fellow travelers until the task was completed.

"Everyone's here, let's set off. This journey will take several months. I hope you three can work with me in unity through this challenge!" Zhu Yuan said.

Lu Ye frowned slightly, "Aren't we going to Zhongzheng Island?"

Though this was his first time taking on such a job, he had learned a lot from half a year with Piao Ke, especially regarding surviving in the All Phenomena Ocean.

Normally, after recruiting three helpers like this, Zhu Yuan should visit Zhongzheng Island to transport resources back to the Tianyan Star System. Before departing, he needs to make a stop at Zhongzheng Island because he can't be sure if the three people he recruited are trustworthy or might scheme halfway. This requires some special means of identification, which may not precisely discern good from bad, but can assess a cultivator's capabilities through comparisons.

Zhongzheng Island is named for its fairness, and it also carries out fair actions.

There, an artifact crafted jointly by powerful figures from the All Phenomena Galaxy and several star systems, called Zhongzheng Register, allows employers to take recruited individuals there to leave their mark.

Just like now, Zhu Yuan could easily take the three to Zhongzheng Island, leave their energy imprints on the Zhongzheng Register, and through those imprints, examine the history of their various tasks, how

many recruitments they had accepted before, how many they had completed or failed, and even reviews left by previous employers...

If this task is completed smoothly, Zhu Yuan could also return here and leave appropriate reviews based on their performance during the task.

Of course, if the task isn't completed or if Zhu Yuan dies halfway, it will invariably add a failed task count to their history on the Zhongzheng Register, a blemish on the record that cultivators depending on this for a living can't erase.

The Zhongzheng Register doesn't record names, so no matter what name is used, as long as there's no change in the energy, the Zhongzheng Register can trace back and investigate a cultivator's history in the All Phenomena Ocean.

One could say that the existence of the Zhongzheng Register significantly regulates and restrains the temperament of many cultivators. Which of the cultivators looking for work on Zhaolai Island doesn't want to make their résumé perfect? Who would willingly leave a blemish on their record?

A decent résumé can make it easier for a cultivator to find a source of livelihood; conversely, a poor record means no one would want to hire them.

In the All Phenomena Galaxy, several gangs engage in banditry, some due to their nature, hoping to make a fortune through such means. But many can't find work on Zhaolai Island; their résumé on the Zhongzheng Register is too poor, leaving them no choice but to resort to robbery.

Lu Ye had never left an energy imprint on the Zhongzheng Register, so his record was naturally blank, but the same couldn't be said for Fan Yunhua and Jia Yu.

Since they are transporting resources back to the Tianyan Star System, Zhu Yuan certainly carries valuable items. Taking the three to Zhongzheng Island to leave an energy imprint and make some inquiries would also be a form of assurance.

Lu Ye kindly reminded him, wanting to leave a good impression on his first employer, as he wanted to make connections during the journey.

However, Zhu Yuan shook his head and said, "No need for such trouble. Zhongzheng Island is crowded, and just lining up might take several days. The goods are urgently needed, so there's no time to delay." He laughed as he spoke, looking at the three meaningfully, "Besides, I trust my own judgment!"

Lu Ye reckoned that he likely trusted his own skills more than any so-called judgment...

Yet, he had an indistinct feeling that something was off. Whether it was Zhu Yuan's previous recruitment or his current demeanor, it all seemed too casual. After all, if he were in Zhu Yuan's position, tasked with transporting resources back to the domain, he wouldn't conduct himself so carelessly and lackadaisically.

Moreover, even if it were urgent, how could a few days delay be unacceptable, considering this trip would take several months?

But for those hired, the employer is everything, like heaven, like the earth, whatever they say goes, and there's no room for contradiction.

Zhu Yuan summoned a starboat; the four boarded in succession. In a moment, the starboat transformed into a stream of light and flew into the distance.

The journey was quite dull. Zhu Yuan controlled the starboat from the array hub, while Fan Yunhua held a wine jar, occasionally taking a sip.

The young Jia Yu closed his eyes to rest.

With nothing else to do, Lu Ye continued to develop his As-Close-As-Siblings Spirit Runes, though he didn't completely immerse himself in it, instead keeping part of his mind alert to his surroundings.

Having sensed something was amiss, he naturally remained extra vigilant.

The starboat departed from the All Phenomena Ocean, piercing into the depths of the stellar space. Turning back, Lu Ye once again witnessed the awe-inspiring marvel of the starry sky.

Being inside it felt enormous, while observing from a distance, it appeared even more magnificent.

Two days later, Fan Yunhua suddenly spoke up, "Master, this direction isn't towards the Insect Path of the Tianyan Star System, where are we heading?"

Upon hearing this, Lu Ye took out his star map to compare and found that the direction was indeed off.

Jia Yu, who had been resting with his eyes closed, slowly opened them, looking towards Zhu Yuan.

Zhu Yuan explained, "Naturally, it is to receive the goods; the items to be sent back are not with me at the moment."

