

Humanity 2111

Chapter 2111: Stellar Fruits on the Stellar Tree

Within the Golden Rice Bowl, two battle groups were fiercely engaged, Lu Ye forcefully wielded the power of the 7th Dao, matching blows with the Flame Race. For a moment, they were evenly matched, with Lu Ye even faintly gaining the upper hand. His opponent had just experienced a major battle, and although there was still Dao force to use, they were greatly depleted and far from their peak.

On the other side, in the Blood Sea, the Talent Tree Avatar, along with allies, was eliminating the underlings of the Flame Race.

The Blood Sea surged. Relying on his tough skin, Chong Yue fearlessly confronted a 5th Dao cultivator, his moves were bold and fierce. The Great Demon Venerable Zi Ji revealed its true form, appearing as a huge purple Eight-tailed Demon Fox, its sharp claws seemed to possess the power to sunder the heavens. Jiu Yan's Silver Spear flashed back and forth, wreaking havoc in the Blood Sea, searching for a chance to kill. Su Wan held a longsword, her body merged with the sword light, coming and going without a trace. From her usual appearance, no one would have thought she was a sword cultivator renowned for killing.

Water Fairy and Chen Li were slightly less powerful, yet they each entangled a 4th Dao enemy.

The form of the Bewitchment Shadow flickered in and out of view within the Blood Sea, and each time it appeared, it was to deliver a powerful attack on the enemy at the most opportune moment.

With such a lineup, even without Lu Ye's doppelganger, they could probably hold their own against the enemy. Now, with Lu Ye's doppelganger's assistance, the battle leaned overwhelmingly in their favor.

It should be noted that even the Talent Tree Avatar could now display a level of the 6th Dao!

With a miserable cry from the Blood Sea, their side's advantage grew rapidly like a snowball, with continuous screams resounding one after another, until the last 4th Dao. Then the doppelganger shouted sternly: "Spare his life!"

On this side, they knew nothing about the situation. He had no idea what use that giant tree and the fruits that seemed cast from stars had, but the enemies certainly did. Sparing a life could provide some insights.

During this fierce battle, the main body was also engaged in a fierce clash with the Flame Race. The Flame Race was no fool, sensing his underlings continually dying, he immediately knew the situation was dire and attempted to escape.

How could Lu Ye let him escape? The Blood Sea surged, cutting off all hope of his escape.

Moments later, another Blood Sea, under the doppelganger's control, merged with this side's Blood Sea. The concealed Zi Ji and others seized this opportunity to launch an assault.

Except for Su Wan guarding the nearly powerless 4th Dao, everyone else gathered around the Flame Race.

The Flame Race clearly knew this time there was no escape, roaring in anger, displaying a desperate stance.

In the end, two fists were no match for four hands, with Lu Ye's main body holding him off, others launched a round of attacks that shattered his protective magic. Lu Ye took the chance to strike, delivering a heavy blow.

A similar scene repeated three times before Lu Ye finally found the opportunity to kill the Flame Race thoroughly.

The Blood Sea receded, and Lu Ye took the opportunity to also retrieve the Talent Tree Avatar.

After a fierce battle, there were casualties on each side. Lu Ye had the greatest depletion; main body and doppelganger together depleted nearly a hundred strands of Dao force.

But encountering an evenly matched opponent in Star Abyss, such depletion was unavoidable. This was with companions' assistance; without them, the situation would be even more serious, possibly turning all painstaking cultivation into nothing, needing to start over.

Without needing instructions, everyone immediately began to clean up the battlefield.

Lu Ye flashed in front of the 4th Dao cultivator being guarded by Su Wan.

At this moment, he was drenched in blood, looking extremely miserable. This was the price of forcefully wielding the power of the 7th Dao, as his entire flesh was riddled with countless tears, now quickly healing.

Glancing at the 4th Dao cultivator, Lu Ye spoke: "Human race?"

Even when life and death were controlled by others, the opponent didn't seem too afraid, just nodded lightly. Not only that, but he also asked a question: "Are you lost ones?"

The so-called lost ones are those like them, whose stellar space of origin shattered not long ago, still bearing evident traces of stellar space cultivators.

However, as time passes, these traces will gradually disappear, then they will become indistinguishable from Star Abyss cultivators.

Lu Ye paid no heed, raising his hand to point at his chest: "I ask, you answer, no nonsense!"

"What do you want to know?"

"What is that over there?" Lu Ye tilted his head to indicate.

The 4th Dao cultivator turned his head to look, then replied, "Stellar Tree."

"What's its use?"

This time, the opponent didn't answer immediately, but asked, "Will I survive if I tell you?"

"Yes!" Lu Ye nodded, "Tell me what you know, then I will let you go."

Upon hearing this, the 4th Dao cultivator's eyes showed a disdainful look: "In the Star Abyss, there's no such thing as trust. How do I know if what you're saying is true?"

"Do you have a choice?" Lu Ye looked at him calmly, "I can totally kill you, pick those few fruits, and then take them out to ask someone."

"Those fruits aren't ripe." The 4th Dao cultivator chuckled, "If you pick them now, they're worthless. As for their use, all I can tell you is that they're greatly useful to us at the Beginner Realm!"

Not mature?

Lu Ye couldn't help but glance at the Stellar Tree in the distance again, slightly frowning. According to his original guess, the Flame Race had already led their forces to slay beasts and seize treasures, indicating the time was ripe, how could it not be mature?

After a moment's thought, he felt something was amiss. If the fruit were indeed mature, why didn't the star beasts eat them? Instead, they left them hanging on the tree? Seven-level star beasts couldn't be that foolish.

The fruit probably wasn't mature yet.

"I can tell you what use the Stellar Fruit on the Stellar Tree has," the opponent suddenly spoke while Lu Ye was pondering.

"Let's hear it."

The 4th Dao cultivator hesitated briefly and then said slowly, "Take me for instance, when forging my Dao foundation, I had the strength of the 3rd Dao. Over the years, I've gradually accumulated to enhance my foundation, thus achieving the strength of the 4th Dao. But the 4th Dao is my limit; everyone has their own limits. The Flame Race member you killed had a limit of the 7th Dao, but if I consume a Stellar Fruit, it'll be different. It can raise our cultivators' upper limits, giving us the possibility to advance further. If I consume a Stellar Fruit, I could achieve the strength of the 5th Dao."

Upon hearing this, everyone raised their eyebrows. If the Stellar Fruit had such a use, it would indeed be a treasure.

Just as this person said, everyone has their limit, and when that limit is reached, one's potential is fully excavated. But the Stellar Fruit can raise the upper limit of a cultivator, which is useful to most cultivators.

"The Stellar Fruit isn't limited to just this use," the 4th Dao cultivator continued, "Earlier, I mentioned the benefits for cultivators like me, who have reached their limits, in consuming Stellar Fruit. If a cultivator who still has room for growth consumes the Stellar Fruit, it can greatly enhance their foundation, providing an opportunity to harness more Dao force. Additionally, the Stellar Fruit significantly aids in honing the Dao Bone, greatly increasing its success rate upon consumption."

These words made Zi Ji's expression bright—a short while ago he had attempted to hone his second Dao Bone, but ended in failure, costing him two hundred Dao force, leaving him heart-achingly unable to recover.

Had he known earlier, he wouldn't have rushed to hone it.

"Though Stellar Trees aren't commonly seen in the Star Abyss, they're not rare either. They usually only appear within stellar marvels. This particular Stellar Tree has been around for nearly a thousand years and began forming its fruit three hundred years ago. If you simply want to wait for the fruit to mature, it'll probably take... another ten to twenty years?"

Lu Ye squinted slightly: "So you know how to make it mature quickly?"

The 4th Dao cultivator smiled without speaking.

Zi Ji exchanged a glance with Lu Ye, his Mental Consciousness stirred briefly, and Lu Ye nodded slightly. Zi Ji then stepped forward: "Tell us, what would it take for you to share this method? Don't play tricks, until we've confirmed your method, you won't get away."

The 4th Dao cultivator seemingly had a plan, and spoke: "It's simple, you swear in the name of the Will of the Star Abyss, I share the method of hastening maturity, and upon verification, we part ways peacefully, without harm to me."

"So simple?" Zi Ji was taken aback.

The 4th Dao cultivator looked at him meaningfully: "It is that simple."

Zi Ji nodded immediately: "Alright, I, Zi Ji, in the name of..."

"Wait!" Lu Ye raised his hand to interrupt. Zi Ji found the condition simple, but Lu Ye was immediately reminded of the Heaven's Augury oath of the Nine Provinces, making him realize that any oath in a certain name isn't to be taken lightly.

He looked at the 4th Dao cultivator: "Does the Star Abyss have its own will?"

If the Star Abyss has its own will, this oath wouldn't be simple.

The opponent chuckled: "I'm just a 4th Dao cultivator, how would I know such profound matters? Perhaps it does... maybe?"

Lu Ye gazed deeply at him, pondered briefly, and looked at Zi Ji: "I'll do it!"

He had the Talent Tree to rely on; earlier in the Asura Field, he could even incinerate the power of the Asura Pact. Thus, it was naturally safer for him to swear.

Looking at the 4th Dao cultivator, he followed his request: "In the name of the Will of the Star Abyss, should you inform us of the method for hastening the Stellar Fruit's maturation, and upon confirming its correctness, we will let you leave unharmed."

As he spoke, Lu Ye remained vigilant, guarding against any possible unforeseen events.

But even after he finished speaking, he detected no anomalies, allowing him to breathe a sigh of relief. It seemed he had overthought things.

"Now, could you tell us how to hasten the maturation of the Stellar Fruit?" Zi Ji asked.

The 4th Dao cultivator nodded: "Certainly. The maturation of the Stellar Fruit, much like us cultivators, requires absorption of Dao force. You all need to take the Dao Bones of the fallen here and place them under the Stellar Tree, which will greatly reduce the time required for its growth. The more you place, the less time you'll wait. Additionally, Dao Bones void of remaining Dao force are also useful, though less effective. You can even channel your own Dao force to feed the Stellar Tree."

Upon hearing this, Zi Ji felt deeply remorseful: "I should have thought of this sooner."

Lu Ye nodded, finally understanding why the Flame Race had let their underlings die without aid—they'd planned to use the Dao Bones of their fallen subordinates to nourish the Stellar Tree.

"How many Dao Bones are there?" Lu Ye turned to ask.

The battlefield had been cleared, and presently all Dao Bones were gathered in Jiu Yan's hands. After checking, she replied: "There are twenty-nine pieces with remaining Dao force, and three without, belonging to the star beast."

Chapter 2112: Feeding the Stellar Tree

The Flame Race came with more than twenty people this time, and almost ended up in complete annihilation. Apart from that 4th Dao, everyone else died.

Cultivators below the 6th Dao each have only one Dao Bone, the 6th Dao has two, and as for the 7th Dao, it's three Dao Bones.

Except for the three Dao Bones of the star beast, the other Dao Bones retained some Dao force to varying degrees.

Originally, those three Dao Bones from the star beast had been discarded by Jiu Yan, but after hearing what that 4th Dao cultivator said, she picked them up again.

Lu Ye then realized that Dao Bones with exhausted Dao force are still useful. He had previously acquired so many Dao Bones and discarded them after absorbing the Dao force within...

Not only did he do this, but so did everyone else.

It seems that Dao Bones shouldn't be casually thrown away; one might encounter a Stellar Tree again someday.

"What about their storage rings?" Lu Ye suddenly remembered something. Since the Flame Race chose to act at this time, they must have been prepared. They definitely would have stocked Dao Bones with no remaining Dao force.

The storage rings were also held by Jiu Yan, along with those Dao Bones, and handed over to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye unlocked the restriction locks on each storage ring, and sure enough, in one of the rings, he found a large number of Dao Bones without Dao force, and the assets in this ring were quite substantial.

It must belong to that 7th Dao Flame Race member.

"Let's go, take a look." Lu Ye beckoned, leading the group towards the Stellar Tree.

From afar, this Stellar Tree didn't look too large, but getting closer, it was apparent that this thing was indeed not small.

The whole tree wasn't a living entity but was a mysterious fusion of countless twinkling starlights, its roots resembling glowing whips, exposed in the Void.

Looking up, there were only three fruits on the enormous Stellar Tree.

Those fruits were not actual fruits, but rather things formed from some kind of mystical energy, merely resembling fruits in appearance.

