

Humanity 2121

Chapter 2121: The Divisions of the Dao Realm

According to Lu Ye's original guess, the corresponding position of the Star Abyss Gate here should be the All Phenomena Ocean.

But the answer obtained now is quite different from his original guess. Several years ago, when the Star Abyss Gate here was not opened, the corresponding position could not possibly be the All Phenomena Ocean.

Because several years ago, the Star Abyss Gate of the All Phenomena Ocean was opened by the Insect Race using some means.

Calmly returning to the Qing Palace, Lu Ye searched around for a long time before finally finding Uncle Duan.

Uncle Duan was in a place that looked like a kitchen, cooking something. A seemingly ordinary large iron pot was set on the stove fire, with bubbles roiling inside.

As soon as Lu Ye entered, he smelled an enticing aroma that made his mouth water.

"What do you need?" Uncle Duan turned his head and glanced at him.

Lu Ye stared at the flame on the stove intently. It was clearly no ordinary fire, as he could distinctly sense the presence of Dao force within it. This flame was undoubtedly stronger than the uncanny fire of the fire gourd.

Resisting his thoughts, Lu Ye clasped his hands and said, "I greet Uncle Duan, and I have some matters to consult."

Uncle Duan nodded slightly, raised a hand, and threw something from his sleeve, speaking as he did so: "You are considered Miss's guest. If there's anything, just ask."

A scream was heard...

Lu Ye saw clearly that what Uncle Duan had thrown from his sleeve was indeed a Star Abyss living creature, shrunk many times over. It looked like a Demon Race member, and despite being shrunk, it exuded an extremely powerful aura.

Lu Ye estimated it was at least of the 6th Dao.

Yet now it was being thrown into the pot just like that...

That Demon Race member tried to escape from the iron pot, but as soon as its head emerged, Uncle Duan stirred the pot with a large iron ladle, instantly submerging the figure in green broth, the screams gradually fading away.

Lu Ye's eye twitched.

"What do you want to ask?" Uncle Duan spoke again.

Despite previous unpleasant interactions with Lu Ye, he seemed to have brushed it off.

Composing himself, Lu Ye then said, "May I ask Uncle Duan, what realm are you and Miss Yin Luo in now?"

This was a pressing question for him and other team members to figure out. There was no way before, now there was, so he naturally seized the opportunity.

Uncle Duan instantly understood: "You're asking about the classifications beyond the Dao realm, right?"

"Indeed!" Lu Ye nodded solemnly: "I hope Uncle Duan can enlighten me!"

"Take this!" Uncle Duan handed Lu Ye the large iron ladle he was holding. Lu Ye quickly took it, and Uncle Duan pointed at the large iron pot: "Stir it, don't stop!"

Lu Ye followed his instructions.

Uncle Duan stood by, and again tossed a greatly shrunk Star Abyss living creature into the pot. This time, it was not a Demon Race member but seemed to be a human race.

Lu Ye couldn't help but glance at his sleeve, wondering what mystery lied there and how many Star Abyss living creatures were hidden within.

"The Dao realm is entered by establishing a Dao foundation," Uncle Duan, arms folded in his sleeves, supervised Lu Ye's work while speaking, "But the Dao realm is a broad category. Not to mention you lost ones, the vast majority of Star Abyss living creatures aren't clear about the finer classifications because they don't need to know. Once their strength reaches a certain level, they'll naturally understand. You may have sought information from Star Abyss cultivators before, but you likely made little progress."

"Exactly." Lu Ye nodded. The squad had indeed tried to gather intelligence along their journey but made no progress.

Uncle Duan smiled: "Cultivation within the Star Abyss differs from your stellar space. In stellar space, tradition is emphasized. Even if one's strength is inadequate, they can learn necessary knowledge passed down by mentors. Star Abyss differs; cultivation here emphasizes natural progression."

He raised a hand and continued: "The Dao realm can actually be divided into three layers: Enter the Path, Dao Fusion, Dao Harmony. Enter the Path is your current level, beginning to understand and recognize the essence of the Dao, entering the Dao realm, being able to sense and utilize Dao force. The most important aspect for any cultivator at this level is the Dao foundation, or Dao Bone, directly affecting our cultivator's strength. In this realm, one Dao is the beginning, and nine Dao is the extreme!"

Lu Ye raised his eyebrows: "So, within the Enter the Path layer, nine Dao is the limit, no tenth Dao cultivators?"

Uncle Duan chuckled: "What tenth Dao cultivator? Beyond nine Dao is the Dao Fusion layer, where there's a qualitative jump in strength."

Lu Ye asked: "In the Enter the Path layer, refining the second Dao Bone becomes the 6th Dao. Calculating it, refining the fifth Dao Bone makes one the 9th Dao. Then, how does one advance in the Dao Fusion layer? By refining more Dao Bones?"

Uncle Duan slowly shook his head: "That's as much as I can tell you now. It's not that I'm withholding information, but... the Star Abyss has its rules, and I must abide by them."

Lu Ye's eyes flashed.

Seeing his thoughts, Uncle Duan said: "You don't need to seek answers from Miss either. Her response will be the same as mine. In the Star Abyss, once you reach the corresponding level, you'll naturally understand some things."

Lu Ye pondered in silence.

After a long while, he spoke again, "Uncle Duan, there's one more thing I'd like to ask."

"Speak!"

"The cultivation of Star Abyss cultivators primarily focuses on obtaining more Dao force, isn't that right?"

"That's correct. Whether it's entering the path, Dao fusion, or Dao harmony, ultimately, Dao force is fundamental." Uncle Duan nodded.

"Then why are so many Star Abyss living creatures gathered here? Even if the Star Abyss Gate has opened, when they invade stellar space, there's no Dao force there, nor is there the Star Abyss ambience that they prefer. So why do they do it?"

"Why..." Uncle Duan chuckled, "Of course it's because there are benefits to be gained. Otherwise, why do you think an unopened Star Abyss Gate would attract so much attention from powerful beings?"

"Benefits? What kind of benefits?" Lu Ye frowned, really unable to grasp the key here.

From his time surviving in the Cover Armor stellar space, even though the Star Abyss cultivators killed quite a few Cover Armor stellar space cultivators, they didn't gain much benefit. It was less effective than hunting each other in the Star Abyss.

"Even if I told you the specific benefits, you wouldn't understand because you're now a lost one. One day, when you truly become a Star Abyss living creature, you'll naturally understand. I can only tell you that the benefits they gain from invading stellar space allow them to grow faster and cultivate more conveniently—something they can't achieve within the Star Abyss. So whenever a Star Abyss Gate is about to open, it's a carnival feast for nearby Star Abyss living creatures. Otherwise, why do you think so many gather under Miss Yin Luo's command despite the Star Abyss living creatures being so disorganized?"

It turns out lost ones will eventually become true Star Abyss living creatures; Lu Ye had already suspected this.

Because when living in an environment like the Star Abyss for a long time, no matter how powerful a cultivator is, they will inevitably be corrupted by the Star Abyss ambience.

Take the others in his team, for example. They already showed traces of this transformation, albeit subtle now due to the short time they've spent there. But eventually, they will become true Star Abyss cultivators, with no trace of being lost ones.

Throughout history, countless stellar spaces have been eroded by the Star Abyss. The surviving cultivators within those spaces, though few, stood out due to their noticeable lost one aura, making their initial situations extremely dangerous. Only when they transformed into true Star Abyss living creatures would their circumstances improve.

While others in the team were transitioning into Star Abyss living creatures, Lu Ye managed to maintain his original aura, thanks to the Talent Tree that eradicated anything useless.

The information Uncle Duan disclosed made Lu Ye a little wary: "Then what is Miss Yin Luo's purpose in guarding here..."

Uncle Duan shot him a sinister look, "It's also for the stellar space you hail from, completing Qing Jun's orders is just incidental."

Lu Ye's expression remained unchanged, yet his heart sank.

He had thought Yin Luo and Uncle Duan were allies rather than enemies, but now it seemed that wasn't the case at all.

Their current ability to rely on Yin Luo for protection was thanks to Yang Qing. But once the Star Abyss Gate opened, Yin Luo and Uncle Duan would become the entire stellar space's arch-enemies!

And such an enemy...

Who could withstand them?

"One last question, what are the cultivation levels of Uncle Duan and Miss Yin Luo now?" Lu Ye asked, which was his initial inquiry.

Uncle Duan replied, "Miss Yin Luo and I are at the Dao Fusion level, but once your stellar space is destroyed, Miss Yin Luo might ascend to Dao Harmony, it's her opportunity!"

It was expected, and even the other ten powerful beings near the Star Abyss Gate should also be at the Dao Fusion level.

But Uncle Duan's words were terrifyingly revealing to Lu Ye.

The destruction of the stellar space was crucial to Yin Luo's path to ascension. Considering what Uncle Duan said earlier, Lu Ye immediately realized that the destruction would provide Yin Luo immense benefits, giving her the chance to advance from Dao Fusion to Dao Harmony.

It was truly troubling...

After more idle chat with Uncle Duan and helping him cook a pot of strange broth, Lu Ye finally left. During the whole process, Lu Ye quietly counted that nearly twenty Star Abyss living creatures, at least at the 5th Dao level, were used to make the broth.

Uncle Duan carried the pot off to find Yin Luo, looking pleased, while Lu Ye returned to his quarters with a heavy heart, summoning everyone together.

He then revealed all the information he had gleaned from Uncle Duan.

After he finished speaking, the room fell silent.

Despite gaining a lot of information, there wasn't much that was genuinely useful.

At least now, everyone understood the divisions within the Dao Realm and knew what level they were currently at.

The team's average level was around the 5th or 6th Dao, which wasn't bottom-tier in the Star Abyss, but still, they were just beginning their journey on the Dao path, with a long way to go.

Chapter 2122: Edible

"In other words, we won't be able to go back for the time being." After a moment, Zi Ji broke the silence.

Lu Ye nodded, "The information passed on by Tree Elder is incomplete, but he means for us to take this opportunity to become stronger as much as possible. As for when we can return... I'll find more opportunities to communicate with Tree Elder. When the time comes, we'll naturally know."

The Star Abyss Gate should open in a few years; before that, the team must return to stellar space. Otherwise, it'll be too late when the Star Abyss Gate opens.

"Then what we need to do now is simple," Jiu Yan's voice rang out, "Hunt those Star Abyss living creatures to acquire more Dao Bones and enhance our strength!"

Lu Ye nodded and said, "Speaking of which, I just tried briefly. Those Star Abyss living creatures outside seem to have received Yin Luo's instructions. If we don't provoke them, they won't take action themselves. But if we strike first, they will retaliate."

Chen Wulei said, "That's your situation. It might not be the same for us..."