Lu Ye didn't understand his meaning, but Fan Yunhua chuckled softly, "Looks like there's a problem with this batch of goods."

If there were no issues, the goods could have been delivered directly on the All Phenomena Ocean. Only problematic goods would be taken far away into the depths of stellar space.

Zhu Yuan remained silent, merely steering the spirit ark quietly.

Fan Yunhua also fell silent, having casually mentioned it; it was not something to delve deeper into.

A day later, the starboat arrived on a desolate planet, a place so harsh that even cultivators with low cultivation couldn't venture deeper, let alone mortals.

Nevertheless, all four were Constellations, with strong adaptability. Zhu Yuan stowed the starboat away and led the way.

Lu Ye and the others followed closely behind. Upon arrival, Lu Ye increasingly felt something was amiss. Even if Zhu Yuan wanted to trade goods with someone, there was no need to choose such a location. The stellar space is vast, any secluded place would do as long as it's unoccupied.

This place was more suited for an ambush rather than exchanging goods.

Of course, it might also be due to excessive caution.

Fan Yunhua and Jia Yu also sensed something, exchanging wary glances.

It's common for hired people to plot against their employers, but not all employers are trustworthy. Some malicious individuals prefer luring people to remote places to attack them, leaving them penniless and in trouble.

Each person quietly expanded their Mental Consciousness outwards to investigate the surroundings, finding nothing unusual.

A little while later, Zhu Yuan led the three to the foot of a barren mountain, facing a dark cave entrance.

His expression suddenly turned solemn, standing still at the mouth of the cave!

Behind him, Lu Ye and the two others simultaneously felt a chill run up their spines, tension evident in their demeanor. Though the cave appeared empty, and their Mental Consciousness detected nothing, all three inexplicably felt like rabbits straying into a tiger's den.

Within that cave, it seemed as if an ancient ferocious beast was ready to erupt at any moment.

As they looked around, the dark cave wasn't merely due to dim light; it was genuinely filled with a black substance, flowing...

Lu Ye slowly raised his hand, grasping the hilt of the Boulder Mountain Saber.

On either side, Fan Yunhua and Jia Yu similarly began channeling spirit force, readying themselves!

Throughout the journey, Lu Ye felt that something was off, and at this point, he was finally certain of one thing: Zhu Yuan was no good. The return of goods to the Tianyan Star System was a facade. Luring the three here was the actual plan, but the exact purpose... was unknown, though it was likely the usual scheme of murder and robbery.

Only one thing puzzled Lu Ye: for there to be a presence of such strength that even their Mental Consciousness, at the Constellation Realm, couldn't detect it, it had to be above that of a Moon Jade, and not just any ordinary one.

Would such a person be interested in Constellations? Robbing Constellations wouldn't be very rewarding, making this an utterly illogical act.

Nevertheless, the three had indeed fallen into Zhu Yuan's trap. The reason that fellow didn't go to Zhongzheng Island before setting off was that it was unnecessary from the start.

They had been careless, ultimately due to a lack of experience, and because Lu Ye was eager to establish good relations with Zhu Yuan, needing someone as a guarantor to pass through Tianyan.

Yet, life is like this, always full of unforeseen events, impossible to guard against.

"Go!" Fan Yunhua suddenly shouted in a low voice, channeling an unknown secret technique and transforming into a streak of blood light, fleeing to the left.

Simultaneously, the sound of a sword echoed, and Jia Yu merged with the sword light, fleeing to the right.

Clearly, both knew their own strength wasn't enough to be a match for the cave's powerful being. Not being familiar with each other, collaboration was out of the question. So, fleeing in opposite directions meant that if the cave's powerful being pursued one, the other had a significant chance to escape.

Chapter 1398: The Hostage Has Been Eliminated!

There's no denying, whether it's Fan Yunhua or Jia Yu, both have extremely rich combat experience and escape instincts.

Almost at the same time as the two made their move, Lu Ye also acted.

He didn't choose to flee. If possible, he would rather have Fan Yunhua and Jia Yu cooperate with him; both of them are in the Constellation Late Stage, combined with him, they might be able to challenge Moon Jade.

But that was clearly unrealistic. He didn't trust those two, and they wouldn't trust him either.

Moreover, in such a situation, taking the initiative is far more advantageous than passive fleeing.

The Boulder Mountain Saber unsheathed with a sound, slashing towards Zhu Yuan.

At this moment, the dense darkness at the front cave suddenly twisted, and two shadows shot out like two thick ropes, one left and one right, attacking outwards.

Fan Yunhua and Jia Yu escaped, Lu Ye slashed, the shadows twisted and reached out, everything happened in an instant.

Lu Ye's pupils suddenly shrank to needle-point size, and his mind was greatly shaken at this moment.

The Boulder Mountain Saber, once slashed out, retained its remaining force and struck down fiercely.