Standing beneath the tree, Lu Ye tossed a Dao Bone without Dao force onto one of the roots, which immediately came to life, enveloped in bright light, and the Dao Bone quickly dissolved.

It is known that Dao Bones, even without residual Dao force, are the most solid things on a cultivator's body. Even if Lu Ye took the Boulder Mountain Saber to slash, it might not break in one strike. But now, it was swiftly consumed by the root of the Stellar Tree, truly a wonder.

With one Dao Bone vanished, Lu Ye looked up at the three fruits, which seemed unchanged.

He let go and placed all the Dao Bones without Dao force onto the roots of the tree.

After a moment, all Dao Bones disappeared, and at last, the three fruits showed some changes, appearing somewhat brighter.

"How do you know when they're ripe?" Lu Ye turned and asked the 4th Dao cultivator.

The other replied, "When the Stellar Fruit is ripe, the Stellar Tree will naturally dissolve. A Stellar Tree only bears fruit once in its lifetime."

Lu Ye understood. The other should not be lying at this moment; accordingly, he threw each Dao Bone with residual Dao force onto the roots of the tree.

Dao Bones with residual Dao force, when absorbed by the roots, indeed had a different effect. The three fruits visibly changed.

Moments later, twenty-nine Dao Bones were completely consumed...

This Stellar Tree seemed insatiable. It's important to know that these twenty-nine Dao Bones, if refined by everyone, could have provided a significant amount of Dao force, creating a substantial accumulation even if it didn't lead to a breakthrough.

Yet now, all had been devoured, and the Stellar Fruit was still not ripe.

Lu Ye turned to look at the 4th Dao cultivator, who immediately understood and said, "Ripening the Stellar Fruit isn't a simple task. Our aim in acting at this time was merely to seize this Stellar Tree. If not for you, we would be scouring the area for Dao Bones to feed the Stellar Tree."

Lu Ye asked darkly, "Did your leader calculate how long it would take for the Stellar Fruit to mature with this method?"

"Three or five months?" The 4th Dao cultivator responded uncertainly.

Lu Ye almost wanted to kill him.

But now, having invested so much, quitting halfway was not an option. To give up now would mean all prior investments were wasted.

But on second thought, the urgency to leave this area was mainly due to feeling the presence of a force nearby.

Now that the force led by that 7th Dao Flame Race was wiped out by them, remaining a while longer wouldn't be too dangerous.

After pondering for a moment, Lu Ye placed his hand on a glowing root in front of him.

Since Dao Bones were insufficient, he decided to use his Dao force to feed the Stellar Tree. Among their eight-member team, he had the most accumulated Dao force; even someone like Zi Ji couldn't support such feeding.

Under the urging of Dao force, Lu Ye immediately felt the ravenous aura coming from the roots of the Stellar Tree.

Feeling helpless, he had always been the one to activate the Talent Tree to devour others, yet unexpectedly today he was devoured by the Stellar Tree.

His Dao force rapidly depleted...

When his Dao force dropped to four hundred thirty, Lu Ye finally stopped.

He couldn't afford to be devoured any further; if his Dao force suffered more loss, he wouldn't be able to maintain his 7th Dao strength.

Standing up and looking around, Lu Ye said, "We still need to go out and hunt for Dao bones."

"Let's go together," Zi Ji spoke. During this time, Lu Ye had been out there working hard alone, supporting everyone, and now it was naturally time for collective effort.

Lu Ye had no objections, after a brief contemplation he said, "Jiu Yan and Su Wan, you two senior sisters stay behind to look after this place. I will leave a doppelganger here, and the rest will be divided into two teams, I'll act alone."

The arrangement was naturally no problem, Jiu Yan opened her mouth, seemingly wanting to say something, but eventually remained silent.

For a team to operate, there needs to be a single voice, she understood this clearly.

Once agreed upon, when everyone was just about to set off, the 4th Dao cultivator slowly remarked, "A reminder, once the Stellar Fruit matures, unless preserved with special means, it won't last long. If any of you plan to polish your second Dao bone, you need to prepare early."

Lu Ye was taken aback, "How should Stellar Fruit be preserved?"

The 4th Dao cultivator shrugged: "I don't know about that, it probably requires some special artifact, anyhow I don't have one."

Lu Ye quickly took out the Flame Race's storage ring, searched through it but found no such artifact. It seemed he was planning to consume it immediately.

This made things difficult.

He originally planned to take the three Stellar Fruits first, and then discuss how to allocate them. But now it seemed that the allocation needed to be prepared in advance.

For himself, he temporarily didn't require this item. According to his previous thoughts, it would be best to allocate these three Stellar Fruits to three 5th Dao cultivators to polish their second Dao bone. This way, there would be an opportunity to create three 6th Dao cultivators.

By then, the team of eight would consist of one 7th Dao and three 6th Dao. The strength of the entire team would surely see a significant boost and be better capable of self-preservation in the Star Abyss.

At present, the team includes Zi Ji, Jiu Yan, Su Wan, and Chong Yue, all 5th Dao. Four people have this qualification, yet only three fruits are available, making it somewhat tricky.

Jiu Yan clearly noticed Lu Ye's dilemma and immediately said, "Let's fully support Zi Ji, Su Wan, and Chong Yue, Fellow Daoists, in achieving the 6th Dao, how about that?" She extracted herself from the situation, leaving Lu Ye free from the hardship.

Chong Yue shook his head at this: "That's unsuitable. In this matter, Lu has contributed the most. Regardless of anything, he must get one Stellar Fruit. If he doesn't take one, then we are even less qualified."

Everyone nodded in agreement, as the matter of the Stellar Tree was discovered based on Lu Ye's intelligence, and everyone was led by him. He exerted the most effort in the battle against the Flame Race's Star Abyss cultivators.

He had, after all, expended an immeasurable amount of Dao force to nourish the Stellar Tree just earlier.

There's no reason for such a significant contributor to end up with nothing; thus, regardless of whether the Stellar Fruit is useful to Lu Ye or not, he qualifies to receive one.

As for whom he gives the Stellar Fruit to after obtaining it, that's up to his discretion, and no one will interfere.

Chong Yue continued, "Fellow Daoist Zi Ji was the first to forge the Dao foundation, and for the past year, he has consistently maintained our safety, both publicly and personally. He deserves a piece." Speaking, he cracked a smile, "I can do without it; give the last one to Fellow Daoist Su Wan. I'll hone my second Dao bone solo to ascend to the 6th Dao sooner or later."

Su Wan smiled radiantly, "Brother Chong Yue, your kindness is appreciated. According to my judgment, we are currently a team, so we must prioritize the collective interests. Brother Chong Yue entered the Dao Realm before me and has accumulated more Dao force than me, thus naturally closer to honing the second Dao bone, making him more suitable to consume the third Stellar Fruit than I am."

As she spoke, she glanced at Lu Ye, "Throughout this year, Fellow Daoist Lu's efforts have been evident to us all; hearts are flesh. With Daoist's selflessness, how could we remain ignorant? Daoist sets an example for us, and while the Stellar Fruit is valuable, surviving in this Star Abyss as a team, our interests are paramount."

Lu Ye nodded, feeling comforted.

Such a team of eight in the All Phenomena Ocean stellar space might each harbor eight hundred Mental Eyes, but here in the Star Abyss, they coexist peacefully and all-out support each other.

This is undoubtedly linked to his year-long selfless dedication, setting a good start, fostering a harmonious team atmosphere. Had he been more selfish, the group would have fallen apart long ago.

"Alright, this is the allocation for the Stellar Fruit. Zi Ji, Chong Yue, and I will each take one," Lu Ye concluded.

Everyone had no objections.

Given this, Zi Ji, Chong Yue, and Jiu Yan must prepare to hone their second Dao bones.

Fortunately for Jiu Yan, over the past year, she received the most Dao bones from Lu Ye, consistently nearing two hundred Dao force.

Next was Chong Yue, but Zi Ji... having failed in honing his Dao bone, had the least accumulation of Dao force. Yet, on the contrary, having experience, using the Stellar Fruit to polish the Dao bone, his success rate would actually be the highest.

Chapter 2113: The Birth of Three Six-Daos

After discussing, Jiu Yan and Su Wan stayed behind to guard the Stellar Tree and the 4th Dao cultivator, while Lu Ye assigned one Talent Tree Avatar to oversee the situation.

The remaining six people split into three teams and began to hunt Dao Bones in all directions.

Lu Ye went alone, Zi Ji took Bewitchment Shadow, and Chong Yue took Water Fairy and Chen Li.

By acting separately like this, the efficiency of hunting Dao Bones naturally became much greater than when Lu Ye was alone. Initially, the Dao Bones obtained by Zi Ji and Chong Yue were primarily used to accumulate their own Dao force.

Only after surpassing two hundred in accumulation did they start feeding the Stellar Tree.

During this period, the Dao Bones Lu Ye obtained were sent back using Void Spirit Runes. Jiu Yan's Dao force accumulation had already broken through two hundred, with quite a surplus.

The 4th Dao cultivator said that through this method to feed the Stellar Tree, it might take three to five months to mature a Stellar Fruit, but in fact, three to five months was not nearly enough.

It's not that he was lying.

But the team had three people who needed to accumulate their own Dao force and prepare to consume the Stellar Fruit, which slowed the process.

Eight months later, the eight members of the team gathered under the Stellar Tree once again.

At this moment, the Stellar Tree had changed significantly compared to eight months ago, with the entire tree becoming exceptionally transparent, as if it could disappear at any moment.

In contrast, the three fruits hanging from the tree were shining with even more brilliant and rich starlight.

This situation seemed as if the Stellar Fruits were consuming all the essence of the Stellar Tree.

According to the 4th Dao cultivator, this was a sign that the fruits were about to mature.

Lu Ye stood beneath the tree by the roots, holding a few Dao Bones in his hand, throwing them one by one into the roots.

Everyone else waited quietly nearby, secretly anticipating.

Until only two Dao Bones were left in his hand, the Stellar Tree suddenly shook, and the tree body, which was almost invisible, disappeared completely.

Only three Stellar Fruits remained suspended in the original place, radiating an unprecedented dazzling light, rapidly expanding to the size of a water jar in the blink of an eye.

"Now!" Lu Ye called out in a low voice.

Three figures, long prepared, dashed out, darting toward the three fruits, instantly entering them, leaving no trace.

Stellar Fruits are not consumed by mouth; these are not actual fruits but require the cultivator to merge into them and use the wondrous power of the Stellar Fruits to refine their Dao Bones, which is why this treasure needs special containers for preservation.

By releasing his Mental Consciousness to perceive, he found nothing to detect.

Lu Ye turned to the 4th Dao cultivator and asked, "What's the success rate of the Stellar Fruits in assisting the refinement of Dao Bones?"

The 4th Dao cultivator, having spent time with Jiu Yan and Su Wan, knew that Lu Ye and his group were reasonable people, so he was more at ease than before. He said calmly, "I don't know; I've never used one. However, I once heard the chief say that unless the foundation is too poor, there's basically no chance of failure when refining Dao Bones with the help of the Stellar Fruit."

Lu Ye raised his eyebrows slightly, feeling reassured by this.

When it comes to the foundation, those chosen by the Spectral Sedan Chair do not have weak backgrounds. Which of them had not accumulated over the years at Peak Sun Blaze?

Jiu Yan's turmoil in the Dao Realm was due to an unresolved inner knot. Once it was resolved with help, she quickly established her Dao foundation.

During the wait, Lu Ye remained vigilant, monitoring the surroundings with the others to prevent any unforeseen incidents.

Perhaps due to the recent extensive hunting in the area, not many Star Abyss living creatures were around, leading to a peaceful environment.

Two days later, one of the Stellar Fruits' light suddenly dimmed, revealing Zi Ji's figure. Meeting Lu Ye's eyes, he nodded slightly, communicating everything without words.

Another day passed, and the remaining two Stellar Fruits dimmed simultaneously, revealing the figures of Jiu Yan and Chong Yue.

Chong Yue's face was alight with joy, making it clear that everything had succeeded.

Though Jiu Yan was less overt, the corners of her eyes subtly curved, indicating her good mood.

"Congratulations to you, Fellow Daoists, for achieving the 6th Dao. Our strength has grown once again," Su Wan cheerfully offered her congratulations.

The emergence of three 6th Dao achievers meant that the effort made during those eight months had been worthwhile, as having greater strength in the Star Abyss meant better self-preservation.