This is evident from Uncle Duan and Yin Luo's previous attitudes towards the group. Others were able to survive, thanks to Lu Ye's self-sacrifice threat, which stopped Yin Luo from eating them.

Yin Luo is definitely willing to take care of Lu Ye, but what treatment others will receive is uncertain.

"It actually doesn't matter much," Chong Yue chuckled, "Those guys outside aren't peaceful cohabitants. Battles and killings are everywhere. Even if they attack us, we're not made of clay. This environment is better suited for us to enhance ourselves. As long as we're careful enough, if we aren't their match, we can escape back to the Qing Palace's area and preserve our lives!"

The group all nodded, clearly realizing this as an opportunity.

For these years, most of the time they've been traveling. Although they gained along the way, the yield wasn't large.

It's rare to come to such a place; naturally, they want to seize the chance. Everyone is an Overlord-level figure in stellar space; who would dread battles?

Zi Ji looked around and said, "Eleven people is too big a target. We need to split up. Ideally, groups of three or four."

Lu Ye raised his hand, "I won't participate. I have other matters to attend to. You all be careful!"

The main reason is that his Dao force accumulation has exceeded a thousand now. With his current foundation, he can only exert the level of the 7th Dao at most; accumulating more Dao force is meaningless.

Even considering the Talent Tree Avatar, as long as his Dao force is over eight hundred, he can act as two 7th Dao individuals. A thousand surpasses this standard.

Thus, what he needs now is to enhance his foundation, so he can harness more Dao force.

And the simplest way to enhance the foundation is to improve cultivation!

By Lu Ye's own estimation, if he can advance to Sun Blaze Late Stage, he can harness the power of the 8th Dao, and reaching Peak Sun Blaze would mean the 9th Dao!

Since being cast adrift in the Star Abyss, he has always protected everyone to his utmost ability, but they're not children, and such protection can't last forever.

Moreover, since eleven people need to split up, he can't look out for them all alone;

So he needs to prioritize enhancing himself.

Hearing this, the group had no objections. After a discussion, they quickly finalized the grouping plan.

The remaining ten people were split into three teams, with the Cover Armor stellar space trio naturally forming one team, and the remaining seven were divided into two groups.

Once the discussion was settled, each departed to rest, waiting to start the action the next day.

Lu Ye kept Jiu Yan behind.

Jiu Yan seemed visibly anxious. Since the last encounter, the two hadn't been alone together again, having already been five years.

Even though she was the initiator five years ago, she still doesn't know how to face Lu Ye, especially in such an alone setting.

On the eve of battle, Lu Ye certainly didn't want her distracted. He offered a drop of treasure blood, "Keep this close to you."

Though he can't hunt alongside Jiu Yan, precautions are a must. With this treasure blood, Lu Ye can monitor her situation anytime. If anything goes wrong, he can provide timely assistance.

Jiu Yan solemnly accepted the treasure blood and thought for a while, placing the drop directly in her ear.

"Get some rest," Lu Ye urged.

Jiu Yan hesitated for a moment before nodding and leaving.

As the door opened, Jiu Yan paused and, with a struggle in her brow, slowly closed the door again and turned to look at Lu Ye.

Their eyes met, and Jiu Yan lowered her head.

Lu Ye blinked and walked towards her, then pressed her against the door.

...

Jiu Yan and the others had each started their hunting. Lu Ye briefly checked her situation.

She was currently with Chong Yue and Bewitchment Shadow; the team consisted of three people: two of the 6th Dao and one of the 5th Dao. In this chaotic place, filled with many Star Abyss living creatures, as long as they chose their targets wisely, there shouldn't be major issues.

The only trouble is their conspicuous lost one aura. Once they take action, it reveals their whereabouts, often attracting Star Abyss living creatures around.

In such circumstances, they need swift battles; any delays could lead to being surrounded.

Fortunately, Bewitchment Shadow, the Clan Leader of the Specter Race, is proficient in ambush attacks and often strikes first, achieving good results.

Jiu Yan's side had no major issues, and as for the other two teams, Lu Ye had no time to divide his focus, leaving them to their own fortunes.

Now his main body and Talent Tree are actively engaged in cultivation.

Regarding cultivation, Lu Ye has always taken a steady and solid approach, not being hasty, but this time the situation is different. Naturally, he aims to be as efficient as possible, so he's even using the Talent Tree Avatar.

Although this method greatly enhances his cultivation efficiency, it still lags far behind his previous cultivation in the All Phenomena Ocean.

At this rate, who knows how long it will take to advance to the Sun Blaze Late Stage.

But for now, this is the only option.

During cultivation, Lu Ye is also honing his Soul Suppressing Secret Technique. The promotion of Sun Blaze is directly related to the level of his Soul Suppressing Secret Technique, so he cannot ignore it. Otherwise, even if his Mana accumulation is sufficient, he still cannot advance if the level of the Soul Suppressing Secret Technique is lacking.

He also manifested a Treasure Blood Avatar.

In the grand hall, Lu Ye's Treasure Blood Avatar walked in, and at a glance, saw Yin Luo sitting bored in a tall chair. Her small body was slumped on the dining table, placing her tattered doll in front of her, muttering to herself, unaware of what she was saying.

Noticing Lu Ye's arrival, Yin Luo immediately looked up at him and pouted, "Oh, it's you!"

She seemed to still be sulking because Lu Ye didn't let her eat Chen Wulei and the others before.

Lu Ye smiled along, stepped forward, and greeted, "Miss Yin Luo."

"Do you have any business?" Yin Luo asked, suddenly showing a look of surprise, sizing up Lu Ye.

Lu Ye suddenly felt a chill run down his spine. Before he could regain his composure, Yin Luo flipped her small hand and slapped him directly.

Lu Ye felt his entire being flattened, the avatar shattered, reverting back to the treasure blood...

It's not just that the avatar couldn't utilize Dao force, the strength difference compared to his true self was immense. Even if his true self were here, he wouldn't have much resistance against a Peak Dao Fusion.

The treasure blood flowed in Yin Luo's hand like a ruby, getting poked a few times before she tossed it forward.

With a burst of blood light, the Treasure Blood Avatar coalesced anew, while Lu Ye looked on helplessly.

This was truly being squeezed and flattened by someone...

"Sluurp..." The sound of swallowing echoed, as Yin Luo looked at Lu Ye with glowing eyes, wiping the drool from the corner of her mouth, "Aren't you from the human race? How do you have the Blood Race's treasure blood?"

Undoubtedly, she was someone with worldly experience, seeing through the essence of Lu Ye's Treasure Blood Avatar with a single glance.

Lu Ye involuntarily stepped back one pace, "I actually also have Blood Race bloodline..."

Yin Luo jumped down from the chair, advancing towards Lu Ye step by step, "Really? Then can I eat this Treasure Blood Avatar of yours? This avatar smells so good..."

"Wait, wait, wait!" Lu Ye raised his hand.

He had come to discuss matters with Yin Luo, never expecting it would trigger such a crisis.

If only he had sent the Talent Tree Avatar!

Yin Luo paid no heed to him, her eyes completely devoid of rationality, drool dripping down her chin, muttering to herself, "The true self can't be eaten, but the avatar can be. Yes, it can be eaten! Ah..."

With her small mouth wide open, it suddenly morphed into a blood-red maw.

At the last moment, Lu Ye hurriedly retracted his consciousness from the avatar, then his connection to that drop of treasure blood vanished without a trace!

Interrupting his cultivation, Lu Ye's face turned dark.

In his entire life, he had never experienced being swallowed whole; the sensation was utterly horrifying.

Frowning in contemplation, Lu Ye sighed, glanced at the Talent Tree Avatar beside him who was cultivating.

The Avatar opened its eyes, stood up, and walked out.

The Treasure Blood Avatar couldn't wander around Yin Luo anymore. Although losing a drop of treasure blood wasn't a huge impact, nobody wanted to go through that experience a second time.

Yet, even before reaching that grand hall, the avatar heard sounds of sobbing inside.

The voice was clearly Yin Luo's!

As if she had been grievously wronged, her crying filled the heavens and earth.

Lu Ye wasn't sure what was happening, so he stood at the door, peeking inside.

The momentarily crying Yin Luo immediately noticed him, her small body flickered, and in the next instant, Lu Ye felt a weight in his arms, knocking him to the ground on his backside.

Coming to his senses, he found Yin Luo clinging to him like an octopus, crying her eyes out, and in between sobs she choked, "Yin Luo is sorry! Yin Luo ate you! Qing Jun won't forgive Yin Luo, waaahh..."

Lu Ye felt as if his ears had gone deaf!

Utterly lost on how to vent his anger.

Clearly, he was the one who got eaten, so why was she crying?

However, Yin Luo's words made Lu Ye keenly perceive certain nuances.

Regarding Yang Qing's instructions, Yin Luo undoubtedly held them in high regard; otherwise, she wouldn't have reacted so strongly over merely consuming a drop of his Treasure Blood Avatar.

After a quick glance, Lu Ye solemnly spoke, "Then how will you compensate me?"

Chapter 2123: Our Little Secret

"Compensate you?" Yin Luo looked up, her tear-filled eyes staring at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye raised his hand to lift her up and then stood himself, nodding, "Yes, that was my precious treasure blood avatar, painstakingly cultivated with significant effort and time, just to be consumed by you in one bite. The loss is enormous, so you have to do something to make up for my loss."

Yin Luo looked gloomy, lowering her head, "It's useless, Qing Jun won't forgive me."

Lu Ye looked at her, "Are you afraid Qing Jun will blame you if he finds out?"

"Hmm..." Yin Luo felt wronged, like a child who made a mistake.

Lu Ye coaxed gently, "But if you don't tell, and I don't tell, how would Qing Jun ever find out?"

Yin Luo looked up, blinking her eyes, with a burst of joyful light in her eyes, "You won't tell Qing Jun about this?"

"Of course not. I believe you didn't mean it. What happened before was just an accident, right?"

"Hmm, hmm! It was an accident!" Yin Luo nodded her head like a little chick pecking at rice.

"Then that's settled." Lu Ye raised his large hand and patted Yin Luo's little head, "It's our little secret, neither of us should say anything."

Yin Luo's eyes squinted into crescent shapes, the corners curving, "No one says a word!"

"But..." Lu Ye rubbed her head, changing the subject, "But my treasure blood avatar was ultimately eaten by you, so you still have to compensate me."

"Then how do you want me to compensate you?" Yin Luo looked at him with clear eyes.

Lu Ye pondered for a moment, "Haven't thought of it yet, I'll tell you when I do." He indeed had a matter he wanted Yin Luo to assist with, concerning the safety of the stellar space, but he wasn't sure if this was the right time to bring it up, so he decided to hold off for now.