Zhu Yuan still had his back to him, his expression solemn. With his strength, he must have already sensed Lu Ye's movement, but he apparently underestimated Lu Ye, merely urging his spirit force for protection.

However, the Boulder Mountain Saber imbued with Divine Sharp Edge Spirit Runes is not something simple protective spirit force can block.

The long saber descended, the spirit force collapsed; Zhu Yuan sensed something was amiss and wanted to evade but it was too late. In haste, he could only raise his arm to block.

The sharp blade slashed at his upper arm, breaking flesh, cutting bone. In an instant of stalemate, with Lu Ye's fierce brute force exploding, the long saber moved like the moon.

Blood splattered, an amputated arm fell to the ground.

The cries of pain and screams rang out together!

It was Zhu Yuan who cried out in pain; he didn't expect his momentary carelessness to cost him an arm.

It was Fan Yunhua and Jia Yu who screamed; Lu Ye couldn't see what happened to them, but he knew their fate wouldn't be good.

Lu Ye paused not at all on his side. After severing Zhu Yuan's arm, a sky full of saber shadows enveloped him.

Zhu Yuan's cultivation at the Constellation Late Stage made him extremely powerful. If it comes to setting up a battle and fighting solo, Lu Ye would have to exert some effort to take him down, but in the end, Zhu Yuan paid the price for his carelessness and underestimation.

As Lu Ye's violent saber momentum unfolded, Zhu Yuan could only fend off, without any possibility of counteracting.

In just three breaths, as Lu Ye stabbed directly, the pitch-black blade pierced through Zhu Yuan's chest, straight through to his heart!

For cultivators below Constellation, such a wound means certain death.

But Zhu Yuan, in the end, had almost refined the essence of his physique to the bone marrow Great Perfection level. Though the wound was severe, it was not yet fatal.

He held his stance, daring not to move recklessly, looking Lu Ye in the eye with shock and disbelief, not expecting himself, at the Constellation Late Stage, to have his vital point captured by a mid-stage like Lu

Ye. He clearly felt the spirit force surge on Lu Ye's Boulder Mountain Saber; any slight movement from him would pulverize his heart...

With a simple stab wound, he could still urge his power to restore it, but if his heart exploded, that would truly be certain death.

On both sides, Fan Yunhua and Jia Yu's screams were unending, as if undergoing extreme torment, the two shadows extending from the cave gradually retracted, as though a giant was retrieving two arms; as they retracted, the screams grew closer.

Until Lu Ye's peripheral vision saw the two being dragged into the cave bound by the shadows.

The deep darkness surged once, and the screams disappeared, along with the vitality of the two...

At this moment, Zhu Yuan's expression was complex, still pondering how he ended up subdued by Lu Ye.

Lu Ye's expression was equally complex.

Earlier he thought what was hidden in the cave should be Moon Jade, but when the other party made a move and the spirit force leaked at that instant, he knew he had judged wrong.

What was hidden in the cave was not Moon Jade.

It was Sun Blaze!

No matter how hard he thought, he couldn't understand why it was Sun Blaze?

For Constellation compared to Sun Blaze, it's like ants on the ground; for Zhu Yuan to painstakingly lure the three in front of Sun Blaze, what was it for?

Just killing for fun? That couldn't be, the All Phenomena Galaxy is full of Constellation cultivators, if this guy truly wanted fun, he could easily venture outside, better than troubling Zhu Yuan so much.

Moreover, the Sun Blazes in the All Phenomena Galaxy are limited, mostly they are home galaxy's powerhouses, even visiting foreign Sun Blazes wouldn't stay long.

"Oh?" A hoarse voice came from within the cave, slightly surprised, undoubtedly due to Lu Ye's reaction and exceptional performance, even if Zhu Yuan was careless initially, for a Constellation Mid-Stage to take him down in just three breaths is also an astonishing feat.

Lu Ye could clearly feel a powerful mental consciousness scrutinizing him, which made him very uncomfortable, as if a snake's tongue was constantly licking him. Under such licking, his every subtle movement and change in expression could not escape the other party's detection.

"Good temperament and very decisive!" The old voice in the cave resounded again, seeming to appreciate him somewhat, then the voice became teasing: "So what do you plan to do next?"

Lu Ye lowered his eyelids and said blandly, "I'll take him away, and once we're in a safe place, I'll let him go!"

He originally thought, if it were Moon Jade in the cave, then he would find an opportunity to activate the red talisman and deal with him! During the Constellation Early Stage, he had killed a Qin Yuandai. Now in the Constellation Mid-Stage, with a longer period of nurturing within his body, the power of the red talisman should be greater.

Killing a Moon Jade shouldn't be too difficult, provided the other's strength isn't too strong.

But the other party was Sun Blaze... this plan wouldn't work.

Lu Ye estimated that if he wanted to fully unleash the power of the red talisman to the level of Sun Blaze, at the very least, he must first advance to Moon Jade.