Others also offered their congratulations, creating a harmonious scene.

Lu Ye looked at the 4th Dao cultivator nearby: "If you have nowhere else to go, would you like to join us?"

The other hesitated for a moment but shook his head: "I appreciate the Fellow Daoist's kindness, but I prefer staying here."

Lu Ye didn't press further. His intent to recruit came from the advantage of the individual's knowledge about the Star Abyss, providing insights when encountering the unexpected.

However, the other seemed very cautious.

This was not surprising. All eight of them came from the same stellar space, capable of mutual support and honest cooperation here, but integrating an outsider was not so simple.

"Then, please feel free, Fellow Daoist!" Lu Ye gestured with a hand.

The other nodded slightly and turned to leave, his voice echoing from afar: "Fellow Daoist, for survival in the Star Abyss, ensure never to lightly swear by the name of the Will of the Star Abyss again. The Will of the Star Abyss is omnipresent, and any oath made under its name will be scrutinized. To break it invites peril!"

"Noted!" Lu Ye cupped his hands from afar.

The restless Zi Ji paused upon hearing these words.

He had just forged his second Dao Bone, and his Dao force was heavily depleted. He initially intended to use that 4th Dao Bone to replenish himself...

"Will of the Star Abyss..." Zi Ji murmured, turning to Lu Ye: "Did you feel anything special when you took the oath?"

Lu Ye shook his head: "No, I didn't."

In Zi Ji's eyes, a flash of light appeared: "So, he might be bluffing?" Though he said this, he had no intention of pursuing, for some matters are better believed than not.

"Let's go." Lu Ye called out.

Although the pre-determined journey was delayed by eight months, the team's overall strength had improved, which would undoubtedly be greatly beneficial for the journey ahead.

An eight-member team, led by Lu Ye, with Zi Ji at the rear, while Chong Yue and Jiu Yan were positioned on the sides, the others sandwiched in between, traversing through the vast Star Abyss.

Because of the Dao Bones' presence, battles and killings could break out at any moment within this Star Abyss.

The squad advanced and occasionally encountered enemies. In the numerous dangers, the eight-member team repeatedly escaped death by a narrow margin.

The most perilous encounter was with a 9th Dao star beast.

The star beast didn't look impressive from a distance, nor was it large, but once engaged, everyone realized its ferocity.

With a single strike, Zi Ji was severely injured. If not for the strong physique of the Demon Race, he might have died on the spot.

In that battle, Lu Ye gave it everything he had. Fortunately, this 9th Dao star beast had great strength but little spiritual intelligence, allowing him to use the Blood Sea to cover their escape. Then, with the doppelganger's assistance and the Void Spirit Runes, he narrowly escaped, though not without sustaining heavy injuries in the end.

If it had been a Star Abyss cultivator with higher spiritual intelligence, the entire team might have been annihilated.

After this battle, the eight-member team rested and recuperated in a concealed place for several months before slowly recovering.

The road ahead was rough, but there was no choice but to press on.

With hardships, there naturally comes gain.

Among the eight, Bewitchment Shadow, Water Fairy, and Chen Li had already advanced to the 5th Dao, just waiting to accumulate enough Dao force to attempt refining a second Dao Bone.

Su Wan had not broken through; she had tried once to refine a Dao Bone and ended up with the same result as Zi Ji's earlier failure, with the invested Dao force going to waste.

The strength of the three 6th Dao cultivators hadn't increased, but as their Dao force accumulated, they no longer had to act as cautiously as before, without needing to worry about Dao force consumption.

The greatest improvement was in Lu Ye.

Now, his accumulated Dao force had surpassed nine hundred... In theory, with so much Dao force, he should be able to exhibit 9th Dao strength.

But at present, with his foundation, the maximum Dao force he could wield was the 7th Dao, so further accumulation of Dao force was meaningless.

However, due to the shared distribution, both his main body and Talent Tree Avatar could exert 7th Dao strength, effectively adding another 7th Dao to the team.

In a stellar space marvel, everyone searched in all directions.

The Stellar Tree only manifests within the stellar space marvels, which is no secret in the Star Abyss, so whenever encountering a stellar space marvel, the team explored in hope of finding Stellar Fruits to aid their breakthrough.

The stellar space marvels in the Star Abyss differ greatly from those in the stellar space, mainly in their scale.

Take the All Phenomena Ocean's stellar space, for instance, where each marvel is enormous, with the smaller ones covering a star system and the larger spanning over a hundred star systems.

But in the Star Abyss, it's not the same. The stellar space marvels are not large, for reasons unknown.

Unfortunately, along this journey, although many stellar space marvels were encountered, the Stellar Tree remained elusive.

This time was no different, yielding no results.

Lu Ye led the team out from the stellar space marvel and found a nearby spot to rest briefly.

"How long has it been?" Water Fairy's gentle voice rang out.

The Star Abyss landscape hardly changes, and even a strong one like Water Fairy finds it hard to track the passage of time unless careful.

"Almost four years!" Zi Ji responded.

Since the day they left the area with the Golden Rice Bowl, it's been three years; none expected this journey to be so long.

Though caution slowed their pace and there were many delays along the way, just the travel took this much time, an invaluable experience for everyone.

In the All Phenomena Ocean stellar space, going anywhere never took this long, even traveling to a distant location could use the Insect Path to shorten the trip.

The Star Abyss also had Insect Paths, quite a few, which they occasionally encountered, but no one knew what lay at the other end or where it led, so no one dared to take the risk.

Suppose a powerful figure is waiting on the other side; going over would mean certain death.

"Brother Lu, how much longer until we arrive?" Chong Yue looked at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye, upon hearing this, activated his mana, silently sensing the Reincarnation Tree mark on the back of his hand, then pondered before speaking: "At our current pace, possibly within a year!"

Chapter 2114: Fire Seed Unextinguished

The sensation transmitted through the Reincarnation Tree mark was initially sporadic, obviously due to the great distance, coupled with the special ambience of the Star Abyss, which had strong interference on this perception.

However, as the distance closed, the sensation gradually stabilized and became clearer.

In recent years, Lu Ye has been using this method to determine the direction of travel, and likewise, estimating the distance by the strength of the sensation.

It's not possible to be too precise, but within a year, it shouldn't take a year if the speed is faster.

In the beginning, everyone had another expectation, that the elusive Spectral Sedan Chair might suddenly appear and take them back to the original stellar space.

This was not an impossible occurrence, as the Spectral Sedan Chair had already attended to them twice before, so there was a possibility for a third time.

But as time dragged on without its appearance, everyone abandoned this hope.

Resting period over, they continued their journey.

On this day, as they passed through an area, Zi Ji suddenly frowned, concentrating as he surveyed the surroundings.

After a while, he couldn't help but feel a stirring in his heart and transmitted audio to Lu Ye, leading at the front.

Lu Ye stopped in his tracks at the words, turning his head to look, "What's wrong?"

Zi Ji didn't explain much, he just gestured, "Come with me for a walk."

From his appearance, he seemed to have discovered something, yet it didn't appear to be anything hostile, leaving Lu Ye uncertain of the specifics.

The formation of the team changed, with Zi Ji at the front and Lu Ye following behind.

Along the way, traces of prior intense battle could vaguely be seen, indicating that fierce fighting had once erupted in this area.

A half-day later, Zi Ji led the group to a particular location.

There seemed to have been a massive creation here, but due to intense combat, it had shattered, leaving behind a vast stellar space of fractured debris.

Amongst it were mingled numerous body parts.

Lu Ye looked in a direction, feeling surprised, quickly went forward to investigate, discovering it was a tattered cover armor, with a huge hole in the middle, stained with blood and remnants of flesh.

Observing the residual signs of the battlefield nearby, Lu Ye suddenly raised his head to gaze at Zi Ji.

Zi Ji at this moment also confirmed his prior speculation: "This is the Hekan Battle Fortress!"

As he passed the previous region, he had felt the terrain was somewhat familiar, but the more he observed, the more off it seemed, until arriving here, he finally confirmed this was where he had stayed for a period. The familiarity was clearly because he had once been active in that area.

"Is this... Cover Armor stellar space?" Lu Ye realized as well.

"That's right!" Zi Ji nodded, "This is the stellar space the Spectral Sedan Chair brought us to last time. Shortly after I was separated from you, I came to the Hekan Battle Fortress."

Lu Ye and Jiu Yan went to the Thunderbolt Battle Fortress, while others were scattered in different locations.

"But isn't this the Star Abyss? Why are we back here?" Chen Li looked puzzled.

Lu Ye replied slowly, "This is indeed the Star Abyss. It seems that the stellar space has been completely engulfed by the Star Abyss."

The Cover Armor stellar space had undoubtedly become part of the Star Abyss, which is why they could see the places once familiar to Zi Ji here.

When the Spectral Sedan Chair took them away, the Star Abyss Gates throughout the Cover Armor stellar space began to expand on a large scale. How long has it been since then? The entire stellar space has already completely fallen.

And nearby, there wasn't even a living creature left, not to mention even the Hekan Battle Fortress had been shattered. One could imagine the brutal battles that must have occurred here.

Realizing this, everyone's mood turned heavy.

Such a vast stellar space had become part of the Star Abyss, the fate of countless beings across the stellar space could be imagined.

"There's movement over there." Lu Ye suddenly looked in a specific direction, though very faint, a ripple of conflict was indeed emanating from that direction.

The group exchanged glances, tacitly employing methods to conceal their presences, each using their techniques as they approached that direction.

In a moment, the scene ahead entered their view.

It was a battered cover armor facing the encirclement of several Star Abyss cultivators.

The noise of the clash was immense, indicating that neither side was weak.

After years of warfare, Lu Ye and the others had naturally accumulated experience in judging the strength of Star Abyss cultivators, so just from the aftershocks of the clash, it was apparent that the cover armor cultivator was a 7th Dao, while the Star Abyss cultivators surrounding him included some from the 6th Dao and some from the 5th Dao.

In terms of strength, the cover armor cultivator was stronger, but he was clearly at the end of his strength, struggling to fend off the enemies' siege.

The battle he encountered was undoubtedly not just this one, otherwise, with the power of a 7th Dao, he would not have been trapped in such a desperate situation.

In this scenario, Lu Ye and the others merely exchanged glances and then moved in sync.

With a swift leap, Lu Ye headed straight towards the battlefield, with the others following closely behind.

Both sides in the great battle were astounded; no one had expected a third party to appear at this critical juncture. Star Abyss cultivators surrounding the cover armor cultivator immediately wanted to pull back and assess the situation.

But how could the cover armor cultivator allow them as they wished? To him, it didn't matter whether the newcomers were enemies or allies; he had already employed secret techniques in a life-or-death struggle. Regardless of victory or defeat, he wouldn't survive, and dragging a few down before dying would make it worthwhile.

An explosive burst in an instant allowed him to kill a 5th Dao opponent.

The other Star Abyss cultivators hadn't yet steadied themselves before Lu Ye and his party came at them like a storm.

Numbers and strength were inferior; once Lu Ye and his team made a move, the fate of these Star Abyss cultivators was sealed.

A few breaths later, Lu Ye sheathed his sword and turned to look at the cover armor cultivator.

The latter didn't look at him but stared fixedly at Zi Ji. Immediately, a gentle woman's voice emerged from the cover armor: "Zi Ji?"

The voice was full of disbelief: "You're still alive?"

She clearly knew Zi Ji, although according to the later news she had received, Zi Ji had been captured by a suddenly appearing Bridal Sedan Chair and hadn't been heard from since. Unexpectedly, after a few years, she saw him again here.

Zi Ji took a step forward and clasped his fists: "Fortress Master Narn!"

This cover armor cultivator was surprisingly the fort master of Hekan Battle Fortress. When Zi Ji first joined the fortress, he had met her once, yet didn't expect her to still remember him.

Fortress Master Narn looked at Lu Ye and the others, and from the shattered cover armor came her laughter: "Good, good! The fire seed of our stellar space hasn't extinguished, which means there's still hope."

She obviously mistook Lu Ye and the others as people from Cover Armor stellar space.

As she spoke, her body shuddered, and the shattered cover armor turned into countless fragments, disintegrating, revealing the image of an elderly woman with white hair inside.

Zi Ji's pupils contracted.

Back when he first saw the fortress master, she still possessed a charming appearance, but now she had transformed into this. Such massive changes couldn't happen to a 7th Dao cultivator in just a few years; the only explanation was that she had used some desperate secret technique that severely exhausted her.