"Alright!" Yin Luo agreed immediately.

"That's settled, you can't go back on your word later."

"Of course, as long as it's something I can do, I won't go back on it."

"Yin Luo, I've previously asked Uncle Duan about some things, he said that invading the stellar space would greatly benefit you, even concerning your path to breakthrough, is this true?" Lu Ye changed the topic; although what Uncle Duan said should be correct, Lu Ye still wanted to confirm it with Yin Luo, whose simple thinking might make it easier to gather some intelligence.

"Yes, if I can succeed in invading your stellar space, then I can break through. When that time comes, the first thing I'll do is kill that Blood Owl!" Yin Luo clenched her little fist, looking fierce.

"Who is Blood Owl?" Lu Ye asked, seeing her posture as if there was a deep-seated grudge.

"Blood Owl is a bad guy, he wants to seize the Star Abyss Gate that's about to open here, he's been repelled by me several times, but I can't kill him!" Talking about this, Yin Luo sounded aggrieved.

Lu Ye understood, "Does the force that attacked last time have something to do with Blood Owl?"

"He's the one who brought them." Yin Luo replied, "By the way, like you, he's a member of the Blood Race."

"Oh?" Lu Ye instantly grew interested, although he had long known that the Blood Race came from the Star Abyss, truth be told, he hadn't encountered other Blood Race members yet. Unexpectedly, this Blood Owl was also one, and being able to clash with Yin Luo, yet not be dead, he must be a strong practitioner at the Dao Fusion level.

Yin Luo suddenly remembered something, "Can you teach me how to kill him? Whenever he can't beat me, he suddenly splits into multiple copies and escapes, and fighting in his Blood Sea restricts me a lot. How can I kill him in his Blood Sea?"

Lu Ye thought for a moment, "Why don't you take me along next time and try? But the premise is you must protect my safety!"

At the Dao Fusion level of confrontation, he basically couldn't interfere, but if the opponent is a Blood Race member, there might be hope.

The bloodline of the Blood Race is undoubtedly something to be leveraged, and Lu Ye believed his own Blood Race saintliness was overwhelmingly powerful, far ahead of other Blood Race members in the stellar space, a unique existence, but he didn't know how it compared to Blood Owl's saintliness.

If his saintliness could suppress Blood Owl, it would undoubtedly assist Yin Luo immensely, but if not, then there's nothing he could do. Therefore, the premise is that Yin Luo can protect his safety.

"No problem!" Yin Luo agreed immediately, although unable to kill Blood Owl, through multiple confrontations, she had a very keen understanding of the strength disparity between them and could certainly protect Lu Ye.

Lu Ye then returned to the previous topic, "Why can you break through once you successfully invade the stellar space?"

"Because of the benefits," Yin Luo looked like it was a matter of course.

Lu Ye patiently asked, "I know you can benefit from it, but what kind of benefit allows you to ascend instantly?"

"I don't know, it's my first time doing this."

Lu Ye's eye twitched, "Then you can't achieve a breakthrough through cultivation? You have to invade the stellar space?"

"I can, but it'll take a long time. Invading the stellar space is the fastest and most convenient method."

Lu Ye understood, sighed, "But the stellar space is where Qing Jun came from, there are many of his friends and family inside. If an unexpected event occurs due to the Star Abyss invasion, Qing Jun would be heartbroken, wouldn't you care to see that?"

Mentioning Qing Jun made Yin Luo's expression much more solemn, and she asked nervously, "What should we do then?"

"Where did Qing Jun go?"

"Seems to be in the depths of the Star Abyss."

"But eventually he will return. If one day he comes back here and sees his birthplace in the stellar space shattered, and his cherished friends and family wiped out by the rampage of Star Abyss living creatures, I can't imagine how heartbroken he would be."

Yin Luo seemed completely dumbfounded.

Observing Yin Luo's reactions, Lu Ye realized it was enough. Yin Luo's little brain shouldn't handle too much complexity, so what he said today should be enough for her to ponder over for a while.

"Think it over yourself."

He gracefully took his leave, returning to his residence to cultivate in peace.

In the days that followed, Lu Ye occasionally used the Talent Tree Avatar to take a stroll outside, either chatting with Uncle Duan to gather information or finding Yin Luo to instill his ideas in her.

Cultivation was going relatively smoothly, although Lu Ye was both amused and exasperated that, as his cultivation progressed, his Dao force kept accumulating efficiently.

However, he didn't need more Dao force at the moment; he would rather convert it into Spiritual Energy to foster his own growth.

The polishing of the Soul Suppressing Secret Technique was also being synchronously conducted.

Apart from him, there was considerable success in the hunting activities led by three groups headed by Chen Wulei, Zi Ji, and Chong Yue.

The number of Star Abyss living creatures gathered in this area was sizable, so the teams could easily find their prey, and they were almost daily reaping bountiful rewards.

Due to their cautiousness, even though the three groups had encountered danger a few times, it was generally manageable. The most perilous time was when Zi Ji's team ran into an 8th Dao and almost suffered total destruction, but luckily they managed to retreat back to the Qing Palace's territory in time, averting the crisis.

Time flew by, and half a year had passed.

One day, the Talent Tree Avatar visited Yin Luo as usual, and upon meeting, the little girl rushed forward, clinging to Lu Ye's leg, looking up at him pitifully: "Lu Ye, I'm so hungry!"

Through long exploration, Lu Ye had learned the true nature of Yin Luo; originally a powerful star beast within the Star Abyss, saved by Yang Qing and enlightened to human form, she gained spiritual intelligence. As a star beast transformed into human shape, her thinking remained simple.

But she still retained the primal instinct of a star beast, which required her to feed periodically.

Her diet comprised of all Star Abyss living creatures weaker than her, although she distinguished between tasty and bland food.

For her, beings from the stellar space were delicious, a taste unmatched by Star Abyss living creatures; hence, during their first encounter, she lost composure upon seeing a group of lost ones.

And among them, Lu Ye was the most tempting because, due to the Talent Tree, his aura was exceptionally pure.

After accidentally consuming Lu Ye's Treasure Blood Avatar, Yin Luo hadn't forgotten it, finding other food now unappealing.

This troubled Uncle Duan greatly; he even left the area recently to find traces of lost ones, hoping to capture some to satisfy the young lady's craving.

But traces of lost ones were not easily found; once the stellar space shattered, stellar space beings generally faced quick demise, and any survivors would hide deeply.

Initially, Yin Luo could suppress her hunger, but the prolonged period without feeding made it unbearable, a primal urge as a star beast that couldn't be alleviated except by eating.

Seeing Yin Luo's eyes blur and drool pooling at the corner of her mouth, Lu Ye knew the time had come.

He had actually been waiting for this day.

Kneeling down, he held Yin Luo's shoulders to position her correctly in front of him, and he gazed into her eyes: "Yin Luo, hold on, Uncle Duan went out to find food for you."

Yin Luo, as limp as noodles, kept leaning towards Lu Ye, drooling hungrily: "I... I can't wait any longer."

"That puts us in a difficult situation, though I still have the Treasure Blood Avatar..."

"Yes!" Yin Luo's eyes brightened, "It's the Treasure Blood Avatar; I want to eat your Treasure Blood Avatar!"

Lu Ye said seriously, "But if Qing Jun hears of it later, he will blame you."

Qing Jun was always a forbidden topic for Yin Luo, and at the mention of Qing Jun, her eyes cleared up considerably, standing stupefied: "Right, Qing Jun will blame me; he'll scold me."

While speaking, her mouth puckered, and tear after tear poured down as she clutched Lu Ye's clothes, feeling forlorn: "What should I do?"

Lu Ye hurriedly comforted her: "Don't cry, don't cry, since this is our little secret, I can let you have a Treasure Blood Avatar, but you must promise me one condition!"

"I promise!" Yin Luo replied instinctively without hesitation.

Chapter 2124: Forging Nine Paths

"In the name of the Will of the Star Abyss, I, Yin Luo, swear to guard this Star Abyss Gate. If it ever opens one day, I vow not to invade the opposite stellar space. Should the stellar space face difficulty..."

Yin Luo's voice slowly rose, her expression solemn yet a bit urgent, and she spoke very quickly.

Months of mental conditioning led Lu Ye to successfully mold Yin Luo's perception of the All Phenomena Ocean as Yang Qing's homeland, inhabited by his friends and family—one not to be invaded at will, but rather needing protection, even at the cost of life.

Additionally, driven by a strong sense of hunger and a craving for Lu Ye's Treasure Blood Avatar, Lu Ye could achieve his goal.

Luckily, Yin Luo was simple and easily manipulated, otherwise such a plan would be impossible.

With the oath taken, Lu Ye breathed a sigh of relief.

Finally, the half-year of planning had not been in vain. There was no need to worry about this Star Abyss Gate anymore; even if it opened in the future, with Yin Luo guarding it, it wouldn't pose much of a threat to the stellar space unless a stronger being killed Yin Luo.

Yin Luo was at the Peak Dao Fusion level, and only those at the Dao Harmony level, the third stage of the Dao Realm, could kill her. Such powerful beings are not easily encountered.

And within the Star Abyss, swearing in the name of the Will of the Star Abyss is no trivial matter. Lu Ye once sought intel from Uncle Duan regarding this. No Star Abyss living creature would dare to joke about it. Failing to uphold a sworn oath results in dire consequences.

"Is it done?" Yin Luo eagerly looked at Lu Ye.

"Yes, yes!" Lu Ye smiled warmly at her, finding this young girl unprecedentedly endearing.

A Treasure Blood Avatar, prepared in advance, stepped forward, filled with a look of resignation to fate.

Yin Luo surged forward, her mouth opening wide, transforming into a menacing maw.

The Talent Tree Avatar stood aside, witnessing the bloody scene firsthand, feeling chilled to the bone. After all, it was a part of himself. Although he had withdrawn his consciousness before it was devoured, experiencing this was not something just anyone could endure.

After consuming the Treasure Blood Avatar, Yin Luo looked unsatisfied, standing there licking her lips, as if savoring the moment.

Lu Ye spoke, "Yin Luo, would you want more in the future?"

Yin Luo froze, then looked at Lu Ye in surprise, "Can I have more?"

Lu Ye showed a troubled expression, "It's possible, but you should know, creating such a Treasure Blood Avatar consumes a lot of resources and takes a long time..."

"I'll compensate you!" Yin Luo blurted out, "Whatever you want, I'll give you."

Lu Ye felt gratified, after half a year, the young girl was finally following the path!

"I need Dao Bones!" Lu Ye said.

He himself did not need Dao Bones, but he had an idea that required a large number of Dao Bones to implement. Currently, the ten out there hunting for Dao Bones had some success, but not enough to support his idea.