"Taking hostages to negotiate terms, a good idea!" The old voice casually praised, and as those words fell, a black light shot out from the cave, directly hitting the back of Zhu Yuan's head!

Zhu Yuan's eyes suddenly dimmed, and his body fell limply, the Boulder Mountain Saber dislodged from his body, instantly staining the clothes on his chest with blood.

"So... now what?" The voice from the cave grew even more mocking.

Looking down at Zhu Yuan's corpse, Lu Ye was silent and speechless.

The hostage was killed, so what was there left to negotiate!

Though he didn't know who exactly was in the cave, just from the other party's behavior, it was clear they weren't a good person, and Zhu Yuan was definitely one of theirs, otherwise, he wouldn't have brought the three of them here. Yet, this old guy killed his own without hesitation, showing his vicious and brutal nature.

The problem was his power was as strong as Sun Blaze, even with Zhu Yuan alive, Lu Ye estimated he wouldn't be able to use him as leverage.

Escape... unrealistic, Fan Yunhua and Jia Yu served as a precedent, under such close distance with a Sun Blaze watchful eye, escape was impossible.

Lu Ye only blamed himself for not being cautious enough, if he had been more careful, and left a weapon control outside beforehand, he might have had a chance to escape.

But without knowing Zhu Yuan's destination, even if he had thought of it, where would he have left the weapon control?

With a flick of the Boulder Mountain Saber in his hand, Lu Ye looked towards the dark cave, infusing his body with spirit force, he fiercely charged in!

If death is certain, then it's better to die on the path of combat rather than waiting in despair.

Though he thought well, as soon as he rushed into the cave, Lu Ye knew he overestimated. The viscous darkness around him was so tangible that stepping into it felt like sinking into a quagmire, his movement stalled, even his spirit force was suppressed, and his mental consciousness couldn't probe out.

Let alone killing the enemy, he couldn't even figure out what the enemy looked like or where they were hiding.

The old voice sounded again: "Courageous, but overestimating oneself. How about this, kneel and kowtow three times, and I will spare your life!"

In the darkness, Lu Ye gritted his teeth in silence, swinging his long saber continuously, yet cutting nothing.

The enormous disparity in power and realm made one feel particularly helpless.

As if this action angered the other, the old voice coldly snorted: "Stubborn fool, when I tell you to kneel, you kneel!"

A massive pressure suddenly descended from the sky, the form of Lu Ye was stiffened instantly, as if a constellation weighed him down, and his form involuntarily hunched over.

As the pressure increased, his expression grew pained, eyes glaring with rage, bones creaking, his face suffused with blood Qi, almost dripping blood.

The old guy was clearly squeezing his limits bit by bit, Lu Ye felt that his leg bones could no longer hold on, forcing it further would only result in them shattering.

But he still held on.

On the Unparalleled Continent, that Divine Sea from Dingzhou's Chaotian Sect was held hostage by Qingli Dao World's Zhao Tianmu, able to face death with equanimity, there was no reason he couldn't.

Nine Provinces cultivators may have their issues, but many possess a commonality, and that is to not fear death!

Because those who fear death are mostly already dead.

The heavy pressure pushing Lu Ye to his limits, and at this very moment, his feet suddenly exerted force, his body shot forward like an arrow leaving the bowstring.

Just as expected, the scene of bones breaking didn't occur, as almost in the instant he took the initiative to exert force, the overwhelming pressure vanished without a trace, even the surrounding black mist was no longer as thick and cloying.

In an all-out charge, a slash infused with all his spirit force, struck heavily downward.

The bright saber light pierced the darkness, then returned to nothingness. Lu Ye felt his Boulder Mountain Saber blocked by something, he tried to pull out the saber, but it wouldn't budge, so he kicked forward!

The kick hit something solid, but Lu Ye wasn't sure what he kicked.

"Hehehehehe... Hahahahaha!" In the cave, laughter suddenly erupted, growing louder and more deafening, sounding extremely joyful!

Chapter 1399: Tianzhou Human Emperor Sect, Ma Bin

In the mountain cave filled with darkness, a burst of laughter rang out, and Lu Ye felt as if his eardrums were vibrating.

The surrounding darkness receded like a tide with the laughter, and gradually, a dim light seeped in, allowing Lu Ye's vision to slowly recover.

He finally saw what had stopped his Boulder Mountain Saber—it was actually being pinched lightly between two of the man's fingers, making it impossible for him to pull it out.

He further realized what his kick had landed on... It was the old man's face!

At this moment, as the darkness dissipated, he maintained the posture of having swung his saber and then kicked, his stance rigid.

He wasn't sure why the other was laughing, but he knew that if the opponent wanted to kill him, he would have done so a hundred times over. The big foot obscured the other's full appearance, but the vague outline gave him a strange sense of familiarity.

A slight repulsion came from the blade, and Lu Ye naturally withdrew his saber and took two steps back.

A slightly aged face with graying hair and beard came into view; the man sat there, smiling at him, as if a mighty lion assessing its prey, with a touch of inexplicable taste.