Fortress Master Narn not only drastically changed her appearance, but her body also bore numerous horrifying wounds, her entire being reduced to skin and bones, as if all her blood had drained.

Lu Ye couldn't help but sigh; he recognized instantly that this fortress master wouldn't survive, merely clinging to her remaining life.

"Does the fortress master have any last words?" Zi Ji asked.

He didn't have a strong relationship with the fortress master and had only met once before, but the sight before him inevitably stirred feelings of mourning.

Would the fate of Cover Armor stellar space mirror the future of All Phenomena Ocean stellar space?

"Ha-ha..." Fortress Master Narn let out a sorrowful laugh, "No need for last words. I've battled all my life; dying here counts as a soldier's death. The stellar space is corroded, leaving no Pure Land; you must be careful in the future and survive."

Zi Ji moved his lips, momentarily at a loss for words.

"Also..." As she spoke, Fortress Master Narn suddenly raised her hand and plunged it into her abdomen. Gripping her teeth, she pulled out a section of rib, shaking violently while enduring the pain, she said, "This Dao Bone still contains some Dao force. Take it and refine it."

She threw it forcefully, the bloody Dao Bone flying towards Zi Ji.

Zi Ji caught it in one hand, and when he looked again, Fortress Master Narn had already lowered her head, life extinguished.

Holding the Dao Bone, Zi Ji remained silent for a long time.

It wasn't until Lu Ye activated Raging Flames to incinerate Fortress Master Narn's corpse that Zi Ji exhaled and said, "Let's go."

Moments later, Lu Ye asked, "Does anyone possess means to communicate with cover armor cultivators of stellar space?"

The appearance of Fortress Master Narn made him realize that despite being corroded, Cover Armor stellar space should still have surviving cultivators, and those able to survive such an overwhelming situation wouldn't be weak. Connecting with them could strengthen their team's power.

Cover armor cultivators from stellar space are trustworthy; on the stance against Star Abyss, everyone stands united.

Chong Yue scratched his face: "Yes, but we have no contacts!"

Not only him, but others were in the same situation.

Though once entering various battle fortresses everyone received specially crafted communication tools from Cover Armor stellar space, almost all spent time in seclusion on the outskirts of the battlefield, attempting to forge their Dao foundation without social interactions.

Even Lu Ye had only one contact: Du Qingsha!

But whether Du Qingsha was still alive, Lu Ye didn't know. When he was taken by the Spectral Sedan Chair, he had been facing a mass of Star Abyss cultivators pursuing Du Qingsha, and in such circumstances, survival seemed bleak for her.

Yet, it was worth trying.

In the following time, Lu Ye continuously attempted to contact Du Qingsha while leading his team forward.

They encountered many Star Abyss cultivators but no more cover armor cultivators from stellar space.

Until three months later, after repeated attempts, Lu Ye successfully contacted Du Qingsha!

This woman... she survived!

After brief communication, Lu Ye led his team towards Du Qingsha's location.

Chapter 2115: Survivors

In the silent stellar space, in a certain area, traces of the aftermath of a great battle could be seen everywhere. Lu Ye led the group to this place, searching for a while and found a wreck of a battered battleship.

This was a Sun Blaze-class battleship, a formidable weapon in any stellar space, but now it had become a pile of scrap.

And there were countless such wrecks in this area.

Following a breach in the battleship's wreckage, they flew inside, twisting and turning through the interior before finally reaching a cabin.

A ghostly glow suddenly flashed, activating the Formation here and opening a gap. Lu Ye slipped through, with the others following closely behind.

Standing and stabilizing his form, Lu Ye saw a familiar figure standing right in front of him. It was Du Qingsha.

At this moment, she was also looking at Lu Ye, an incredulous expression on her face, clearly not expecting to see him again in this lifetime.

Years ago, she and Lu Ye were hunted by many Star Abyss cultivators and fled in a sorry state. As a result, Lu Ye was taken away by a suddenly appearing mysterious Bridal Sedan Chair, and since then, there had been no news.

"Sister Qingsha, long time no see," Lu Ye spoke.

Du Qingsha then returned to her senses, nodding slightly, "Still alive... that's good!"

In recent years, she had witnessed too much death. Familiar or unfamiliar companions perished right before her eyes. It could be said that in recent years, she witnessed more deaths than all previous years combined.

Lu Ye then looked at the other two people behind her.

One was a chubby man, round as a meatball, the other a young man with sword-like brows and starry eyes.

Including Du Qingsha, there were only the three of them here.

What surprised Lu Ye was that he knew both of these men.

"Fort Master, Captain Chang!" Lu Ye cupped his fists.

The chubby man was none other than Chen Wulei, the fort master of the Thunderbolt Battle Fortress, while the young man was Chang Yu, the captain of Team A-6, who had previously collaborated with Team A-3 in hunting the 6th Dao!

Chen Wulei, at this moment, was looking at Lu Ye with curiosity, "Didn't they say you were taken away by the Spectral Sedan Chair? How come you're back?"

When Lu Ye and Jiu Yan first entered the Thunderbolt Battle Fortress, they had told Chen Wulei some things. In the entire Cover Armor stellar space, only Chen Wulei knew their origin.

Later, upon hearing from Du Qingsha that Lu Ye was taken away by the Spectral Sedan Chair, he vaguely speculated that Lu Ye had returned to his home stellar space.

Who would have thought they'd meet here again?

"It's a long story," Lu Ye sighed, "let's sit down and talk."

No one objected, of course.

After a short while, Lu Ye introduced the people from both sides, and then revealed all that had happened previously.

Upon hearing this, Chen Wulei realized that his previous speculation was incorrect. The Spectral Sedan Chair that took Lu Ye and the others wasn't to send them back to their original stellar space but directly brought them to the Star Abyss.

Currently, the Cover Armor stellar space has been consumed by the Star Abyss, completely becoming a part of the Star Abyss. By chance and coincidence, everyone now had the opportunity to meet here again.

Chen Wulei pondered, "As you say, your group was taken by the Spectral Sedan Chair twice, but it's been several years since then, and the Spectral Sedan Chair hasn't appeared again?"

"Yes."

"What is the intention of the Spectral Sedan Chair?" Chen Wulei was puzzled.

Lu Ye shook his head, "We've discussed this internally before. The Spectral Sedan Chair is likely a Supreme Treasure level, and it has its own will. As for its intentions, we can't be sure. But whatever its intentions are, in the end, we benefited from it."

Without the Spectral Sedan Chair, everyone might still be scattered across different parts of the All Phenomena Ocean, completely unaware of the truth behind the descending crisis, possibly even having conflicts due to some disagreements.

Without the Spectral Sedan Chair, no one could have established a Dao foundation and entered the Dao Realm.

Although wandering the Star Abyss now, with dangers everywhere, at least everyone has found the path beyond Sun Blaze and is treading further along it, barely having the qualifications to survive in the Star Abyss.

"Fort Master, is it just the three of you? Where are the others?" Lu Ye asked.

Chen Wulei shook his head and sighed, darkly sorrowful, "The Star Abyss Gate expanded, the Star Abyss fully pervaded, and after years of continuous battle, most are dead."

Originally, after passing through the most chaotic period, there were still quite a few of them surviving. But as the wide-ranging hunt by the Star Abyss cultivators took place, fewer and fewer survived. The three of them had experienced countless battles, barely surviving by luck.

"Three months ago, we passed the area where the Hekan Battle Fortress is located and saw Fortress Master Narn over there."

Chen Wulei's expression shifted with vigor, "Oh? What about her?"

Lu Ye shook his head, "Fortress Master Narn was besieged at that time, and we arrived too late."

Chen Wulei fell silent, undoubtedly already understanding Fortress Master Narn's fate.

"There should still be survivors. Those who can live through such a calamity are not mediocre. My opinion is whether we should attempt to contact them. In the current situation, only by integrating our dispersed strength do we have a better chance at survival." Lu Ye looked at Chen Wulei.

Du Qingsha spoke from the side, "We've done this before, but... the situation isn't quite what you imagine."

"What's wrong?" Lu Ye was puzzled.

Du Qingsha pondered for a moment before explaining, "Our stellar space was torn apart after being invaded by the Star Abyss, splitting into many parts. The area we're currently in is a part of our home stellar space, but nobody knows where the other parts were integrated into the Star Abyss."

"The stellar space was torn apart?" Lu Ye and the others were utterly shocked.

"That's right." Chen Wulei nodded, "We conducted a thorough investigation. Beyond this region, the stellar patterns don't match our knowledge; it's a completely unfamiliar environment."

"I can't believe such a thing..."

After the stellar space was corroded by the Star Abyss, it could actually be torn apart? Then, the entire stellar space would fragment into countless small parts, each integrating into different locations within the Star Abyss.

In this way, searching for survivors from our home stellar space is almost impossible because no one knows where they might be within the Star Abyss.

It was a stroke of fate that Lu Ye and the others encountered Fortress Master Narn; the area where the Hekan Battle Fortress resided happened to be along their path.

After a brief contemplation, Lu Ye spoke, "Fort master, Sister Qingsha, Captain Chang, if you three don't have a place to go, come with me."

Du Qingsha asked, "Where are you going?"

"Home!"

"Home?" Du Qingsha frowned, "Back to your stellar space?"

"Yes!" Lu Ye nodded.

Du Qingsha was puzzled: "How are you planning to return?"

This is the Star Abyss, even if Lu Ye's home stellar space still exists, how can they return?

Lu Ye said slowly, "Our stellar space has a supreme treasure called the Reincarnation Tree..."

As he explained, Lu Ye displayed his Reincarnation Tree mark.

Chen Wulei and the others gradually understood.

Du Qingsha said, "So you traveled from a very distant place, following the sensing of this mark? At the end of this sensing, there should be a way back to your stellar space."

Lu Ye nodded, "About six years ago, a Star Abyss Gate was opened in our stellar space. Although it was sealed by the power of a supreme treasure, that place should be a weak point in our home stellar space. I surmise that it is due to this weakness that there is a resonance between the mark and the Reincarnation Tree. Given the resonance, there should be a way back into the stellar space."

"There is indeed such a possibility." Chen Wulei nodded, then looked at Du Qingsha and Chang Yu: "What are your thoughts?"

Chang Yu said, "I have no thoughts. Where you go, I go!"

There might be other cultivators left in our home stellar space, but there are only the three of us left in the Thunderbolt Battle Fortress. The stellar space is destroyed, nowhere to go, as long as companions are present, that's home.

Du Qingsha said, "I'll listen to the fort master."

Chen Wulei smiled bitterly, "The Thunderbolt Battle Fortress is gone, what fort master is there to speak of?"

The grief in the smile slowly transformed into fury: "The Star Abyss invaded our stellar space, countless cultivators fought for hundreds of years, yet still couldn't stop the overwhelming tide. The domain was destroyed, beings tormented. We failed! But I, Chen Wulei, am born not to be defeated. Now that there is a chance, I still want to try once more, to see if this overwhelming tide is truly unstoppable!"

After speaking, he slowly stood, solemnly clasped his hands towards Lu Ye, "Fellow Daoist, you are righteous. Please take us three wretched dogs in. If we can truly return to your stellar space, facing the Star Abyss invasion, we will serve willingly, without complaint!"

Du Qingsha and Chang Yu quickly stood up, solemnly clasping their hands.

Lu Ye immediately returned the gesture, "It is the fortune of our home stellar space that you three agreed to my proposal, thank you all!"

Lu Ye could see the fire of rage in Chen Wulei's eyes, knowing full well that he didn't agree out of a desire for a better life, but because the All Phenomena Ocean stellar space was about to encounter the same fate Cover Armor stellar space once did.

Cover Armor stellar space fell, Chen Wulei was unwilling, and how could Du Qingsha and Chang Yu not be?

Now that there is this opportunity, they naturally want to fight once again.

Their joining strengthened the team's power, changing from eight to eleven people, and Chen Wulei was even at the 7th Dao level, Du Qingsha had already advanced to the 6th Dao years ago, and Chang Yu, who was previously at the 5th Dao, had also recently advanced to the 6th Dao, clearly having a breakthrough in recent years.

In other words, the entire team currently had two at the 7th Dao, five at the 6th Dao, with the rest being at the 5th Dao!

Both Chen Wulei and Du Qingsha had potential for a breakthrough at any time. If the latter broke through, it wouldn't mean much—just another member at the 7th Dao. But if Chen Wulei broke through, he would reach the 8th Dao level.