"The more, the better! Not a large quantity at once, but I need you to continuously supply me with Dao Bones."

"Hmm..." Yin Luo contemplated, "I can give you at most a hundred Dao Bones a month, not more. If I kill too many outside, they'll run away."

Lu Ye knew that Dao Bones came from the Star Abyss living creatures outside. For Yin Luo to provide him with Dao Bones, she would have to go out and kill those Star Abyss living creatures.

These Star Abyss living creatures were gathered here mainly drawn by the Star Abyss Gate, and their relationship with Yin Luo wasn't merely one of superior and subordinate. Since Yin Luo was the strongest here, they ostensibly came to join her.

But in reality, Yin Luo didn't have strong control over them. If she killed too many, they would naturally flee, likely seeking refuge with other nearby strong beings like the Blood Owl.

A hundred a month was the limit Yin Luo could provide.

It had already exceeded Lu Ye's expectations.

"That's fine!" Lu Ye nodded, "Every month you give me a hundred Dao Bones, and I'll give you one Treasure Blood Avatar every six months."

"Six months... Can we do one a month?" Yin Luo looked at Lu Ye longingly.

Lu Ye shook his head decisively, "You have to know, creating a Treasure Blood Avatar is very tiring for me, and each loss severely depletes my vital energy. I need time to recover."

"Then... two months?"

Lu Ye was speechless; how had this little girl learned to bargain? Had he taught her too well?

After a brief consideration, he said, "Three months then, I'll give you one Treasure Blood Avatar every three months."

"Okay!" Yin Luo nodded immediately, a smile spreading across her face, "Is this our little secret?"

"Smart!" Lu Ye praised her.

The two exchanged glances, understanding each other without words.

Half a day later, eleven figures gathered together in Lu Ye's room.

"What's the reason for summoning us?" Zi Ji asked, a scar across his face strikingly evident, clearly left from a recent battle. Given that it hadn't healed despite his Demon Race Great Demon Venerable constitution, it showed how perilous that battle was.

"I intend to concentrate some resources to prioritize creating a 9th Dao, so your squads need to be adjusted!" Lu Ye got straight to the point.

"Oh?" Chen Wulei raised an eyebrow, "Actually, I've had a similar thought. Although our current overall strength isn't weak, it's still not strong enough. If we had a 9th Dao to oversee, the efficiency of our hunting would greatly increase! I've observed that the ten Dao Fusion near the Star Abyss Gate aren't making any moves; they're not involved in the competition, so in reality, in this area, the 9th Dao is the strongest! I agree with Fellow Daoist Lu's idea. I'll bring back the Dao Bones our squad hunts down and hand them over to you."

With his statement, Du Qingsha and Chang Yu naturally had no objections.

Lu Ye shook his head and said, "Brother Chen, you misunderstand me; I have my own channel to obtain these resources to create a 9th Dao, and I don't need you to provide them. The Dao Bones you hunt should still be used by yourselves to enhance your strength."

"You have a channel..." Chen Wulei had some understanding, "Brother Lu, have you reached an agreement with Miss Yin Luo?"

Lu Ye had been in closed-door cultivation recently, they all knew this. Moreover, concentrating resources for creating a 9th Dao required quite a number of Dao Bones, which he couldn't acquire by himself. Thus, there was only one channel.

By leveraging the strength of the strongest here.

"Exactly!" Lu Ye didn't hide, "Yin Luo will provide me with a hundred Dao Bones each month, enough for one person to refine and use."

"That's excellent." Chen Wulei was delighted and cupped his hands, "Then I first wish Fellow Daoist Lu an early advancement to the 9th Dao."

Lu Ye slowly shook his head, "The candidate for creating the 9th Dao won't be me. My situation is unique and I cannot break through for now, so we need to adjust the squads." As he spoke, he looked at Jiu Yan, "Senior Sister, you shall do it."

Jiu Yan was momentarily stunned, "Me?" She opened her mouth as if to say something yet didn't utter a word in the end.

Everyone understood, Lu Ye's choosing Jiu Yan was only natural; everyone had noticed their relationship, though none ever mentioned it aloud.

The monthly resource of a hundred Dao Bones was obtained through Lu Ye's means, and he wished to use them for Jiu Yan, others had no reason to interfere.

His summoning all to explain the matter was an act of transparency.

Jiu Yan was originally a member of Chong Yue's squad, now that she's to fully concentrate on advancing to the 9th Dao, Chong Yue's squad would be short one person, requiring supplementation from Zi Ji's side.

The discussion resolved, everyone dispersed, leaving only Jiu Yan behind.

Lu Ye took out the hundred Dao Bones obtained from Yin Luo and handed them to Jiu Yan, "Feel no worries, everyone has personal ambitions, they all understand, once you advance to the 9th Dao, assisting them fully won't be late."

"I understand," Jiu Yan nodded.

Logically, if Lu Ye wasn't the candidate, Chen Wulei would be the best choice, as he's at the 7th Dao. Yet, as Lu Ye said, everyone has personal ambitions, and he's no exception.

"I'll return to cultivate then," Jiu Yan said.

Lu Ye nodded.

Moments later, in Jiu Yan's room, she examined these Dao Bones, secretly shocked because their quality was superb, each Dao Bone contained substantial residual Dao force, indicating the Dao Bone's former owner hadn't expended much Dao force before death.

Take, for instance, the Dao Bones left by 5th Dao cultivators; despite having the same level of power, their quality varied entirely. The more the residual Dao force, the higher the quality.

Reflecting on it, with Yin Luo personally executing, those even at the Beginner level, not to mention those ten sitting beside the Star Abyss Gate in Dao Fusion, likely couldn't resist.

Days suddenly became uneventful. Besides cultivation, Lu Ye's only task was to condense a Treasure Blood Avatar for Yin Luo every three months.

In the blink of an eye, another half year passed.

While Lu Ye's side experiences stable gains, others brought forth good news.

Jiu Yan had successfully advanced to the 7th Dao. Her luck wasn't bad; after only three attempts, she successfully polished the third Dao Bone and is now attempting the fourth, though she's failed several times.

Each failure means exhausting the invested Dao force. Not only that, the chosen Dao Bone shatters and requires recovery, while Jiu Yan must re-cultivate that chosen Dao Bone using methods to make it more robust and able to withstand Dao force impact.

Additionally, Chang Yu also advanced to the 6th Dao. As a cultivator from Cover Armor stellar space, he's been at the Beginner Realm far longer than others; when everyone else was still forming their Dao foundation, he was already at the 5th Dao. Now, progressing to the 6th Dao was only natural.

Others showed little change in strength, but polishing Dao Bones, each failure accumulates more experience for subsequent success. Therefore, theoretically, unless terribly unlucky, eventually, the Dao Bone might indeed be polished successfully.

The current environment also provides a rare opportunity to rapidly acquire Dao Bones and accumulate Dao force, an opportunity for everyone.

No one slackened.

Once more, after letting Yin Luo consume a Treasure Blood Avatar, Lu Ye brought back Dao Bones and approached Jiu Yan's room. Before he could knock, the door suddenly opened.

Chapter 2125: We Were All Wrong

"Perfect timing, I've been looking for you," Jiu Yan said, looking quite excited.

"Have you broken through again?" Lu Ye was overjoyed.

Jiu Yan was already at the 7th Dao; if she broke through again, she would reach the 8th Dao!

The team currently had no 8th Dao powerhouse.

"No!" Jiu Yan shook her head, "Come in and let's talk."

As she spoke, she stepped aside, and Lu Ye entered.

After a while, in Jiu Yan's room, the two sat down. Puzzled, Lu Ye asked, "What good fortune has come your way?" Since it wasn't a breakthrough, Lu Ye was confused by Jiu Yan's evident joy.

Jiu Yan chuckled and flipped her hand, revealing an item: "It's this!"

Lu Ye looked and noticed a small palm-sized umbrella in Jiu Yan's hand. "Heavenly Net Umbrella? What's up with it?" he asked, puzzled.

Back in the Cover Armor stellar space, before Jiu Yan had forged her Dao foundation, Lu Ye had given her this treasure for protection. The Heavenly Net Umbrella had been with her ever since.

But logically, the Protective Power of the Heavenly Net Umbrella should no longer be useful to someone like Jiu Yan.

Based on Lu Ye's various attempts, the power within affiliated treasures was generally equivalent to only the power of one Dao. Thus, when he absorbed uncanny fire from the fire gourd and Sword Qi from the sword gourd, it only marginally increased his Dao force, nowhere near as efficient as refining a Dao Bone.

And when the Star Abyss Gate opened by the All Phenomena Ocean, Lu Ye once used the fire gourd against an ox demon without a Dao foundation, and the ox demon could resist it.

That ox demon had only the power of one or two Daos, and being able to withstand the affiliated treasure's might indicated that the power of affiliated treasures wasn't actually that strong.

Hearing this, Jiu Yan sighed, "It turns out... ever since you've been able to practice Dao force, you haven't activated affiliated treasures again, right?"

"No," Lu Ye shook his head.

After the fourth metamorphosis of the Talent Tree, he was already equivalent to a 5th Dao cultivator. With his own abilities already at the 5th Dao level, he hadn't felt the need for affiliated treasures.

"Neither have I," Jiu Yan said with a bitter smile. "We were wrong!"

"What do you mean?" Lu Ye was bewildered.

"The power of affiliated treasures is not as simple as we thought. Try using Dao force to control an affiliated treasure now!" Jiu Yan suggested.

"Using Dao force to control an affiliated treasure..." Lu Ye murmured, and then, as if remembering something, his eyes lit up and he quickly took out the sword gourd.

With a surge of Dao force, the mouth of the gourd quivered, and a streak of sword light shot out from the sword gourd. However, the sensation this sword light gave Lu Ye was entirely different from before.

The sword light which previously had only the power of one Dao, though sharp, was nowhere near as menacing as now.

"This is..." Lu Ye's eyes gleamed.

"Attack me!" Jiu Yan tossed the Heavenly Net Umbrella in her hand, and the small umbrella twirled above her head. Its edges draped down with tassel-like defenses, enveloping her completely.

Without hesitation, Lu Ye directed the sword light to attack Jiu Yan.

In an instant, a brilliant explosion occurred, and the sword light dissipated into nothingness. The protective light of the Heavenly Net Umbrella dimmed but did not shatter.

"I see!" Lu Ye realized.

Jiu Yan retracted the Heavenly Net Umbrella, smiling wryly, "I discovered it by accident. By leveraging affiliated treasures, we can exert greater power!"

Take Jiu Yan's current situation: She's at the 7th Dao, but using Dao force to control the Heavenly Net Umbrella could provide the protection of the 8th Dao.