"You..." Lu Ye's expression turned to surprise and suspicion, because he recognized the man.

It wasn't that he knew him personally, but he had seen him from a distance.

Nearly three months ago, when he was fishing with Piao Ke on Angling Island, a supreme strongman had caused havoc at All Phenomena Ocean, killing a Sun Blaze of the All Phenomena Galaxy on the spot, and when he fled, he passed by Angling Island, where Lu Ye had caught a glimpse of him from afar.

No wonder he felt a sense of familiarity earlier, because the old man in front of him was the very one who had escaped from All Phenomena Ocean back then!

After the incident that day, the All Phenomena Ocean quickly calmed down, and nothing happened thereafter. Though Lu Ye knew that the All Phenomena Galaxy wouldn't just let it slide, matters at the Sun Blaze level were beyond what a Constellation could investigate, so he merely inferred that the killer must have escaped; otherwise, the All Phenomena Galaxy would have made an announcement.

He never imagined that the man was hiding here!

It was certain that the powerhouses of the All Phenomena Galaxy were searching for this man's whereabouts, likely turning the entire domain upside down to find him. How this old man avoided being tracked down was evidently a testament to his skills.

At this moment, one might think that the entire All Phenomena Galaxy believed the old man had already fled the galaxy. By staying here, he had ingeniously hidden in plain sight.

What Lu Ye couldn't understand was why this man, hiding so well, would have Zhu Yuan bring him here.

By now, he had begun to piece some things together.

The four had come together; including Zhu Yuan, three had been killed, while he, the one with the lowest cultivation, remained alive. If the old man had no intentions for him, Lu Ye would find it hard to believe.

But why him?

Was it just because of a fleeting glance on Angling Island?

Back then, he hadn't detected any sign that the man noticed him, but considering the man's extraordinary cultivation, it was entirely possible for him to notice Lu Ye observing him.

It couldn't be because the man wanted his life. If he wanted to kill him, there wouldn't be a need for such complexity, nor would he risk exposure by staying here.

And it couldn't be because Lu Ye had seen his face; the old man wasn't hiding his identity, and surely there were many who had seen his face.

What on earth was the reason?

As he pondered, with thoughts swirling, Lu Ye remained clueless about the situation.

However, it was the old man's subsequent words that instantly startled him.

"Nine Provinces cultivator, still as tough as ever!" The old man looked at him with a scrutinizing gaze, as if an elder surveying a junior, with a hint of appreciation.

Lu Ye controlled his emotions, showing no trace of his inner thoughts, and feigned confusion: "What do you mean, senior? This junior doesn't understand!"

"Are you not from the Nine Provinces?" The elder's expression remained unchanged, intriguing, yet even with his keen eyes, he couldn't detect any unnatural changes in Lu Ye's demeanor.

Lu Ye slowly shook his head: "I'm from the Unparalleled Continent!"

About his origins from the Nine Provinces, even Tang Jun was unaware, so how could a Sun Blaze he only glimpsed once know? But Lu Ye knew in his heart that if the man dared to ask, he must have noticed something. Yet what flaw could have allowed him to see through it?

This was no small matter.

Yang Qing had specifically warned him in the past: when walking the stellar space in the future, never mention the Nine Provinces, and when he was taken to the Reincarnation Tree, he acted under the Nine Heavens' name.

The reason was that the powerful figures from the former Nine Provinces era made many enemies; even after thousands of years, such grudges are hard to dissolve once rooted, especially those domain powerhouses who had invaded the Nine Provinces, likely harboring intense sensitivity to the mention of the Nine Provinces.

So Lu Ye wanted to understand how the old man in front of him deduced that he was from the Nine Provinces.

As he was contemplating how to subtly probe the matter, the old man smiled slightly: "If you're not from the Nine Provinces, then why do you carry the aura of the Heaven's Augury Compass on you?"

Lu Ye's pupils constricted slightly, finally realizing where the problem lay!

So it was the Heaven's Augury Compass.

Every cultivator from the Nine Provinces, even those independent cultivators without any sect, possess a battlefield marking. Only with this marking can one enter the Spirit Stream battlefield and the Cloud River battlefield, gather merits and battle accomplishments, and communicate conveniently with others...

For the Nine Provinces cultivators, the battlefield marking is essential.

The battlefield marking is bestowed by Number Nine, who is the Artifact Spirit of the Heaven's Augury Compass and the embodiment of the Nine Provinces' Origin. Therefore, every Nine Provinces cultivator with a battlefield marking naturally carries the aura of the Heaven's Augury Compass.

According to the information Lu Ye obtained, during the era preceding the Nine Provinces, when they were being besieged by many formidable enemies, the Heaven's Augury Compass had not yet been created. It was only after the Nine Provinces' powerhouses sensed the situation was irreversible that they combined their forces to forge the Heaven's Augury Compass. Leveraging its power, they moved the Nine Provinces from its original location to escape disaster and have since remained at a secluded corner of the Jade Conch Galaxy for ten thousand years, disconnected from the stellar space.