Which is the highest level Cover Armor stellar space cultivators had ever reached.

Lu Ye originally thought that, given the team's current strength, they should have enough power to protect themselves within the Star Abyss. But as he delved deeper in conversation with Chen Wulei, his heart sank to the bottom.

For Chen Wulei had once been gravely wounded, shortly after Lu Ye was taken away by the Spectral Sedan Chair.

Recalling that harrowing experience, Chen Wulei was fearful: "That wasn't like an opponent of the 9th Dao. Though I am at the 7th Dao, I am confident I would not be so powerless against someone of the 9th Dao. That individual's strength... should be above the 9th Dao!"

In that instant of confrontation, Chen Wulei felt as if he was an egg thrown against a rock. Had it not been that the opponent didn't regard him at all, quickly leaving after one strike, Chen Wulei would've long lost his life.

Chapter 2116: Deadlock

Lu Ye's understanding of the division of Dao Realm cultivators' strength all comes from Cover Armor stellar space, and the intelligence from Cover Armor stellar space is gathered from years of exploration and contact with Star Abyss cultivators, along with some speculation.

According to the intelligence collected by Cover Armor stellar space, 9th Dao is considered the ultimate because nine is the extreme number, so there's unlikely to be 10th Dao or 11th Dao experts...

But now it seems that things might not be like this.

Moreover, the classification of Star Abyss cultivators' levels is not well understood by Cover Armor stellar space, because for hundreds of years, the enemies they've encountered were at best around the 7th or 8th Dao.

However, this may explain why the 8th Dao expert from Cover Armor stellar space lost contact after attacking Star Abyss.

It's evidently because there are beings stronger than the 9th Dao in Star Abyss. An 8th Dao wouldn't be enough.

"According to my thoughts, the Star Abyss Gate actually has limitations. At the initial opening, since the Star Abyss Gate was not stable enough, the strength that could pass through wasn't strong. But as time passed, the gate became increasingly stable, allowing stronger powers to pass through, and with the expansion of the Star Abyss Gate, even stronger beings could traverse it."

Chen Wulei's words made Lu Ye recall the opening of the Star Abyss Gate at All Phenomena Ocean; at that time, three Star Abyss cultivators came through, all of whom hadn't forged a Dao Realm.

In Star Abyss, such strength, even if not the lowest, is similar.

This undoubtedly corroborates Chen Wulei's conjecture from another perspective.

"From this perspective, our immediate task is to understand the division of realms after Dao Realm. Otherwise, when encountering powerful enemies, it's hard to assess their true strength." Zi Ji pondered.

Lu Ye shook his head and said, "That's not easy. Actually, I have been trying to explore it for a long time, but I didn't gain much. The Star Abyss cultivators give me the impression that they themselves do not fully understand this."

Previously, the team's members were in seclusion, while he was outside hunting alone, probing multiple Star Abyss cultivators about this matter. Unfortunately, there was not much success.

Of course, this might be related to the fact that none of the enemies he encountered were particularly formidable. If he met powerful beings, perhaps he could learn more.

After some adjustments, the team set off again.

It must be said that acting as lost ones in Star Abyss was quite bothersome because Lu Ye and the others' aura was completely different from Star Abyss living creatures.

If those Star Abyss living creatures encountered each other, they might coexist peacefully.

But when they came across Lu Ye's group, they would rush forward aggressively without any provocation.

This was normal because newcomers like Lu Ye in Star Abyss usually wouldn't be too strong and would easily become prey.

But the current team's strength of eleven was distinctly different from typical lost ones, with two of the 7th Dao overseeing, five of the 6th Dao cooperating, and the weakest possessing 5th Dao strength. With such mighty force, even encountering 8th Dao would be against them.

However, caution was paramount in Star Abyss, especially during prolonged journeys. Some unnecessary battles should be avoided to prevent mishaps.

Lu Ye's greatest wish now is to lead the team safely to the endpoint sensed by the Reincarnation Tree's imprint, after years of traveling, they mustn't fail at the final juncture.

With this philosophy, they undoubtedly encountered fewer troubles.

As time passed, the sensing of the Reincarnation Tree's imprint became clearer and more evident.

Approximately ten months after joining Chen Wulei and others, they finally approached their destination.

Even with Lu Ye's calm disposition, he couldn't help but feel anxious and nervous. Returning to the home stellar space using the Reincarnation Tree's imprint was his plan, but whether it would succeed, he couldn't be sure.

If it works, everything is well, but if not, they would possibly have to wait for the Star Abyss Gate to open to return.

No matter what, he sensed that the location was probably a stellar weakness, certainly the starting point of Star Abyss invasion, and at that time a Star Abyss Gate would surely open there.

At this moment, the team of eleven was hidden on a meteorite, trying their best to conceal their aura, using the meteorite's movement to gradually approach their final destination.

Such cautiousness was due to the odd atmosphere here.

As Lu Ye had already noticed days ago, this area gathered a vast number of Star Abyss creatures, more than any prior location!

This resulted in frequent battles in the area.

Just at this moment, Lu Ye clearly sensed three battlegrounds erupting with conflicts within a hundred thousand miles around.

It's inevitable, in such a dense cluster of Star Abyss creatures, it's quite ordinary to fight upon disagreements.

A moment later, the battle ceased at one site, indicating a victor emerged, while the other two became more intense, likely attracting more Star Abyss creatures due to the commotion.

Some Star Abyss cultivators even passed near the hiding meteorite, hastening towards the battlefield, clearly individuals who loved to watch the chaos unfold.

In such situations, they didn't dare to transmit audio with Mental Consciousness, fearing exposure, wishing only to pass quickly.

However, despite their wariness, an unexpected occurrence happened suddenly— a figure landed on the meteorite, activating Mana, causing the floating meteorite to stop instantly.

This individual hadn't sensed anything unusual but had merely used the meteorite as a landing point.

After stabilizing himself, he gazed at the nearest battleground, trying to observe the situation there.

At this moment, he suddenly sensed something amiss and turned his head. In that direction, he saw several lurking figures watching him with indifferent eyes.

This Star Abyss cultivator was shocked, never expecting there to be others hiding on this meteorite. He was about to escape immediately.

A fluid-like figure had already risen behind him, and in the blink of an eye, it pounced on him. The Star Abyss cultivator didn't even have time to utter a sound before collapsing limply.

Even though Bewitchment Shadow only had the 5th Dao cultivation, his unexpected attack was unblockable, despite the opponent's superior strength.

The crisis was resolved! Everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

However, suddenly a bright light struck from the side. Clearly, a passing Star Abyss cultivator nearby had noticed and launched an attack this way.

The meteorite shattered, and eleven figures were fully revealed.

That attacking Star Abyss cultivator was stunned, then immediately turned and fled. He had casually thrown a strike, not realizing he had stirred up a hornet's nest.

However, after only a few steps, he quickly realized, turned to look at Lu Ye and the others, and his eyes shone with brilliance: "Lost Souls!"

No wonder they were hiding so carefully; they were lost souls newly arriving in the Star Abyss. And there were eleven of them!

He had encountered lost souls before, and they were not very capable, so he immediately had an idea and turned back to kill.

Suddenly, his vision blurred, and a figure had flashed in front of him, with a dazzling blade slashing at him.

"Mere lost souls!" he roared angrily, his expression fierce as he launched a punch.

This punch hit straight on Lu Ye's chest but didn't budge him an inch. Instead, when the Boulder Mountain Saber fell, the protective magic shattered immediately, and his body was split in two.

Lu Ye reached out a hand, extracted a piece of Dao Bone from the opponent's body, and shouted, "Go!"

They were already exposed, no longer needing to hide. The final destination was not far, and if they hurried with all their might, they could reach it within one hour.

As he spoke, he was the first to fly out, and everyone followed closely. Before leaving, Bewitchment Shadow did not forget to extract the Dao Bone from the cultivator he attacked and killed.

The commotion here immediately attracted the attention of the surrounding Star Abyss cultivators. When they sensed the presence of Lu Ye and the others, they chased after them as if they were cats smelling fish.

The most worrisome thing happened. The reason for hiding like that earlier was that Lu Ye knew that once they were exposed, it would trigger such a result.

But fate is like that; sometimes the more you worry, the more likely you are to trigger it.

In such a situation, there was only one choice.

To carve a bloody path!

Chen Wulei was already clad in cover armor, quickly rushing ahead of the team and moving side by side with Lu Ye. In the team, only the two of them were at the 7th Dao, so naturally, it was up to them to clear the way.

Zi Ji and Chong Yue held the rear, while the others dispersed in the middle, each being alert to enemies coming from all directions.

The entire team of eleven instantly twisted into one unit, like an arrow, racing madly forward.

Wherever they passed, any obstructors were swiftly slain by Lu Ye and Chen Wulei working together, cutting a swift and unstoppable path.

As time passed, the team got closer and closer to the final destination, and the sensation of the Reincarnation Tree mark on the back of their hands became more and more pronounced.

"How much farther?" Chen Wulei shouted to ask.

"Right ahead!" Lu Ye replied while looking ahead.

The sight before him stunned him, leaving him in shock. In the distant void, there was an area that was distinctly different from its surroundings, appearing somewhat murky.

And around this area, there were about ten figures sitting solemnly, each one imposing as a mountain and deep as the sea.

Radiating outward from these ten figures, a large number of Star Abyss living creatures had gathered in this place.

This was the most Star Abyss living creatures that Lu Ye had ever seen gathered, all of them apparently waiting for something.

What was even more unbelievable to him was not far from this gathering of Star Abyss living creatures, there stood a magnificent palace. The palace was shrouded in a layer of hazy light, making it hard to see clearly, but anyone who saw the palace would instantly think there must be an immensely powerful being inside.

All the blood in Lu Ye's body ran cold, and he immediately halted.

He had thought of all sorts of situations they might encounter upon arriving here, but never imagined it would be such a scene.

At least tens of thousands of Star Abyss living creatures were gathered by that murky area, clearly waiting for something.

Aside from waiting for the Star Abyss Gate to open, what else could they be waiting for?

Clearly, the Star Abyss's encroachment on the All Phenomena Ocean stellar space has shown signs, which is why so many Star Abyss living creatures were attracted to gather here.

Even with his current 7th Dao power, forcing through such a situation would undoubtedly lead to death!

Chapter 2117: This Young Man Looks Familiar

Lu Ye never imagined that the culmination of the Reincarnation Tree's sensing would lead to such a situation.

At this moment, at least tens of thousands of Star Abyss living creatures gathered in front, and behind, numerous pursuers attracted by the previous commotion. It was truly a case of a tiger in front and wolves behind, with the situation being extremely critical.

"Stay close to me!" Lu Ye barked in a low voice, turning and darting to the side.

Returning to the stellar space was no longer an option; what needed to be done now was to break through and survive as best as possible.

Even on the side, there were some Star Abyss cultivators attracted by the commotion. Fortunately, their numbers weren't too large, making it a potential breakthrough point.

Lu Ye felt somewhat relieved to see that the large number of Star Abyss living creatures over there hadn't acted recklessly. They remained entrenched in that area, especially the ten figures at the center, all of whom watched indifferently.

Even from a great distance, Lu Ye felt a prickling sensation on his back, understanding that the strength of those ten figures was beyond what he could contend with at present. These ten were likely experts surpassing the 9th Dao.

Their strength was formidable enough that they didn't regard Lu Ye and his group.

Blades glittered, and sword flashes ran rampant as one attack after another was unleashed. The group followed Lu Ye and Chen Wulei closely, fiercely carving a bloody path.

Lu Ye's tension slightly eased, thinking that if things continued this way, breaking through wouldn't be too difficult.

Just as this thought arose, Lu Ye's pupils contracted.

Looking ahead, he saw a sea of meteorites rushing towards them. On those meteorites of various sizes stood numerous figures.

With a quick calculation, there were certainly more numbers than those he'd previously seen.

Lu Ye's heart sank into the depths, unable to fathom why there were so many Star Abyss cultivators at this location as well.

Why did an unopened Star Abyss Gate possess such significant allure?

Long howls from behind drew Lu Ye's attention, and he quickly turned to see ten figures swiftly approaching from the rear, precisely the ten experts he had observed earlier.

Behind these ten, countless Star Abyss living creatures shouted and hollered, as if a grand banquet awaited them, each seemingly fueled with an adrenaline rush.