The same goes for Lu Ye. Just now, he used the power of the 6th Dao to wield the sword gourd, and the sword light it unleashed had the destructive power of the 7th Dao!

"This is truly..." Lu Ye was momentarily at a loss for words.

Having these treasures on hand, living in such a harsh environment for years, yet never using them, seemed utterly foolish.

He hadn't imagined affiliated treasures could be used in this way.

As Jiu Yan mentioned, since he could cultivate Dao force, he hadn't even considered using affiliated treasures, even briefly having thoughts of letting the Talent Tree absorb the sword and fire gourds, but abandoned the idea as it wasn't beneficial enough.

Fortunately, the discovery wasn't too late. If losses had occurred before realizing this, it would have been disastrous.

An affiliated treasure, depending on its nature, could provide a cultivator with an additional Dao's worth of attack or defense, which is quite a significant boost.

"We must call them back," Lu Ye said.

Having discovered this utility of affiliated treasures, it couldn't remain a secret.

Jiu Yan nodded, handing the Heavenly Net Umbrella to Lu Ye and with a wave erased her imprint from it: "Three affiliated treasures, just right for three teams."

Lu Ye accepted it.

A short while later, in Lu Ye's room, aside from Jiu Yan, everyone gathered.

Lu Ye placed three affiliated treasures in front of everyone and then shared his findings. A group of people listened with their eyes gleaming.

"Two offensive, one defensive, all can enhance the user's corresponding Power of the Path. However, once the power of the affiliated treasures is consumed, it needs extra nurturing. I have some resources for nurturing the sword gourd and the fire gourd, but nurturing the Heavenly Net Umbrella seems to require a vast input of Mana. You decide how to distribute them. Perfect for three teams."

Although the power of the affiliated treasures is impressive, it is ultimately a one-time consumption, so they can only be treated as last-resort weapons and cannot be used limitlessly. Especially in the current environment, apart from the Heavenly Net Umbrella, the power of the other two items is hard to replenish and nurture.

"I'll take this." Chong Yue spoke, picking up the Heavenly Net Umbrella. Due to his unique physique, he was already very strong in protection; with the Heavenly Net Umbrella as his trump card, his defense would be even stronger.

There wasn't much difference between the remaining sword gourd and fire gourd. Zi Ji and Chen Wulei each took one, allowing Chen Wulei to display 8th Dao strength at crucial moments.

After some time, each refined the affiliated treasures, and then they set off to hunt again.

Several days later, while Lu Ye was peacefully cultivating, he suddenly heard Yin Luo's summons: "Lu Ye, come quickly!"

Lu Ye's expression changed. Yin Luo rarely disturbed his cultivation, so obviously something was happening.

He hurried over to the great hall and immediately saw Yin Luo sitting on her large chair, observing a scene like a phantom image in front of her.

The scene in the image reflected the surrounding Void landscape.

Uncle Duan had returned at some point and was standing respectfully behind Yin Luo.

Upon meeting eyes, Uncle Duan only glanced at Lu Ye before lowering his eyelids.

"Here!" Yin Luo beckoned to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye walked over without hesitation and sat down on her left, looking up at the scene and saw densely packed figures at a glance.

"What is this..." Lu Ye's expression changed.

"That nasty guy is back!" Yin Luo pursed her lips.

The villain she referred to was undoubtedly the Blood Owl. Over the decades, they had clashed numerous times, with Blood Owl always losing to Yin Luo and retreating wounded. But once he healed, he would return again, endlessly troublesome.

The Blood Owl's aim was to seize control of the nearby Star Abyss Gate. His strength wasn't too far behind Yin Luo's, and as they say, 'two tigers can't share one mountain.' Naturally, they had to settle the outcome. Only by repelling Yin Luo could he gain control over the Star Abyss Gate. Once the Star Abyss Gate opened and the Star Abyss invaded stellar space, he could wait for the opportunity to enter the stellar space, and after the stellar space shattered, he could reap great benefits.

It can be said that in the Star Abyss, any soon-to-open Star Abyss Gate will prompt contention from top-notch Peak Dao Fusion entities like Yin Luo and Blood Owl.

This process can greatly enhance their advancement and breakthrough.

"You said you could help me." Yin Luo looked at Lu Ye.

"It's my duty!" Lu Ye was indignant. After finally making Yin Luo swear allegiance, Yin Luo could now be seen as the Guardian of the nearby Star Abyss Gate. How could Lu Ye allow Blood Owl to disrupt his plans?

If Blood Owl indeed repelled Yin Luo, then when the Star Abyss Gate opens, it won't be any good for stellar space.

Additionally, he wanted to know whether, with his saintliness, he could suppress that Blood Owl.

"But, Yin Luo, you have to keep me safe." Lu Ye's tone shifted.

When two Peak Dao Fusion beings clash, he, a 7th Dao entity, is extremely fragile — even a slight aftershock could cost him his life.

"Don't worry, I won't let anything happen to you!" Yin Luo took full responsibility, not only because Qing Jun had instructed her to protect Lu Ye, but also due to Lu Ye's intrinsic value to her. She couldn't bear to see anything happen to him.

While speaking, the image revealed another wave of figures, wherein ten Peak Dao Fusion entities on Yin Luo's side led tens of thousands of Star Abyss living creatures to confront the enemy.

Lu Ye anxiously searched for Chen Wulei and others within the crowd but could not find them for a moment, uncertain of their participation.

Logically speaking, in such a grand battle, there are countless fallen, and it is indeed the time when fortune is found amidst peril; surely, those three teams would not miss out.

While observing, he asked, "Yin Luo, from where does Blood Owl gather so many people?"

She has so many people on her side due to the attraction of the Star Abyss Gate, but Blood Owl? He surely doesn't have such an advantage.

Yin Luo shook her head and said, "I don't know..."

Lu Ye then looked to Uncle Duan: "Do you know, Uncle Duan?"

Uncle Duan chuckled, "It's naturally because of the Star Abyss Gate's induction!"

"Star Abyss Gate's induction?" Lu Ye was puzzled.

Uncle Duan explained, "You haven't truly become a Star Abyss living creature, so you aren't aware. Let me tell you this: within the Star Abyss, the appearance of a Star Abyss Gate is like a light in the night. Over time, this light grows brighter and increasingly noticeable, attracting more Star Abyss living creatures, drawing them here. Those ordinary Star Abyss creatures follow their instincts, seeking a suitable entity to join. If this entity can lead them to seize the Star Abyss Gate, then after the invasion of stellar space, they can take advantage of the proximity."

Lu Ye understood, "So Blood Owl doesn't need to gather people; they naturally flock to him?"

"Exactly!" Uncle Duan nodded.

Lu Ye couldn't help but worry, "Wouldn't that attract a Dao Harmony entity?"

Yin Luo is at Peak Dao Fusion; if a Dao Harmony entity comes, she wouldn't stand a chance.

Uncle Duan shook his head and said, "Dao Harmony entities don't involve themselves in such trivia. They mostly reside deep within the Star Abyss. It's the Peak Dao Fusion's business to expand the Star Abyss territory."

Chapter 2126: Blood Owl Attacks

As they spoke, the battle exploded in the distance, reminiscent of what Lu Ye had witnessed over a year ago—a brutal battlefield forged by the blood and flesh of tens of thousands of Star Abyss living creatures.

Lu Ye watched for a moment before discerning the chaos within this battlefield.

With large numbers on both sides and no clear way to distinguish friend from foe, once a melee begins, unless familiar with each other, everyone around is an enemy.

This battlefield seemed more like a grand banquet of tens of thousands of Star Abyss cultivators mixed together, destined for many to fall and some lucky ones to benefit from it.

Lu Ye finally spotted Chen Wulei and the others among the chaos. The distinctive shapes of the three cover armors were quite noticeable as the team of nine wandered along the edge of the vast battlefield, never venturing deep, seizing opportunities for gains, and fleeing when faced with strong foes.

This was undoubtedly the smartest approach.

A year ago, they would've been unable to operate like this as the aura of the lost ones was too conspicuous, revealing their presence upon action and attracting surrounding Star Abyss living creatures to besiege them.

However, over the past year, their aura has gradually shifted toward that of Star Abyss living creatures. Although there's still a slight difference from the genuine Star Abyss entities, it's not significant.

It's estimated that after some time, everyone can shed their identities as lost ones, completely blending into the Star Abyss, at which point they'll be indistinguishable from Star Abyss cultivators.

Only Lu Ye still seemed out of place with the surrounding environment.

He wasn't sure whether this was a good or bad thing...

As the fierce battle raged on, Uncle Duan's voice suddenly came from behind: "They're coming!"

Lu Ye immediately looked up to see a deep Blood Sea rapidly approaching the battlefield in the scene. The surging waves of the Blood Sea converged into a grimacing face that roared with a wide mouth, and the sound penetrated Qing Palace despite the vast distance.

"Yin Luo! Come out and face your death!"

"I've been waiting for you!" Yin Luo snorted coldly, her small face full of murder, then tossed the ragdoll she was holding into Lu Ye's path.

Before Lu Ye could react, a shadow covered him. Looking up, he saw the ragdoll had grown enormously, its tattered body splitting open as if forming a large mouth that swallowed him.

Lu Ye was enveloped in softness and felt himself begin to move rapidly.

Yin Luo's voice reached his ears: "I'll deal with him; find your opportunity."

Lu Ye acknowledged.

He realized he must be inside the ragdoll, which seemed unremarkable yet was a treasure.

Puzzled, he asked, "Why doesn't Uncle Duan join you?"

Uncle Duan should be quite strong, too, and if he teamed up with Yin Luo, the chances of victory would be greater.

"No, if Uncle Duan acts, this villain will escape. He'll only fight me one-on-one."

Normally, commanders wouldn't make such moves, treating their soldiers' lives lightly. But here in the Star Abyss, the Blood Owl wouldn't care about the lives of Star Abyss living creatures who follow him; no matter how many die, more would pledge allegiance.

After Yin Luo's statement, Lu Ye felt intense vibrations outside, with terrifying Dao force waves.

He quickly calmed his mind, hiding his aura.

Though such concealment is futile before a Peak Dao Fusion, Yin Luo should help him hide sufficiently; his efforts merely add extra security.

He dared not investigate, unsure of how Yin Luo and the Blood Owl were fighting, but the ragdoll where he was hid seemed to become a weapon against the enemy, with its tattered form gaining destructive power from terrifying Dao force.

The aftermath alone was enough to send shivers down Lu Ye's spine.

No worries for his safety meant he should employ his tactics.

He subtly urged his blood Qi to spread, proceeding cautiously.