In other words, those enemies attacking the Nine Provinces likely did not know of the Heaven's Augury Compass's existence; only the native Nine Provinces cultivators knew of this divine object.

With this realization, Lu Ye felt a stirring in his heart and looked at the old man, asking, "Senior, you are..."

The old man's expression turned solemn: "I am Ma Bin of the Human Emperor Sect from Tianzhou!"

Tianzhou...

Human Emperor Sect...

As these once familiar words echoed in Lu Ye's ears, all his doubts were suddenly clarified.

Yet never did he imagine that he would one day meet a powerhouse from the pre-Nine Provinces era!

Based on the intel and battle displays Number Nine had provided him, in that fateful battle, all cultivators of the pre-Nine Provinces era who were qualified joined the stellar space battle. In other words, anyone with the cultivation of a Constellation or higher entered the battlefield.

The final outcome of that battle was unknown to Lu Ye, nor to Number Nine, because when the final decisive battle ignited, the power of the Heaven's Augury Compass was activated, and the Nine Provinces was moved away.

However, clearly, the situation was unfavorable. With a home world to retreat to, pre-Nine Provinces cultivators could withdraw to recuperate and heal. Without a home world, it would be a fight to the death!

Even total annihilation of the army was not impossible.

Lu Ye always believed that the powerhouses of the pre-Nine Provinces era perished in battle. Even if they didn't, after all these years, they would have died of old age.

According to the current Cultivation System, Constellations have a lifespan of two thousand years, Moon Jades four thousand, Sun Blazes eight thousand. Longevity may grant a few more years, but living ten thousand years is exceedingly difficult.

Of course, these figures are theoretical. In reality, cultivators frequently battle others and sustain injuries, which is commonplace. Despite recovery, such experiences impact their lifespan. This is why Tang Jun is approaching his life's end soon.

How Ma Bin has lived until now remains a mystery; what methods he used or sacrifices he made are unknown.

Of course, there is a chance he is lying, but Lu Ye feels there is no need for it. With such a powerful Sun Blaze in front of him, if Ma Bin truly wished to extract information, he surely had other means beyond falsely claiming to be from the pre-Nine Provinces.

Most importantly, Ma Bin mentioned the Heaven's Augury Compass.

This should be a secret known only to those with ties to the pre-Nine Provinces, a secret that in the current Nine Provinces era, only Lu Ye knows.

To be sure, Lu Ye asked, "What is the Heaven's Augury Compass?"

Ma Bin chuckled, "Stop pretending. I participated in its creation back in the day; its aura is as familiar to me as an old friend! It's just that, after all these millennia, I hadn't sensed it and thought I was imagining things when I did recently."

No further probing was needed. Sighing, Lu Ye composed himself, sheathed his Boulder Mountain Saber, and solemnly saluted the old man before him: "Lu Ye of the Righteous Blood Sect from Bingzhou, pays respects to Senior!"

"You're from Bingzhou? Good! There was a Righteousness Sect in Bingzhou long ago, every one of them as steadfast as you!"

"Nowadays, Bingzhou has the Righteousness Gate, but no Righteousness Sect," Lu Ye replied.

"Perhaps the legacy was left behind. Over ten millennia, much has changed," Ma Bin mused, gesturing with his hand, "Sit!"

Lu Ye obediently sat cross-legged before him, pondering a moment before asking, "Did you notice me that day?"

He was naturally referring to three months ago, regarding the event on Angling Island.

Ma Bin nodded, "Indeed, having sensed the aura of the Heaven's Augury Compass on you, I paid attention and had others investigate you, finding a way to bring you here."

This confirmed that Zhu Yuan was indeed Ma Bin's associate, acting upon Ma Bin's instructions.

Lu Ye frowned slightly, "Does that mean Zhu Yuan isn't from the Tianyan Star System, and the mission to transport supplies was entirely fabricated?"

Ma Bin replied, "Correct! However, Zhu Yuan took great care in his actions. Fearing your suspicion, he specifically recruited two others to assist."

"And the intel claiming a route through Tianyan to Yunshang, leading to Jade Conch..."

"Fabricated, spread by someone he hired. Though traveling through Tianyan does indeed allow entry to Yunshang, and Yunshang cultivators do use this method to reach the All Phenomena Galaxy."

Chapter 1400: Experts of the Former Nine Provinces

Lu Ye understood upon hearing this; no wonder everything was so coincidental and went so smoothly. As soon as Cao Xiang gathered intelligence about the Jade Conch, he went to Zhaolai Island and happened to see the cultivators from the Tianyan Star System recruiting manpower. Negotiations with Zhu Yuan on the compensation went smoothly, and then he accepted the recruitment.