"We're in high demand," Chen Wulei couldn't help but chuckle; with enemies totaling over a hundred thousand surrounding them, their group only comprised eleven people. The Star Abyss living creatures truly valued them.

If there had been any slim chance of survival before, now, with so many Star Abyss living creatures attacking from both front and back, there was no possible escape route.

"This isn't right!" Suddenly, Lu Ye realized something, "They are two separate forces!"

The ten formidable figures from behind showed no interest in them but seemed focused on the meteor sea that was flying from the front. In that meteor sea, a similar number of powerful forces rose to oppose them.

The group suddenly understood. They wondered why their small number of eleven had caused such a significant disturbance; it turned out they had encountered a clash between two factions.

Despite understanding this, the group's morale remained heavy. Compared to these two factions, the strength of their squad of eleven was negligible. The mere shockwaves from the clash of these two giants could potentially annihilate them.

"This way!" Lu Ye called out, changing direction once more.

Almost simultaneously, the ten figures swept past nearby, not sparing them a glance.

Yet the violent aura emanating from them caused Lu Ye and his group to feel their skin prickling and their protective magic trembling, each filled with apprehension. If even the mere aftershocks were so terrifying, a direct confrontation would likely mean they couldn't endure even a casual blow from any one of them.

Lu Ye had hoped to lead everyone away from the battlefield before the two factions clashed, but in the end, it was too late. Just a few breaths later, the two mighty forces crashed against each other like two torrents.

The vast Void trembled.

The position of Lu Ye and his group became awkward, as they hadn't yet exited the battlefield, and Star Abyss cultivators had already set their sights on them.

While the ten figures didn't regard them due to greater threats, the other Star Abyss cultivators weren't as dismissive.

Almost entirely defenseless, the squad of eleven was swept into this formidable war.

Even Lu Ye and the others didn't know why such a large-scale conflict erupted, nor could they distinguish which side the mixed Star Abyss cultivators belonged to. The group could only passively defend and kill any who posed a threat to them, considering them enemies.

In such chaotic situations, even Lu Ye could only ensure his own safety, barely monitoring the situation around Jiu Yan, and could do nothing for the others.

However, he quickly realized something else.

The Star Abyss living creatures initially gathered here were being held back by enemies who seemingly emerged from nowhere. Wasn't the sensing endpoint now left unattended?

In the middle of the chaos, he glanced in that direction, finding it indeed empty.

Lu Ye's heart settled as he finally realized what to do. His Mental Consciousness surged as he transmitted an audio message to the others, seeking life in the crevices of the battlefield while constantly approaching that direction.

Inside a magnificent and splendid palace.

In front of a long table, a petite figure sat upright.

This was a small girl who looked around ten years old, with two ponytails, dressed in a pitch-black long dress. She sat on a tall chair, her feet couldn't even reach the floor, her small legs swinging leisurely.

At this moment, she held a rag doll in one hand and touched her little belly with the other, complaining pitifully, "Uncle Duan, isn't it ready yet? I'm so hungry!"

The rag doll in her hand was tattered, showing many signs of mending, who knows how long it had accompanied her.

As her voice fell, an elderly man with white hair walked in, chuckling as he said, "Alright, alright."

While speaking, he approached her, setting down what he held in his hands, a dish and a bowl.

The little girl immediately straightened her posture, sniffed lightly, and showed an expectant expression, "It smells so good, Uncle Duan, your cooking has improved again."

Uncle Duan smiled kindly, "This time the ingredients are good, very fresh, it has nothing to do with this old man's culinary skills, miss, please try it."

"Then I won't be polite." The little girl carefully placed the tattered rag doll in her arms, reached out and grabbed something from the dish.

It was a humanoid being, even alive, grabbed in her small hand, only its head exposed, face full of terror, struggling continuously, begging, but no matter how it struggled or begged, the little girl remained indifferent.

She opened her mouth and bit down, a crunching sound echoed, life dispersed.

The little girl chewed, her mouth full of blood, eyes gleaming with delight, "Delicious, the untainted lost ones taste better than those infused by Star Abyss ambience."

Uncle Duan chuckled, "Earlier, a stellar space shattered, I personally caught this from that stellar space."

"Mmhm!" The little girl nodded repeatedly, reaching again into the dish.

After eating quickly, she picked up the small bowl, which contained green soup still bubbling, each bubble popping represented a human face, with tragic wails echoing from within.

She took a sip and revealed a satisfied look, "This soup is delicious too!"

Uncle Duan stood beside her, "If it's good, have more."

The little girl hugged the bowl, gulping eagerly, finishing it in a moment, she slumped back in the chair, patting her little belly, "Full!"

Uncle Duan began tidying the dishes, saying while doing so, "Miss, if you like it, I'll make more for you later. Fortunately, a group of lost ones arrived, and I have ordered not to harm them."

"Good, good!" The little girl immediately looked forward to it, suddenly listened intently, frowned, "Why is it so noisy outside, is Blood Owl causing trouble again?"

Uncle Duan nodded, "The Star Abyss Gate will open in a few years, of course, he wants to seize this place, but don't worry miss, the subordinates will handle it."

The little girl nodded but still waved her hand, immediately showing various scenes of the battlefield outside.

She clearly wanted to see how the battle was going outside; guarding here for so many years was indeed boring, watching the commotion could pass the time.

As for her subordinate Star Abyss cultivator who might perish in this battle, she did not care at all. As long as she occupied this soon-to-open Star Abyss Gate, people would continuously come to pledge allegiance.

Moreover, even Star Abyss living creatures under her never lived peacefully together. Even without Blood Owl causing trouble, they always fought among themselves.

After watching for a while, the little girl felt it was dull.

Suddenly recalled Uncle Duan's previous words, "What about the few lost ones who intruded here?"

Since they had intruded here, they inevitably were to become her ingredients, first look at their quality was also good.

Uncle Duan glanced, pointing to one scene, "This place..."

The little girl followed his direction and immediately found more than ten figures gathered, the leader was a young man with a knife and a man wearing cover armor.

"So many!" The little girl couldn't help but laugh, and while laughing, suddenly froze, seriously scrutinizing the leading young man, her expression puzzled, "Uncle Duan, doesn't this young man look familiar?"

Uncle Duan asked curiously, "Has Miss seen this man somewhere?"

Otherwise, why would he seem familiar?

The little girl pondered but couldn't remember where she had seen him, feeling annoyed, "Where did I see him? I definitely have seen him!"

Uncle Duan remained silent, avoiding to disturb the miss's thoughts.

After a moment, the little girl suddenly seemed to remember something, shouted, and started rummaging in her storage ring, retrieving a stone resembling an image message, immersed her mind to view it, "It's him! But how did he escape? No, he should be inside, how is he here?"

Uncle Duan looked at the image message stone, his expression also turned solemn, "This is left by Qing Jun?"

Chapter 2118: Yin Luo

Uncle Duan knew that when Qing Jun left years ago, he left some things with the young lady and entrusted her with certain tasks, even saying that this palace was forged and crafted by Qing Jun for her.

The image stone was clearly something left by Qing Jun.

"Miss, may this old man take a look?" Uncle Duan inquired.

The young girl promptly handed over the image stone to him. Uncle Duan concentrated his mind and saw indeed a young man's image within. Comparing with what he saw now, he felt incredible: "It's really him!"

"But... he shouldn't be here. His stellar space is still intact! Could it be someone who looks similar?" The young girl was somewhat uncertain.

Uncle Duan pondered for a moment, then asked: "Miss, what did Qing Jun say back then?"

The young girl replied, "Not much, just that if the Star Abyss Gate opens, I should find this person immediately and protect his life."

That's why Qing Jun left her the image stone; after all, she hadn't met the man before. Without this image stone, how could she find him?

"I see!" Uncle Duan understood, "Then I shall bring him over. To know if he is truly the person, Miss can find out face to face with a single question."

"Alright!" The girl nodded. Anyway, those lost ones had to be captured eventually. If this was indeed the person Qing Jun instructed, he should be settled properly. If not, then Uncle Duan would deal with it.

At this time, Lu Ye and the others had already left that chaotic battlefield, a process smooth beyond expectation!

"Fellow Daoist Lu, something's off. Did you notice those Star Abyss cultivators didn't seem to want to entangle with us?" Chen Wulei transmitted audio over.

Aside from the initial few real combat exchanges, there wasn't much obstruction in their journey afterward.

"They haven't even mobilized strong forces against us!" Lu Ye felt it too. Although it was peculiar, it was undoubtedly beneficial for his side.

Also, there wasn't much time to ponder then.

The turbid Void was right in front of them, as long as they reached it, they might return to the stellar space!

However, just when they were less than a hundred feet away from the destination, a figure suddenly appeared ahead, blocking their way.

It was an elderly man with white hair, hands folded within his sleeves, eyebrows lowered, eyes closed, yet possessing an indescribable aura.

"Be careful!" Lu Ye sensed keenly that this old guy was not easy to deal with, but at this point, there was no choice but to engage.

As he spoke, he took the lead in attacking, everyone followed suit, none held back in this burst. Lu Ye was confident that even if facing an 8th Dao strong practitioner, the sudden attack would lead to dire consequences; if not death, severe injury.

However, facing such overwhelming offenses, the old man remained motionless, allowing the attacks to fall upon him as if a breeze touched him, not only unharmed but without even a crease in his attire.

Everyone was dumbfounded!

This man... definitely surpassed the 9th Dao!

A horrifying thought flashed through Lu Ye's mind, he shouted: "Run!"

No one was a fool. Recognizing the opponent's strength, everyone knew this was an invincible force. Almost as Lu Ye's words fell, eleven people split and fled in different directions.

Lu Ye, in particular, activated the Blood Escape Technique.

Yet before he even began moving, a figure flickered before him, instantly shattering his protective magic, as if a heavy object hit him, causing him to fly backward.

Hurriedly stabilizing his form, he found all eleven people, without exception, returned to their previous positions.

Each one was flushed with blood Qi, faces pale, yet showed no trace of injury. Clearly, the opponent had shown mercy; otherwise, he could kill eleven in the blink of an eye.

Eyes meeting, everyone was apprehensive and frightened.

"If you wish to try escaping, feel free, but next time I won't be merciful."

Lu Ye steadied his heart, cupped his fists: "Sir, how should I address you? What teachings do you wish to impart?"

The fact that the opponent didn't kill them meant there was still hope, though Lu Ye didn't know why the elderly man acted so, he presumed a purpose was involved.

Also, the opponent seemed willing to communicate, which was good news.

The elder glanced at him, saying indifferently: "You may call me Uncle Duan!"

"Uncle Duan!" Lu Ye immediately addressed respectfully, knowing to yield.

Uncle Duan nodded, beckoning: "Follow me, all of you."

With those words, he first turned away and left.

Lu Ye stood there, his expression changing briefly, but eventually he sighed and motioned for the others to follow.

The strength of Uncle Duan was unfathomable, rash actions were inadvisable; being prudent was wiser.

Following behind Uncle Duan, Lu Ye saw he was heading towards the palace enveloped in hazy light, prompting unease in his heart.

Given the circumstances, the reason Uncle Duan refrained from killing them was likely due to orders from the palace owner, who they were likely being taken to meet.

How strong must the master of the palace be if Uncle Duan is so strong?

What is the opponent's objective?

Just when Lu Ye was pondering this, Uncle Duan had already taken them to the front of the palace.

Everyone looked up to see a plaque above the main hall with the words "Qing Palace," the characters resembling two entwined dragons reflecting one another.

While observing, a shadow suddenly darted out from the hall, and immediately a delicate scream came from Water Fairy's direction.

Startled, Lu Ye instinctively reached for the Boulder Mountain Saber, but at the same time, Uncle Duan's gaze pierced over, sharp as lightning!

Lu Ye sensed it, slowly withdrew his hand, and focused to discover that somehow a little girl in black with twin braids had appeared in Water Fairy's arms.

She burrowed completely into Water Fairy's embrace, breathing greedily while squirming around, causing Water Fairy's clothes to rise and fall.

Water Fairy appeared vulnerably as if she had been violated, yet under Uncle Duan's intimidation, she dared not act recklessly, pitifully looking toward Lu Ye.

Lu Ye slowly shook his head, helpless.

"So fragrant!" The little girl suddenly jumped down from Water Fairy's embrace, saying this, then darted into Su Wan's arms nearby.