The Peak Dao Fusion Blood Race is highly sensitive to their Blood Sea; normally, Lu Ye's interference would be detected, but occupied by Yin Luo, the Blood Owl wouldn't be as meticulous.

Thus, if Lu Ye exercised caution, major issues should be avoided.

Time passed...

Lu Ye gradually increased his blood Qi, infusing it into the Blood Owl's Blood Sea, even seizing a moment amidst their fierce clash to integrate a drop of treasure blood.

Until a certain moment...

"He seems to have sensed something!" Yin Luo's voice reached Lu Ye.

Lu Ye didn't hesitate: "Three breaths later, unleash your most potent technique!"

As he spoke, he ceased hiding, frantically surging his blood Qi.

The Blood Owl's expression shifted; from his perspective, the massive ragdoll Yin Luo wielded against him suddenly turned blood-red, and a Blood Sea emerged from within, radiating outward.

"Blood Race!" Blood Owl's expression turned cold as he realized that Yin Luo, this puppet, had another hidden inside. But upon sensing Lu Ye's cultivation, he sneered, "Just a mere Beginner level!"

If it were Dao Fusion, he might have been cautious, as at Dao Fusion level, the opponent might have the qualifications to threaten him.

But just Beginner level... he wouldn't care.

At this moment, he finally understood the anomaly he felt earlier. It was clearly that Beginner level clansman secretly using techniques, but he was too occupied to notice.

"Explode!" Lu Ye's voice was a low growl from within the puppet. The treasure blood he had earlier merged into Blood Owl's Blood Sea immediately exploded, expanding his own Blood Sea fiercely.

The saintliness activated!

Before the results were clear, Lu Ye couldn't judge who was stronger in saintliness between himself and Blood Owl. After all, this was the first Blood Race he encountered in Star Abyss, and it was at the Peak Dao Fusion. He hadn't established a standard for judging the strength of saintliness within the Star Abyss Blood Race yet.

If his saintliness was weaker than Blood Owl's, then today's efforts would be futile, but Yin Luo's strength was slightly stronger than Blood Owl, so self-preservation wasn't an issue.

However, if his saintliness was stronger than Blood Owl's, it could suppress him and weaken his strength, regardless of the gap in their realms.

Almost simultaneously as Lu Ye activated his saintliness, Blood Owl also activated his own!

He didn't need saintliness against Yin Luo, as it served no purpose; saintliness wouldn't enhance his strength. But facing an unknown clansman hiding in Yin Luo's Dao soldier, he naturally had to react.

Despite being confident that in saintliness, the opponent could never surpass him!

The two forces of saintliness burst forth simultaneously, colliding invisibly within the Blood Sea.

Lu Ye felt relieved internally, while Blood Owl's calm expression suddenly changed, "Impossible!"

The saintliness of a Beginner level Blood Race was actually stronger than his, and this power noticeably suppressed his strength.

In an instant, the originally huge Blood Sea shrank sharply, reducing its size by at least twenty percent.

Moreover, Blood Owl's strength, while within the Blood Sea, also noticeably declined.

Having been instructed by Lu Ye in advance, Yin Luo now exploded with full force.

The previously balanced situation was abruptly broken. Blood Owl roared in anger and struggled desperately, but to no avail. Yin Luo, though simplistic in thought, had battle instincts ingrained in her bones as a star beast shape-changer, especially skilled in beating a drowning dog. In a mere moment, she inflicted heavy damage on Blood Owl.

Realizing the danger, Blood Owl immediately attempted to flee.

Yet at this moment, another figure charged into the Blood Sea.

It was Uncle Duan, who had been observing from nearby.

He clearly also recognized the opportunity to eliminate all threats. With Blood Owl being entangled by Yin Luo and unable to escape, he joined the fray to make it a two-against-one, further worsening Blood Owl's plight.

"Who are you? Who the hell are you?" Blood Owl's angry shout reached Lu Ye's ears. He couldn't fathom why a Beginner level could suppress him in saintliness. Without this factor, he wouldn't have found himself in such dire straits.

Hidden inside the puppet's body, Lu Ye naturally ignored him, only sensing another intense clash outside before Blood Owl's aura suddenly vanished.

"Haha!" Yin Luo's laughter echoed, "Finally killed it!"

She had battled Blood Owl for decades, always having the upper hand but never able to finish him off. Her hatred for Blood Owl was tangible, gnashing with rage; finally, she fulfilled her wish this time.

"Let me out!" Lu Ye's voice sounded from the side.

Yin Luo then remembered the hero of this battle, quickly raising a hand to slice open the giant puppet's belly, allowing Lu Ye to tumble out.

Steadying himself, Lu Ye turned his head to see no trace of Blood Owl, only the golden energy swirling where Blood Owl's life force had disappeared.

"Dao force!" Lu Ye's eyebrows raised; this was undoubtedly the remaining, unused Dao force after Blood Owl's death.

However, Blood Owl's Dao force was slightly different from what he knew. Upon closer inspection, the flowing gold seemed to contain some intricate and mysterious patterns.

Apart from this, there was Blood Owl's remaining Blood Sea; as for Blood Owl himself, it seemed he had vanished without a trace.

Silently astonished, not knowing what kind of death blow Yin Luo prepared for Blood Owl with such power.

At this moment, Uncle Duan sat at the place filled with golden energy, eyes closed in concentration, clearly refining the Dao force.

Noticing Lu Ye's gaze, Uncle Duan opened his eyes and gestured, "You led the charge in this battle; come and refine it together. The remaining Dao force after a Dao Fusion's death is considerable; if we don't refine it quickly, it'll dissipate in a few days."

Lu Ye said, "I'll collect the Blood Sea first."

Over the years, Lu Ye had expended a considerable amount of treasure blood through various means. Although he gained some during his campaign against Blood Race in two domains, overall it was insufficient.

Killing Blood Owl this time would undoubtedly yield a significant harvest.

Chapter 2127: 3 Years

The Blood Owl's saintliness was far stronger than that of those Blood Race Saintly Venerables in the stellar space; during that previous clash of saintliness, Lu Ye had clearly sensed that the Blood Owl's saintliness was actually not much weaker than his own.

Yet it was precisely that tiny difference that suppressed him and brought death.

This battle could be said to have refreshed Lu Ye's understanding of the Blood Ancestor's strength!

All of his saintliness came from refining the residual Sacred Blood left behind by the Blood Ancestor, and from that drop of treasure blood remaining in the core of Mount Fangcun.

Even at his peak, how much of the Blood Ancestor's saintliness could he possess? Ten percent, twenty? Or more?

The only thing Lu Ye could be certain of was that his saintliness was far inferior to the Blood Ancestor's; yet even so, he had still been able to suppress the Blood Owl.

The Blood Owl was at Peak Dao Fusion, and the Blood Ancestor?

He must necessarily be stronger than Peak Dao Fusion, so at the very least the Blood Ancestor was at Dao Harmony!

But earlier, Uncle Duan had said that trivial matters like eroding the stellar space were beneath the notice of Dao Harmony experts; such powerhouses were all deep within the Star Abyss, so why had the Blood Ancestor invaded the stellar space back then?

With doubts in his heart, he had no time to ask now; Lu Ye calmed his mind and refined the Blood Owl's post-death legacy.

The vast Blood Sea rapidly withdrew, and along with it Lu Ye's saintliness rose swiftly.

After a day, Lu Ye finally began refining the Dao force remaining after the Blood Owl's death; this was the first time Lu Ye had seen Dao force preserved in such a form—those clusters of golden light were clearly condensed Dao force.

It was just that in this form, Dao force could not be maintained for long, just as Uncle Duan had said before: it would dissipate within a few days.

Although only a day had passed, quite a bit of Dao force had already dispersed.

Uncle Duan and Yin Luo each occupied a corner, quietly refining.

Lu Ye joined them.

Though he no longer had much craving for Dao force, since his strength had already reached his own limit and no amount of Dao force could bring further improvement, this stuff was ultimately "the more the better"; even if he could not use it now, he would need it in the future.

The moment he began refining, Lu Ye immediately felt the difference.

In the past, when refining those Dao Bones, his efficiency had been very high thanks to the Talent Tree, but it had never been this high!

The Dao force remaining after the Blood Owl's death seemed extremely pure and highly condensed, making it very easy to refine.

In just one day, Lu Ye's Dao force had actually increased by several hundred strands!

However, as time passed, this efficiency gradually weakened.

A few days later, when Lu Ye checked his own Dao force, his accumulation was close to three thousand strands, which made him secretly click his tongue; one had to know that a few days earlier, he had only around twelve hundred strands of Dao force, which was the accumulation of several years.

Now, from refining only a small portion of the legacy of a Peak Dao Fusion cultivator, he had actually gained so much.

Unfortunately, his own foundation had not improved; he still could only wield the power of the 7th Dao.

Looking across the stellar space, he was probably the most unusual Beginner level cultivator; there was absolutely no other cultivator at the Beginner level who possessed such a quantity of Dao force.

Yin Luo and Uncle Duan returned to the Qing Palace; the great battle on that battlefield had also ended, with only some scattered skirmishes still ongoing.

Chen Wulei and the others had already returned to the Qing Palace a day earlier; their three teams had obtained quite a few Dao Bones in this battle, so naturally they needed to hurry and refine them now.

The Blood Owl's death had made this region much calmer, but only relatively so.

Drawn by the soon-to-open Star Abyss Gate, Star Abyss living creatures kept converging in this direction from time to time; small-scale battles erupted almost every single day, with extreme frequency.

Aside from his own cultivation, Lu Ye went to the Star Abyss Gate every few months to have brief communications with the Tree Elder and confirm the situation.

Thus, three years passed in a leisurely manner.

Over these three years, the strength of the nine cultivators in the three teams had all changed.

Chen Wulei had already advanced to the 8th Dao; with his affiliated treasure in hand, he could burst out with the strength of the 9th Dao. This kind of improvement undoubtedly gave his team a much stronger ability to protect themselves and kill enemies.

Zi Ji had advanced to the 7th Dao; among the others, aside from Chen Li who was still at the 5th Dao, everyone else had advanced to the 6th Dao!

Chen Li's luck was truly poor, and perhaps his foundation was slightly weaker than the others'; time and again he polished Dao Bones, only to meet with repeated failure.

He did not lose heart; every time his Dao force accumulation exceeded two hundred, he would attempt again.

As for Jiu Yan, she had already advanced to the 8th Dao even before Chen Wulei; she was now attacking the 9th Dao. The resources obtained from Yin Luo's side were enjoyed by her alone, naturally giving her more opportunities to attempt; however, she herself could not say exactly when she would succeed.

But as long as Jiu Yan succeeded in advancing, the team would have its first 9th Dao powerful expert.