This explained why Zhu Yuan was unwilling to even take a trip to Zhongzheng Island before leaving. In his view, among the three people recruited, the other two, regardless of their nature, weren't going to survive. Whether he went to Zhongzheng Island or not made no real difference.

All of this was just a setup, a trap aimed at him, with the ultimate goal of luring him here to meet Ma Bin.

He even got Tang Jun to lend him two thousand spirit jades for travel expenses...

"Senior went to such great lengths to bring me here; is there any instruction?" Lu Ye collected himself and asked.

Since the intelligence received was false, using the Tianyan route to return to the Jade Conch was unrealistic; further intelligence gathering was needed.

But as for Ma Bin's purpose in having Zhu Yuan bring him here, it was unknown.

Lu Ye wasn't worried about them harming him, but matters at the Sun Blaze level were difficult for just a Constellation to meddle in; he feared disappointing the expectations of the old senior.

"Just wanted to meet you," Ma Bin said with a slight smile. "To be honest, the plan to move Nine Provinces millennia ago was decided in haste. Nobody could guarantee success, but without moving, Nine Provinces would've faced the fate of total annihilation. So, it was a gamble we had to take. Yet, moving a domain is something never done before; most don't dare due to the high risks. A single mistake and the entire domain could collapse, leading to the extinction of all life within. Looking at it now, has it succeeded?"

If it hadn't succeeded, Nine Provinces wouldn't exist now, and Lu Ye sitting here, alive and well, undoubtedly signified something.

Lu Ye nodded, "It was very successful. Over these ten thousand years, although not entirely peaceful, the Nine Provinces maintained a good cultivation environment; cultivators thrived, and the domain's potential increased steadily. Until a few years ago, it upgraded to a large-scale domain."

Ma Bin was a little surprised, "Logically, Nine Provinces shouldn't have grown this quickly. The seniors of that time were even mentally prepared for Nine Provinces to lose its status as a cultivation domain, because implementing that plan greatly depleted domain resources, potentially crippling Nine Provinces, causing its potential to vanish, spiritual energy to dissipate, turning it into an ordinary domain, eventually devoid of cultivators."

Compared to being exterminated, this result was acceptable. At least the beings in Nine Provinces could continue living, just without cultivation.

In the stellar space, there are many such domains without cultivators.

However, upon seeing Lu Ye for the first time, Ma Bin knew Nine Provinces had become a large-scale domain, as only such a domain could cultivate Constellation Realm beings.

Lu Ye said, "I dare not comment on the seniors' predictions about Nine Provinces, but the domain's resources indeed waned for a while. The cultivators' levels within the domain were low; today's development owes much to the Heaven's Augury Compass. Senior might not know, but years ago, an Artifact Spirit appeared by chance in the Heaven's Augury Compass, merging with the Heaven-Earth Origin of Nine Provinces, possessing strong independent thinking. Under its management, Nine Provinces developed as it did."

"Oh?" Ma Bin's eyes brightened, "The Heaven's Augury Compass's Artifact Spirit is so remarkable?"

This was something even the seniors of that time couldn't predict and was indeed a pleasant surprise. Speaking of which, no matter how high one's cultivation level, even at Sun Blaze, it's impossible to foresee every eventuality.

The strong ones from the pre-Nine Provinces era had prepared for the worst possible outcomes and the best countermeasures, relinquishing other concerns, as each went off to the stellar space battle zones and perished in combat.

At that time, Ma Bin had just reached the Constellation stage and, despite his low cultivation, wasn't regarded as a threat, thus narrowly surviving by chance.

Seeing Ma Bin's intrigued demeanor, Lu Ye said, "If you're interested, I can tell you more about Nine Provinces?"

"I would like that." Ma Bin adjusted his position to make himself more comfortable and looked at Lu Ye with great interest.

The events from too long ago were beyond Lu Ye's knowledge; he could only speak of what he had experienced and understood.

He spoke of the structure of the opposition between the two major factions in Nine Provinces, the Spirit Stream battlefield, the Cloud River battlefield, and the checkpoints at the front lines. He also mentioned Number Nine, who shielded Nine Provinces, allowing it to pass through these ten thousand years safely. Furthermore, he spoke of how, akin to scavenging, Number Nine collected various pieces of floating land and shattered domains from the stellar space, turning them into secret realms, allowing Nine Provinces cultivators to experience the styles of other domains early.

He also recounted the insect calamity, where, for the first time in history, the two major factions collaborated sincerely, jointly venturing into the Insect Race secret realm and destroying the insect hives.

Furthermore, there was the vast army that ventured to the Blood Refinement World like divine weapons from the heavens, crushing the Blood Race and freeing the human race of that domain.

In the view of the Sun Blaze level, all these events were mere trivial matters, akin to sesame seeds, but Ma Bin listened intently, even showing a look of fascination, regretting that he couldn't personally partake in them.

The span of ten thousand years is so long; even with his formidable cultivation, he can't help but feel homesick.