Su Wan was initially watching the scene unfold, unaware that she would be involved. Perhaps tickled by the little girl's squirming, she giggled, unable to help twisting a bit.

"This one smells nice too..." The little girl then jumped into the embrace of Zi Ji nearby, and Zi Ji's forehead veins almost popped out.

She sniffed one by one, until finally she came to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye closed his eyes, thinking out of sight, out of mind.

Suddenly feeling something wet on his chest, he couldn't help but frown and look, seeing the little girl gazing at him with watery eyes, drooling like a waterfall from the corner of her mouth: "You're the most fragrant!"

Her eyes were as dark as ink, but at this moment, they revealed an intensely longing expression.

Lu Ye felt a chill run down his spine, an inexplicable sense of extreme danger arose within him.

"Missy!" Uncle Duan also noticed something was amiss and rushed forward a few steps, pulling the little girl off Lu Ye's embrace, whispering in her ear: "Qing Jun!"

As if awakening from a trance, the little girl's expression snapped back to normal, and her eyes, nearly overtaken by instinct, regained some spiritual intelligence. She quickly wiped the drool from the corner of her mouth: "How rude of me."

Lu Ye steadied his mind, faintly realizing this little girl was abnormal. She appeared human but couldn't possibly be, as her aura felt more like a star beast to him.

Yet, he had never heard of a star beast being able to shape-change, let alone possess such intelligence.

He cupped his fists and asked, "May I ask what to call Miss, and why you've brought us here?"

"Me?" The little girl paused, then hugged the tattered rag doll in her arms, giggling: "I'm Yin Luo!"

"Miss Yin Luo." Lu Ye nodded.

"As for why I brought you here..." Yin Luo looked at Lu Ye, lightly touching her red lips with a small hand, "What's your name?"

Lu Ye pondered briefly, intending to make up a false name to fool her, but Uncle Duan's voice sounded gently: "Answer honestly to whatever Miss asks."

The thought that had just formed was immediately suppressed, and he answered truthfully: "My name is Lu Ye."

Yin Luo's eyes lit up upon hearing this: "Is your homeland a domain called Nine Provinces?"

Lu Ye was stunned: "How did Miss Yin Luo hear of the Nine Provinces?"

The name Nine Provinces might be known by many across the stellar space, but this was the Star Abyss, how could the name of Nine Provinces possibly have reached here?

He was baffled at how Yin Luo could know about Nine Provinces.

"It really is you?" Yin Luo looked surprised. She had initially thought it was merely a resemblance, only to find it truly was the person Qing Jun wanted her to keep an eye on, "But why are you here? Isn't your stellar space still intact?"

Lu Ye, full of questions, couldn't find answers, and wanted to ask further, yet seeing Uncle Duan staring at him behind Yin Luo, he could only respond honestly: "Does Miss Yin Luo know of the Spectral Sedan Chair? We were brought here by it."

"Spectral Sedan Chair..." A look of realization flashed across Yin Luo's face, "No wonder, only it could move people through the Star Abyss so undetected."

As she spoke, she suddenly raised her head and looked toward the depths of the chaotic battlefield, a look of anger appearing on her little face: "Wait for me, I'll be right back!"

With her words finished, her small figure suddenly vanished.

Moments later, from the depths of the chaotic battlefield, there arose an enormous rebound from the fierce combat.

Sensing the aftermath, Lu Ye was secretly alarmed. Although unsure of Yin Luo's current cultivation, it undoubtedly far exceeded his and his companions'.

Soon after, the aftermath dissipated, though the battle between the Star Abyss cultivators had not yet ceased, Yin Luo had already returned. Her black dress was spotless, but she appeared a bit puffed up with anger: "Uncle Duan, he's so annoying, obviously not a match but keeps coming to harass every now and then, isn't there a way to beat him to death?"

Uncle Duan shook his head: "Although your strength surpasses his and it's easy to beat him, killing him is difficult. Even with me, it's not possible, that's why he acts so fearlessly."

"One day I'll finish him off!" Yin Luo gritted her teeth.

Chapter 2119: Qing Jun

Inside the Qing Palace, at the long, narrow dining table, host and guests took their seats.

Yin Luo sat at the highest seat, while Uncle Duan stood behind her like a shadow.

Yin Luo's crisp voice rang out: "So you're saying, you were brought from the stellar space into the Star Abyss by a Spectral Sedan Chair, and then you couldn't go back?"

"Exactly so!"

"Then that's perfect!" Yin Luo bounced with delight. "I was still a bit worried that something might happen to you before I could find you. Now that you've come on your own, just stay here. That way when your stellar space shatters I won't have to run all over looking for you."

Lu Ye furrowed his brow. Though having a powerhouse like Yin Luo shelter him in the Star Abyss was a good thing, there were some matters he ultimately had to get clear.

He spoke up: "May I ask, Miss Yin Luo, how did you learn about me and the Nine Provinces? And why were you coming to look for me?"

Hugging that rag doll in her arms, Yin Luo pursed her lips, thought for a moment, and said, "I'm also acting on someone's request. Before he left, he told me to stay here and, when the Star Abyss Gate opened, find a way to locate you and protect you."

"Acting on someone's request? Who?" Lu Ye was utterly stunned. Anyone who could make Yin Luo stay here was definitely not a stellar space cultivator. Yet he could swear he'd never had any close dealings with Star Abyss cultivators, much less with a powerhouse on Yin Luo's level.

"Qing Jun. You don't know him?" Yin Luo looked at him curiously.

Lu Ye slowly shook his head. Among the people he knew, none were called Qing Jun, but then it occurred to him that Qing Jun was likely not a name, but a title.

Qing Jun... Lu Ye's heart stirred. Could it be...

He hurriedly asked, "Miss Yin Luo, what does this Qing Jun look like?"

Yin Luo didn't answer. Instead, she looked at Lu Ye a bit suspiciously, then turned her head and said, "Uncle Duan, did we get it wrong? He doesn't know Qing Jun."

Uncle Duan's voice came from the darkness: "Little friend, what do you think Qing Jun should look like?"

Lu Ye's heart instantly leapt into his throat. He knew that his next answer was very likely tied to the life and death of everyone here. He carefully recalled for a moment, then slowly gave a description.

Yin Luo nodded. "That's right. You do know Qing Jun, don't you? Yet just now you said you didn't..."

Lu Ye gave a wry smile and said nothing. The one he knew was certainly no so-called Qing Jun.

But in this way, some of the doubts in his heart were finally answered.

"Then it's settled. From now on, you just stay here and behave." Yin Luo looked very pleased.

"Then I must thank you, Miss Yin Luo."

This strange little girl, for some reason, was friend rather than foe, but there was no denying that her strength was tremendous. She could be called the strongest person Lu Ye had ever seen thus far.

With her protection, their current situation was naturally very safe.

"What a pity..." Yin Luo looked at Lu Ye somewhat aggrieved.

"What's a pity?" Lu Ye was puzzled.

"You smell the best, but I can't eat you!"

All at once, the grievance on her face turned horrifying in Lu Ye's eyes.

Uncle Duan said faintly, "Miss, Qing Jun only told you to protect this little friend and ensure his life is without worry. He never said you had to protect the others."

Hearing this, Yin Luo's eyes lit up. "Right, Qing Jun only told me to protect him. That means everyone except him can be eaten!" As she spoke, her expression grew jubilant. Her gaze swept over the crowd, and she gave a slurping hiss as she drew in a mouthful of saliva.

Chen Wulei, Zi Ji and the others' expressions changed drastically. Just now, listening to Lu Ye and Yin Luo talk, they'd thought the danger had already passed and had even turned into a blessing in disguise. Who would have thought that in the blink of an eye the situation would take such a sharp turn.

"Miss Yin Luo!" Lu Ye sprang to his feet. "These people are all very important companions of mine. My being able to come here is entirely thanks to their support and assistance. Without them, there would be no Lu Ye. I beg you, don't set your sights on them!"

Yin Luo looked at him with a face full of innocent sincerity. "But Qing Jun only told me to protect you. He didn't say to protect other people."

Lu Ye's thoughts raced. "Miss, could you think a bit more carefully? Did Qing Jun perhaps say to protect Lu Ye and the people by his side? Or maybe he didn't say it outright, but that's what he meant."

Though they hadn't interacted for long, Lu Ye had already noticed that while Yin Luo's strength was impressive, her spiritual intelligence wasn't very high. She was somewhat like an actual child, often muddle-headed and clueless.

Sure enough, Yin Luo let him talk her in circles, then turned to Uncle Duan and asked, "Is that what Qing Jun meant?"

Uncle Duan said blandly, "That should not be what Qing Jun meant."

"Then that's fine..." Yin Luo let out a breath of relief. If so many delicious-smelling morsels were dangling before her eyes and she couldn't eat them, that would be too much torment. She waved her small hand. "Uncle Duan!"

Uncle Duan immediately stepped out from the shadows.

There was a clatter as everyone sprang to their feet. In an instant, Mana surged.

Uncle Duan's expression was calm as he walked forward step by step. "You may resist to your heart's content and see whether you can stop this old man!"

They had already witnessed Uncle Duan's strength earlier. How could they not know how powerful this old man was? Even if they joined forces, they definitely could not be his match.

With a metallic clang, Lu Ye drew his saber, but for the first time ever, he didn't point its edge at someone else—instead he set it right against his own neck, stared at Yin Luo, and said, "Miss Yin Luo, if you so much as think about my companions again, I'll die right in front of you!"

As he spoke, the Boulder Mountain Saber sank downward, and fresh blood immediately flowed from his neck.

Uncle Duan stared at him in astonishment, then his face darkened. "Boy, you dare threaten my young lady? If my young lady wants someone dead, then there's no way he lives. But if she wants someone to live, then he absolutely doesn't get to die! You can go ahead and try, see whether you're faster or this old man is."

Puchi...

The long saber pierced three inches into flesh, blood gushed out like a fountain, and Chong Yue standing beside him was instantly drenched into a man of blood. Lu Ye, however, wore a defiant look. "Uncle Duan, your strength is immense, I'm far from your match. But even if you can stop me this time, what about next time, and the time after that? How many years can you guard against me? Ten years? A hundred, or a thousand?"

"You brat..." Uncle Duan was at a loss for words. In all the years he'd lived, this really was the first time he'd seen someone use self-destruction to threaten others. It truly opened his eyes.

Yin Luo was clearly nervous as well. "Don't, don't, don't. I won't eat them, all right? Just don't die. If you die, I'll have no way to explain to Qing Jun!"

He'd bet right!

Lu Ye's heart settled. From what Yin Luo had said before, she held Qing Jun in extremely high esteem; otherwise she wouldn't have treated him and the others with such pleasant courtesy. Now it seemed he had still underestimated Qing Jun's status in her heart.

Lu Ye had wanted to make Yin Luo swear an oath in the name of the Will of the Star Abyss, but as that thought turned over, he gave it up. Some things couldn't be pushed too far; the outcome as it stood was already acceptable.

"I only ask that you remember what you said today, Miss." Lu Ye withdrew the Boulder Mountain Saber. At the bloody wound on his neck, flesh and blood squirmed and rapidly mended.

"Ai..." All the life seemed to drain out of Yin Luo. She slumped into her chair, a picture of utter despair. After a long moment, she waved her hand weakly. "Uncle Duan, take them away. I don't want them dangling in front of me."

"Yes!" Uncle Duan responded, then beckoned for everyone to head toward the side.

There were quite a few rooms inside the Qing Palace, more than enough to house eleven people. Under Uncle Duan's arrangements, everyone was quickly settled.

After Uncle Duan left, they gathered once again in Lu Ye's room.

The eleven of them sat in a circle, the atmosphere somewhat heavy. It had already been six years since they'd drifted into the Star Abyss. They had gone through many battles during that time, but, truth be told, they had never run into an opponent that truly outmatched them—until now...

Whether it was Yin Luo or Uncle Duan, their strength and realm were completely beyond their comprehension. Even the ten powerhouses under Yin Luo far surpassed the group in terms of strength.

That kind of power gap made everyone realize that all their smooth sailing before had just been luck. If they'd run into even one person on the level of those ten experts at any point along the way, they would probably have been wiped out long ago.

"That was embarrassing."

After a long time, Lu Ye finally let out a sigh.

Using the threat of his own death to coerce someone was practically a joke. Luckily, Yin Luo was easy enough to bluff, and she placed tremendous weight on Qing Jun's instructions, which was the only reason Lu Ye managed to achieve his goal and protect the others' lives.