What Lu Ye wanted to know even more was: after Jiu Yan advanced to the 9th Dao, if she then wielded her affiliated treasure, would she be able to possess the power of the 10th Dao? If so, then she could basically be considered invincible below Dao Fusion, and the team's strength would undergo a qualitative transformation.

Yin Luo's supply of Dao Bones would not be cut off; by then they could choose another person, such as Chen Wulei, and help him advance to the 9th Dao.

In this way, one by one, the members of the team would all eventually achieve the body of the 9th Dao.

The others were progressing well; Lu Ye's side was also acceptable. Although his cultivation efficiency had slowed somewhat, he was ultimately still accumulating.

The only troublesome thing was that the Talent Tree's fuel was running a bit low.

Back then on that Giant Red Planet, the Talent Tree's fuel reserve had reached an extreme, and not long after that it began its metamorphosis. All these years Lu Ye had never replenished it and had been consuming it nonstop.

Especially after entering the Star Abyss, the consumption was a bit greater than before. After these years, the fuel reserve had already reached a warning line.

He still had some fire-type resources left, but those had to be kept in reserve for the fire gourd.

So the most pressing matter was that Lu Ye had to find a way to replenish the Talent Tree.

This was easy to handle. Although the environment in the Star Abyss was vastly different from the stellar space, that mainly referred to the pervasive Star Abyss ambience. In terms of various celestial bodies, the Star Abyss and the stellar space weren't much different.

There were also suns in the Star Abyss.

There was one nearby. Lu Ye just needed to make a trip over and he would naturally get what he wanted.

However, moving alone with the strength of the 7th Dao was still somewhat unsafe, so Lu Ye decided to go find Uncle Duan before setting out.

To ask him to act as his protector.

After living together for several years, Lu Ye and Uncle Duan could be considered familiar with each other. When bored, Lu Ye would even use his Talent Tree Avatar to play chess with Uncle Duan, so they had built up some rapport.

So when faced with Lu Ye's request, Uncle Duan refused without hesitation: "Not going!"

Lu Ye blinked: "You sure about that, old sir?"

Uncle Duan snorted: "If you want to go, go yourself. This old man is busy."

Lu Ye didn't try to persuade him. He merely flicked his finger, and a drop of treasure blood flew out, rapidly transforming into a Treasure Blood Avatar. Off to the side, Yin Luo's eyes immediately shone, and with an "ah-woo" took a big bite.

Ever since he killed that Blood Owl and obtained enormous benefits from it, Lu Ye hadn't been too concerned about consuming treasure blood.

If there was one Blood Owl in the Star Abyss, there would be a second and a third. The Blood Race he would run into in the future would only become more and more numerous; raising and replenishing his saintliness wasn't a problem.

"Yin Luo, if I die, you won't have anything to eat." Lu Ye shot Yin Luo a look.

Yin Luo immediately turned to look at Uncle Duan.

The veins on Uncle Duan's forehead bulged: "You little brat!"

After these few years, how could he not see clearly that Lu Ye had long since gotten Yin Luo thoroughly tamed with that Treasure Blood Avatar? Yet he still had no way to deal with it.

He also couldn't figure out why, after so long, Lu Ye still hadn't been tainted by the Star Abyss ambience and was still maintaining that unique purity of the stellar space.

In the end, Uncle Duan still set out together with Lu Ye. Once Yin Luo spoke up, he couldn't refuse.

"A horse dies from running toward a distant mountain"—travelling in the stellar space followed the same logic. Fortunately, with Uncle Duan handling the journey, Lu Ye didn't need to split his attention; he only had to focus on his own cultivation, so no time would be wasted.

A month later, the old and the young pair arrived before that big sun.

This big sun was different from the Giant Red Planet Lu Ye had gone to back then. This was a star in its peak state, and the searing high temperatures permeating from within were far beyond what that old Giant Red Planet could compare to.

But Lu Ye's current strength had undergone a complete transformation, and the Talent Tree had already gone through four metamorphoses. Drawing fuel from this big sun shouldn't be a problem.

If he were in the stellar space, Lu Ye would still have to consider whether he might affect a nearby domain, since the survival of all living beings in any domain depended on the sunlight from its sun. But here in the Star Abyss, he didn't have to worry about that.

Under Uncle Duan's lead, the two figures directly slipped into the interior of the big sun. The intense heat that could make a Peak Sun Blaze cultivator retreat three sectors away became gentle under the protection of Dao force.

They went straight into the deepest part of that sun before Lu Ye finally stopped.

Feeling the scorching heat all around, he was satisfied.

From now on, replenishing the Talent Tree's fuel wouldn't be as troublesome and laborious as before. If he ran out of fuel, he just had to find a big sun. Whether in the stellar space or the Star Abyss, there were plenty of suitable targets to choose from.

Activating the Talent Tree's power, invisible roots spread out, crazily extending in all directions.

This was the first time Lu Ye had done this since the Talent Tree's four metamorphoses, and he immediately felt the difference. The roots the Talent Tree extended now were tougher than before, as well as longer and denser.

Each root stretched out thousands, tens of thousands of li, and still didn't stop. Only after several tens of thousands of li did they finally run out of momentum.

With Lu Ye's location as the source, the area within a radius of several tens of thousands of li inside the big sun was filled and pierced through by the Talent Tree's roots.

In the next instant, Lu Ye felt immense, surging heat being devoured through countless roots and stored inside the Talent Tree.

He could even feel the Talent Tree's ravenous hunger...

Uncle Duan just stood quietly to the side, watching. Yet even with his eyesight, he couldn't make out much; he only knew that Lu Ye had activated some method and was crazily devouring the heat inside the big sun.

A month later, Lu Ye slowly opened his eyes.

After four metamorphoses, the Talent Tree's fuel capacity was undoubtedly far greater than before. After this month of frenzied devouring, Lu Ye estimated that, barring any accidents, he wouldn't have to worry about fuel for the next ten or twenty years.

After greeting Uncle Duan, the old and the young pair headed back toward the Qing Palace.

Behind the two of them, the brightness of that big sun was clearly dimmer compared to a month ago.

Chapter 2128: The Time Has Come

Seven more years have passed!

It has been a full eleven years since Lu Ye and the others arrived at the Qing Palace.

A lot has happened in the past seven years, seemingly due to the increasingly evident signs of the Star Abyss Gate opening, attracting another powerful expert at the peak of Dao Fusion.

This expert intended to seize this Star Abyss Gate, and Yin Luo faced off against them over ten times, with victories and defeats on both sides, yet neither could prevail.

The new peak Dao Fusion expert is undoubtedly stronger than Blood Owl from back then.

However, there is also Uncle Duan on Yin Luo's side, so that expert has no effective method against her.

In contrast to Yin Luo's tense standoff with the enemy, the improvement in the team's strength has been extremely remarkable.

Seven years ago, there wasn't even a single 9th Dao in the team, but now, after Jiu Yan's promotion to 9th Dao, Chen Wulei, Zi Ji, and Chong Yue have subsequently advanced, making for a total of four 9th Dao powerful experts.

Su Wan, Du Qingsha, Chang Yu, Water Fairy, and Bewitchment Shadow may not be 9th Dao, but they have reached 8th Dao strength.

Chen Li is at the 7th Dao.

When they first arrived at the Qing Palace, Lu Ye's strength was the strongest, but now, he is the weakest because, strictly speaking, he is only 6th Dao, and wielding the power of 7th Dao is quite burdensome.

The overall strength of the three squads has increased significantly, naturally boosting the efficiency of hunting for Dao Bones, plus the monthly support from Yin Luo's side, making the team's foundation accumulate rapidly. At this rate, it might not take many years for them all to advance to 9th Dao.

Although his strength hasn't improved, his accumulation of Dao force is quite substantial because, during secluded cultivation, the Dao force has been slowly increasing.

Currently, Lu Ye's total accumulated Dao force has exceeded six thousand, and a large patch of leaves on his Talent Tree is shining golden brightly, which is truly pleasing.

Yet despite so much Dao force, Lu Ye doesn't know what it's for.

After so many years in secluded cultivation, his cultivation is still at Sun Blaze Mid-Stage, a bit away from Late Stage, whereas the refinement of the Soul Suppressing Secret Technique has made significant progress.

According to his observations, his Soul Suppressing Secret Technique should be at Final Achievement, enough to support the requirements for advancing to Sun Blaze Late Stage.

Since starting cultivation, he actually rarely had such a long time to cultivate carefully. His breakthroughs have mainly been achieved through the Talent Tree's mad devouring, like swallowing a mouthful to become bloated.

Such cultivation is certainly efficient, but it has drawbacks; though the careful cultivation is less efficient, it allows for a deeper understanding of one's strength changes. Slow work produces fine work, and during these ten years, Lu Ye has thoroughly remedied some hidden dangers left from past cultivation.

It must be said, this is indeed fortunate.

In Lu Ye's room, eleven people gathered once again.

Over the years, everyone rarely gathered unless someone broke through to 9th Dao, changing the focus to forging 9th Dao. Thus, Lu Ye has only gathered them four times in total; otherwise, everyone acted independently as squads.

So many years of combat and slaughter have made everyone emanate a forest-like aura, even the weakest temperament Water Fairy now has a sharp presence.

Almost everyone has experienced more than one life-and-death crisis!

Sometimes squads help each other through difficult times, while other times they flee back to the Qing Palace territory, evading pursuit.

The worst time was when Chong Yue's squad was almost wiped out, dragging their wounded bodies back to the Qing Palace. Lu Ye almost believed they wouldn't survive, but in the end, Uncle Duan intervened to save them.

"What's the matter this time?" Zi Ji asked first.

He knew that Lu Ye would not gather everyone without a significant reason.

Lu Ye glanced around at everyone and slowly spoke, "The time has come!"

They were all stunned, quickly reacting, and immediately their expressions became excited.

They have been waiting for this day for eleven years, and today, they can finally go home.

"Has Tree Elder confirmed it?" Zi Ji asked.

Lu Ye nodded, "Confirmed. Actually, I can feel it too because my connection with Tree Elder has become increasingly effortless over the years." Initially, the information Tree Elder sent from the stellar space was quite incomplete, but it has improved significantly over time.

This isn't a good thing, it only indicates that the stellar space's flaws are becoming more apparent, with the Star Abyss Gate's opening imminent.

Additionally, Lu Ye has continually observed the area where the Star Abyss Gate is located, and now that Void region is even more turbid compared to back then. These are all changes.

"When is departure?" Chong Yue asked.

"At any time!" Lu Ye replied, "But my thought is to leave in a month; during this month, everyone should accumulate as much Dao force as possible. When we return to the stellar space, we won't have such good conditions and environment like this." The more Dao force accumulated now, the less they have to worry about when facing enemies later.