Yet over the years, he has never actively sought any information about the Nine Provinces, nor has he tried to find it; he doesn't even know if the Nine Provinces still exists.

Because his goal is too significant, any action might easily attract enemies' attention. If that were to bring calamity to his homeland, he could never escape the guilt.

The current Nine Provinces was preserved by countless predecessors shedding their blood in the era before. He cannot assist the Nine Provinces in any way but must never do anything to harm it.

Upon hearing that the enhancement of the Nine Provinces' foundation is related to absorbing the Blood Refinement World, Ma Bin's expression turned stern: "In that case, is the Nine Provinces now a rapidly growing domain?"

"It should be." Lu Ye nodded, "Speaking of which, the Nine Provinces was previously targeted by a Sun Blaze shortly after it advanced to a large domain and connected with the stellar space."

Ma Bin's expression cooled, his intent to kill evident: "What's that Sun Blaze's name? Where did they come from?"

He looked as if he was about to strike to kill the person.

"Not sure where they were from; the name was Yueh Xin, but no need to worry, senior. At the time, under Number Nine's guidance, I found Senior Yang Qing and helped him get free. Yueh Xin was killed by Senior Yang Qing."

"Yang Qing..." Ma Bin froze for a moment, then realized: "Oh, right, he's the Sect Master's old friend. Because of some mistakes, the Sect Master sealed him, probably just going through the motions, quickly releasing him. When the Nine Provinces faced an invasion by a formidable enemy, during the most perilous moment, this senior wanted to help, but the Sect Master didn't allow it, lest he suffer the same fate as us. He's very powerful; defeating a Sun Blaze is normal. So, is it Senior Yang Qing who now guards our homeland?"

Lu Ye shook his head: "After freeing himself, Senior Yang Qing took me to the Reincarnation Tree to join the Divine Sea struggle. Upon returning, he left alone; he didn't say where he went, and I don't know."

Ma Bin's gaze flickered, as if realizing something.

Speaking of the Reincarnation Tree, Lu Ye suddenly remembered: "Senior, the Reincarnation Tree has a doppelganger in the Nine Provinces. It should know the Nine Provinces is intact and also knows the exact location. Haven't you gone to inquire?"

Ma Bin shook his head: "Outside the Reincarnation Tree, strong figures lurk in the shadows. If I appear, I certainly can't hide my trace. I wanted to inquire by the Reincarnation Tree, but unfortunately never had the chance."

Lu Ye felt slightly disappointed because if Ma Bin had inquired by the Reincarnation Tree about the Nine Provinces, he might have known its exact location; then Lu Ye here could know the specific path to return to the Nine Provinces. But since Ma Bin hadn't inquired, there was no way to check.

"Then how did you come to the All Phenomena Galaxy? Since you're here, why don't you know the path back, still needing to inquire with the All Phenomena Merchants Guild for information?" This point particularly puzzled Ma Bin.

But thanks to Lu Ye seeking information from the All Phenomena Merchants Guild, or else Zhu Yuan wouldn't have had the chance to lead him here.

"It's a long story." Lu Ye sighed, narrating how Yueh Xin set up a big array connecting Unparalleled Continent and the Nine Provinces, turning Unparalleled into a crucial training site for the Nine Provinces' True Lake and Divine Sea, and mentioning the Constellation Realm invasion in Qingli Dao World, how he killed Moon Jade using a red talisman, ultimately chased by Tang Jun, triggering the formation of the Insect Path.

"I fell into the Insect Path with Tang Jun, finally breaking free using a certain item. When I came to my senses, I was in the All Phenomena Galaxy, and that Insect Path had just formed, still unstable, so I couldn't return."

These twists and turns amazed even a Sun Blaze like Ma Bin when hearing them; as for the item helping one break free in the Insect Path, Lu Ye didn't elaborate, and Ma Bin didn't ask.

Though he was interested in another matter: "How do you have a red talisman from the Dwarf Race in your hand?"

Logically speaking, since the Nine Provinces has just advanced to a large domain, it knows nothing about stellar space; Dwarf Race red talismans are extremely precious—where did Lu Ye get one?

"Senior knows, too; when the Nine Provinces advanced to a large domain, we Constellations began exploring surrounding stellar space. I inadvertently saved a Dwarf Race member and then entered Mount Fangcun, where I helped them a lot. The red talisman was given by a Dwarf Race Sun Blaze."

"That help must have been significant; you are indeed someone with fortune!" Ma Bin praised, seemingly recalling some amusing incident. "Entering stellar space initially must have been overwhelming, right? When I first entered stellar space years ago, I was dumbstruck, fortunate that my senior brother and sister guided me, or I wouldn't even find my way back."

Speaking of these amusing stories, a nostalgic gleam appeared in his eyes. Unfortunately, after ten thousand years, those familiar faces and voices have long vanished; recalling now only adds to the sadness.

Shaking his head: "Continue speaking about yourselves; the old man's tales are gloomy—the youth have the vigor!"