If Yin Luo had shown even a bit more toughness during that exchange, Lu Ye's little trick would have been useless. In the end, they would have had no choice but to fight it out, and there was no need to imagine how that would end.

In the end, it still came down to lack of strength!

"Nothing embarrassing about it." Chen Wulei shook his head. "We owe our lives to you this time. Otherwise..."

He thought of the way Yin Luo had looked at him and couldn't help but shiver. He had never imagined someone could actually be interested in him looking like this.

"He's right." Zi Ji nodded. "If you count it up, we owe you another life-saving favor."

He was actually still a bit shaken. Six years ago, when they had first arrived in the Star Abyss, he had, in fact, entertained thoughts of killing Lu Ye. But in the end he had suppressed that impulse and chosen to sit down with Lu Ye and speak frankly.

If not for that, how could there be today?

"Brother Lu, this Qing Jun... just who is he?" Chong Yue asked from the side.

He wasn't the only one wondering; everyone else had the same question.

This time they'd walked away from disaster entirely because of Qing Jun's instructions to Yin Luo. From what they knew now, Qing Jun's strength was likely far above Yin Luo's.

But how did Lu Ye know such a powerhouse?

Qing Jun had even ordered Yin Luo to guard this Star Abyss Gate, wait for it to open, and then find Lu Ye in the stellar space to shelter him.

"Qing Jun..." Lu Ye's expression turned pensive. "He's of the Dragon Race. His real name is Yang Qing!"

At first he hadn't known who Qing Jun really was, but after cross-checking with Yin Luo, he'd realized that this so-called Qing Jun was Yang Qing.

In fact, all these years, Lu Ye had always had a lingering doubt in his heart.

After leaving the Nine Provinces back then, where did Yang Qing go?

A powerhouse like Yang Qing couldn't possibly stay unknown. Back then, a Sun Blaze cultivator had accidentally found the Nine Provinces and tried to seize control of them, only to be smacked to death by a single slap from Yang Qing. At that time, Yang Qing had just broken free from his imprisonment and had yet to recover much of his strength, which showed just how terrifyingly strong he was.

So why had such a powerful figure disappeared without a trace for decades? Lu Ye hadn't been able to find even the slightest hint about him.

In the early days Lu Ye's strength had been low, his experience shallow, and the places he roamed too few, so it was understandable he couldn't find any information about Yang Qing. But ever since he took

charge of the All Phenomena Ocean and advanced to the Sun Blaze realm, he could be considered a notable figure in the stellar space.

And still he hadn't heard a single thing about Yang Qing. That was a bit abnormal.

Chapter 2120: Not the Right Time

Lu Ye once speculated whether Yang Qing had encountered some accident, trapped somewhere or already met with misfortune.

But now it seems the reality is that he had long left the stellar space, entered the Star Abyss, and gained incredibly powerful strength.

As for the relationship between Yang Qing and Yin Luo, Lu Ye was not sure, perhaps he could try to inquire.

After briefly explaining Yang Qing's situation, everyone finally understood.

Especially Zi Ji, as the long-lived Great Demon Venerable, he actually knew Yang Qing, because he had heard about the Nine Provinces' downfall battle back in the day.

However, in his understanding, that Yang Qing was indeed strong, but not to the extent of being unfathomably powerful.

Who knows what opportunities Yang Qing had in the Star Abyss to suddenly become so powerful.

"So, Yang Qing left the stellar space and entered the Star Abyss before us, he should have known about the Star Abyss long ago, we were brought here by the Spectral Sedan Chair, how did he get here?" Chen Li showed a puzzled expression.

Traveling from the stellar space to the Star Abyss is no simple matter.

The Spectral Sedan Chair can traverse different stellar spaces and even the Star Abyss; this is its power as a supreme treasure. What did Yang Qing rely on?

Lu Ye couldn't help but recall Yang Qing's encounter with the Tree Elder. As a supreme treasure, the Tree Elder's attitude towards Yang Qing was somewhat thought-provoking. From this perspective, the Tree Elder knew the situation, even helping Yang Qing enter the Star Abyss might not be beyond possibility!

Looking across the entire stellar space, perhaps only the Reincarnation Tree could send someone out without being noticed.

Lu Ye expressed his speculation but had no way to verify it.

"Anyway, we should be safe for now," Lu Ye continued, "As long as we are inside this Qing Palace, there's no need to worry about safety issues, but as for the future..."

Chen Wulei said, "Lu Ye, I think your previous ideas might not come to fruition. Before coming here, we didn't know so many Star Abyss living creatures were gathering here. That murky Void should be the place where the Star Abyss Gate is about to open. If all goes well, that situation should last for a while, but if there is interference from external forces, who knows what might happen? If the Star Abyss Gate is fully opened, then..."

That would mean the invasion of the Star Abyss would occur ahead of time, and by then, the Star Abyss living creatures gathered here would flood into the stellar space, causing great calamity.

Lu Ye nodded, "I've thought about this matter."

Speaking of this, he felt fortunate that Uncle Duan stopped them in front of the Star Abyss Gate, otherwise, an unexpected event might truly have been triggered.

"There are still some things I want to verify, everyone just waits for now, cultivate on your own, if anything comes up, I'll inform everyone."

No one had any objections, so they returned to their rooms to meditate and cultivate.

In the past few years, everyone's strength has mainly improved by hunting Star Abyss living creatures to obtain Dao Bone, as it was basically impossible to meditate and cultivate while on the move, but now the situation is different. Although meditating and cultivating might be less efficient, it is safe and reliable.

Lu Ye wasn't idle, instead, he slipped out of the Qing Palace.

The previous battle had ended, and the invading enemies had been completely repelled after Yin Luo made a move, but without the harassment of external enemies, the killing and strife among the Star Abyss living creatures gathered here never ceased.

Fortunately, within a thousand miles of the Qing Palace, no Star Abyss living creature dared to approach.

At this point, he finally understood why it was so easy to leave the battlefield earlier. Apparently, there was some order given by Yin Luo, so those Star Abyss living creatures hadn't troubled them.

Considering this, although there were many Star Abyss living creatures nearby, as long as he acted cautiously, there shouldn't be any major problems.

Using Yang Qing's influence as a protective guise, as long as Yin Luo was willing to shelter him, those Star Abyss living creatures should not trouble him.

Despite his thoughts leaning towards caution, Lu Ye ensured safety by condensing his Talent Tree Avatar inside his room before taking action, ready for any unexpected need to rescue his original form.

With a leap into the fleeing light, he flew out and soon passed beyond the Qing Palace's territory of a thousand miles.

Immediately, fierce Star Abyss living creatures began to gaze at him menacingly. Lu Ye promptly drew the Boulder Mountain Saber, beckoning with a hand gesture challenging his opponents with a provocative expression.

Unexpectedly, this creature merely stared at him for a while, then spat disdainfully and turned away with a look of contempt.

This was the first time he had encountered a Star Abyss cultivator not attacking him right away, and for a moment, Lu Ye found it hard to adapt.

However, this scenario undoubtedly confirmed his thoughts. It seemed the Star Abyss living creatures under Yin Luo's command had been ordered not to fight him lightly.

With this realization, Lu Ye felt more assured and headed boldly towards the Star Abyss Gate.

During the journey, he repeatedly provoked the Star Abyss cultivators he encountered, yet without exception, none of them bothered to engage with him.

Until once, when Lu Ye initiated an attack, the opponent finally retaliated, but unfortunately, due to inadequate strength, they were only met with defeat and death.

After repeated verification, Lu Ye understood that as long as he didn't attack first, there wouldn't be any major issues, but if he did, the Star Abyss cultivators would still retaliate.

This made him even bolder.

After a short while, he gradually approached the location of the Star Abyss Gate.

The Star Abyss living creatures congregated here are extremely dense, and struggles and slaughters can be seen everywhere. The victor takes the Dao Bone to strengthen themselves, while the defeated only face demise.

Lu Ye was secretly surprised; such an environment, such chaotic contention, is very capable of producing some strong individuals, because in such a place, as long as one's strength is sufficient, it is easier than ever to obtain Dao Bone.

For cultivators like them who want to improve themselves, acquiring Dao force is key.

Lu Ye, emitting the aura of a lost one, stood out like a beacon in the dark among the dense crowd of Star Abyss living creatures, attracting countless malicious gazes along his way.

Nevertheless, he remained calm and fearless, heading straight to where the ten strong individuals were located.

At this location, no ordinary Star Abyss creature dared to approach. Apart from the ten figures and the unopened Star Abyss Gate as the source point, there was no other living being.

The ten had different races, varying heights, and as Lu Ye approached, at least three pairs of eyes were watching him with interest.

The closer he got, the more tense Lu Ye became. He secretly urged his mana, ready at any moment to construct Void Spirit Runes for escape.

Fortunately, he reached that murky void without any mishaps.

Focusing and scrutinizing the murky void, Lu Ye vaguely sensed an extremely chaotic void force gathering within.

It can be confirmed that this was a Star Abyss Gate that hadn't fully opened, and it connected to the stellar space of All Phenomena Ocean.

As for where exactly it connected to, that remained unknown and required investigation.

Immersing his mind, he slightly activated his mana, and the Reincarnation Tree's mark on the back of his hand slowly emerged. Standing at this position, the sensory feedback from the mark was more intense than ever.

The stellar space of All Phenomena Ocean, where the Reincarnation Tree's true body was located.

Almost at the same time Lu Ye activated the Reincarnation Tree mark, Tree Elder immediately sensed it, looked up at the distant stellar space with an expression of surprise and doubt: "This location..."

He certainly remembered this location, because it was also one of the stellar space's flaws, which he had quietly opened for a moment using his power years ago.

"I see!" Tree Elder quickly gained insight.

The Spectral Sedan Chair had suddenly appeared, taking Lu Ye and others away, causing quite a stir. As the stellar space supreme treasure, Tree Elder, with ears and eyes pervasive throughout the stellar space, had certainly heard about it.

However, he hadn't expected, after a few years, to sense the mark he had bestowed upon Lu Ye back then at this location, which undoubtedly meant that Lu Ye was right at the opposite side of this position.

He closed his eyes, and the vast true body of the Reincarnation Tree swayed, releasing an invisible force that pierced through the void's barrier in an instant.

In front of the murky void, Lu Ye blinked.

Just a moment ago, he vaguely felt something, and as he was about to investigate carefully, an incomplete piece of information suddenly emerged from the mark, flooding into his mind.

He quickly investigated and then opened his eyes.

As he had suspected before, arriving at this location allowed him to connect with the true body of the Reincarnation Tree through the mark. The information clearly had been transmitted from Tree Elder in the stellar space.

However, possibly due to the isolation of different spaces, even the information transmitted by Tree Elder was not complete.

In summary, Tree Elder had only one piece of advice: "It's not the time, try to enhance yourself!"

Tree Elder should have some understanding of the situation here; after all, stellar space had been invaded by Star Abyss once before, such a situation had occurred.

Tree Elder knew what consequences would arise if he used his power to receive Lu Ye back at this time. Although the Star Abyss Gate would eventually open, now when Lu Ye and others were in the Star Abyss, was the perfect time for them to enhance themselves. The more they improve, the stronger the home planet's abilities to protect itself when the Star Abyss Gate opens.

As for when to receive Lu Ye back, it would depend on future variables and Lu Ye's considerations.

After pondering for a while, Lu Ye had made up his mind.

As his mana calmed down and he turned around, he almost bumped into a tall figure. Lu Ye quickly stepped back a few paces and looked up, to see a figure at least five zhang tall standing behind him.

Covered in black hair, it looked like an upright gorilla.

Lu Ye jumped in shock, almost unable to resist fleeing immediately.

Calming his mind, he bowed: "Greetings, Fellow Daoist."

The gorilla-like strong individual was one of the ten gathered here, looking down at Lu Ye, he buzzed: "What were you doing just now?"

Lu Ye blinked: "I just came to take a look at the Star Abyss Gate, it's an order from Miss Yin Luo."

Upon hearing Yin Luo mentioned, the other couldn't help but frown, a look of dread on his face.

Seeing this, Lu Ye spoke: "By the way, Fellow Daoist, may I ask if this Star Abyss Gate has opened in the past few years?"

"No!" he replied, not bothering to engage with Lu Ye further, and returned to his previous position to sit down.