"Then we'll leave in a month!"

"We have a lot to do."

Beside Lu Ye on his left, Jiu Yan suddenly spoke, "I have a question: when we leave, will it affect the Star Abyss Gate? Could it be that our passage will completely open the Star Abyss Gate?"

Currently, the Star Abyss Gate hasn't opened yet, but any external force could potentially impact it.

Jiu Yan's concern is not without reason.

Lu Ye said, "I asked Tree Elder about this; his answer is there will be an impact, but it won't immediately open the Star Abyss Gate, only hasten it."

"So, if the Star Abyss Gate was supposed to open in ten years, after we pass through, it might open in three years or even within a year!"

"Three to five years!" Lu Ye replied, "The Tree Elder has estimated that after we return, the Star Abyss Gate will definitely open within three to five years!"

"Three to five years..." Zi Ji nodded, "That's manageable, we'll have time for preparations after returning."

"This is precisely why the Tree Elder wants to bring us back earlier. Otherwise, we could just wait for the actual opening of the Star Abyss Gate before returning."

Once the stellar space is invaded, more than one Star Abyss Gate will appear. Especially since the All Phenomena Ocean stellar space has been invaded before, only the Tree Elder knows how many weaknesses exist within the stellar space. Returning early allows for targeted deployment and enables the mobilization of the entire stellar space's power to overcome the catastrophe.

Looking at it this way, three to five years is still very tight, because integrating the power of an entire stellar space is no easy task.

"One month later!" Lu Ye looked at everyone, his tone solemn.

Everyone nodded and then left separately.

If they are going to leave, it's natural to inform Yin Luo.

Half a day later, Yin Luo tearfully grasped Lu Ye's clothes, "Don't go! Don't leave, what will I do without you?"

Lu Ye sighed, "I don't want to leave either. But if I don't go back, Qing Jun's homeland will face disaster, and when Qing Jun's friends and relatives die, how will you explain it to Qing Jun?"

Yin Luo sobbed, "I'll guard here and won't let them pass."

Lu Ye ruffled her small head, "The Star Abyss invasion isn't limited to this one Star Abyss Gate. You can guard here, but what about other places? You don't even know where the other Star Abyss Gates are. Don't worry, I'll come back to see you occasionally and bring you some treats."

Yin Luo lowered her head, feeling dejected, "You better mean it."

"I mean it," Lu Ye nodded firmly. Since it's a Treasure Blood Avatar, once you're used to it, it doesn't really matter. His saintliness is strong, and slight losses aren't significant.

Over the next month, Yin Luo remained in a low mood, which unfortunately caused trouble for the nearby Star Abyss living creatures.

With nowhere to vent her bad mood, Yin Luo could only take it out on those Star Abyss living creatures.

As a result, Lu Ye gained quite a few Dao Bones...

He distributed them all down.

The month passed in a blink, and the agreed-upon day arrived, everyone gathered together.

Yin Luo licked her lips, regretfully looking at Lu Ye.

Lu Ye appeared exhausted, as he had just concentrated on forming three Treasure Blood Avatars for Yin Luo, a farewell gift for her care during this period.

Eyes met, and Lu Ye quickly waved his hand, "No more, I'm going to die!"

Yin Luo immediately became nervous, "Do you want to rest for a bit and leave later?"

"It's already agreed; the Tree Elder will meet us in the stellar space. If we're late, we won't make it."

"Then let me send you off!" Yin Luo sniffled, her eyes full of reluctance.

Even if she didn't mention it, Lu Ye would have. This time leaving isn't like before, and nobody knows what might happen. Having Yin Luo's seat helps prevent some unexpected consequences.

A group of more than ten figures flew out from the Qing Palace, heading straight towards the Star Abyss Gate.

Feeling Yin Luo's powerful aura from afar, the Star Abyss living creatures along the way avoided them by a large margin. Many had already met their fate at Yin Luo's hands over the years, with nowhere to appeal.

Were it not for the allure of the Star Abyss Gate, they wouldn't have stayed near a powerful creature like Yin Luo.

Even the ten Dao Fusion cultivators changed their expressions upon sensing Yin Luo's aura and retreated. Although they were also Dao Fusion, their strength was far inferior to Yin Luo's.

Soon, the group arrived before the Star Abyss Gate.

"We're leaving, Yin Luo, take care of yourself." Lu Ye glanced at Yin Luo and then at Uncle Duan, "Thank you, Uncle Duan, for taking care of us all these years."

Uncle Duan responded with a sarcastic smile, not bothering to reply.

"Remember to come back to visit me!" Yin Luo shouted.

"I'll definitely return!" Lu Ye nodded emphatically. With that, he activated his mana to envelop everyone around him, raising his hand and triggering the Reincarnation Tree's imprint.

Vivid green light spread out, enveloping a large area. In the next instant, everyone suddenly transformed into a green light, entering the turbid Void ahead, and their figures simultaneously vanished.

Crack...

It was as if something shattered.

In the utterly turbid Void, a fissure split open, not loud, but with invisible repercussions sweeping across.

Numerous Star Abyss living creatures in the vicinity stared at this scene, suddenly becoming excited, raising their arms and cheering. The atmosphere turned fervent.

At that moment, the admiration for Yin Luo by the Star Abyss living creatures reached an unprecedented level.

They undoubtedly thought Yin Luo used some method to increase the stellar space's vulnerabilities, making the Star Abyss Gate even more fragile, suggesting its early opening!

This event anticipated by all Star Abyss living creatures had them feeling overjoyed!

Chapter 2129: Destroyed Illusion Star Cluster

After a tumultuous journey, Lu Ye felt as though he had entered a swirling tunnel, with a powerful force pulling at him from the front, guiding his form.

The surroundings were unexpectedly a vibrant green, with no sign of anyone else.

Lu Ye dared not make any rash movements, as it was clearly Tree Elder exerting his power to aid them. Any action at this moment could lead to unnecessary mishaps.

Swaying with the flow...

In his perception, several days seemed to pass, and the green light around him gradually dimmed. Just as Lu Ye began to worry, he suddenly felt light, enveloped by the aura of stellar space!

Quickly steadying himself, he turned to look back, only to see the Void behind him ripple intensely, as familiar figures began appearing from those ripples.

They were the companions who had wandered with him in the Star Abyss for many years.

With a surge of mana, Lu Ye stabilized their forms. Before he could speak, he sensed several auras swiftly approaching them.

Turning his head, his gaze first focused on the approaching individuals, but his attention was soon caught by the scene behind them.

Others felt the same!

For behind those individuals was a massive floating city, bustling with countless cultivators, giving Lu Ye the impression of a lurking monstrous beast.

Upon seeing the floating city, Lu Ye immediately thought of the battle fortress in Cover Armor stellar space.

It was clear to him; if Tree Elder knew of the Star Abyss invasion, he would have to prepare.

This battle city couldn't have appeared here without reason. It seemed many changes had occurred in stellar space while he was away.

The individuals he spotted earlier were now approaching, each possessing the Sun Blaze body, and the one leading them had an exceptionally profound aura, clearly a Peak Sun Blaze.

Compared to Zi Ji and others who had yet to ascend to the Dao Realm back then, he seemed even a bit stronger.

"Fellow Daoists, you have been through much," he nodded slightly.

"Ah, it's Brother Gu." Chong Yue immediately recognized him, as his reputation was too significant. In the past stellar space, his strength ranked unquestionably among the top three.

Most of the others recognized him too and greeted him accordingly.

Jiu Yan's voice reached Lu Ye: "That's Gu Yunliu, the Yellow Dragon World Lord."

She was afraid Lu Ye might not recognize him and made sure to inform.

Lu Ye indeed didn't know him, but as soon as Chong Yue spoke, he discerned Gu Yunliu's identity.

"By order of Tree Elder, I have come to greet you all," Gu Yunliu said again.

"Tree Elder!" Lu Ye's expression shifted. He first thought Tree Elder would directly guide them into the Reincarnation Tree, but it seems that is not the case.

Gu Yunliu looked at him and said: "I know you have many questions. Follow me back to the battle city to meet Tree Elder, and all will be revealed."

Zi Ji curiously asked: "Tree Elder is currently in that battle city?"

Gu Yunliu laughed: "Tree Elder has a doppelganger stationed at the battle city!"

The group understood immediately; the Reincarnation Tree undeniably has the most doppelgangers, scattered throughout stellar space, too many to count. Having a doppelganger stationed in the battle city is unsurprising.

Thus, they followed Gu Yunliu toward the battlefield.

"Brother Lu, long time no see!" Among the group approaching them, a young man accompanying Gu Yunliu greeted Lu Ye, revealing himself to be Gu Sheng.

He had also ascended to Sun Blaze after many years.

It's not surprising. He and Arbuluo had dominated the top spots in the Asura Field back then, with unparalleled strength and exceptional talent. Ascending to Sun Blaze was not difficult for him.

Before the Asura Field closed, Lu Ye had agreed with them to explore a secret realm, but Lu Ye was taken by the Sky Asura Race, leaving only him and Arbuluo, ending in no gains.

"Brother Gu, it's been a long time." Lu Ye smiled, patting his shoulder, finally seeing familiar faces again, which gave him a genuine feeling of returning to stellar space, "Congratulations on ascending to Sun Blaze, Brother Gu!"

Gu Sheng lamented: "Sun Blaze means little in your presence." He had heard of Lu Ye's past feats, feeling both inadequate and driven to chase after him.

"How is Old Luo?" Lu Ye casually asked.

Gu Sheng paused, realizing Lu Ye meant Arbuluo, replied: "He also ascended to Sun Blaze. In recent years, stellar space spirit energy has been increasingly active, making cultivation simpler than before. He ascended even sooner than I did, and now he is with the Ancient Savages World seniors, gathering at another battle city."

The activated stellar space spirit energy and simplified cultivation marked stellar space's change before imminent events, consistent across stellar spaces, though the Star Abyss invasion will eventually hinder cultivation, making it increasingly difficult.

Cover Armor stellar space had experienced such events before.

"This battle city was instructed to be built by the Tree Elder?" Lu Ye asked.

Gu Sheng nodded, "Yes, back during the upheaval of the All Phenomena Ocean, you and Island Master Jiu Yan disappeared without a trace. Later, all the Spirit Islands together interrogated the enemy you had captured, learning some incredible information. Following that, the Tree Elder decreed, and we discovered the truth of the great crisis's arrival. Over the years, the entire stellar space has been preparing for the impending calamity."

"That's good!" Lu Ye sighed with relief.

Originally, he had been worried that three to five years would not be enough time to prepare, but now it seems there's no need to worry too much. The Tree Elder must have experienced a Star Abyss invasion before; with him around, precautions are naturally in place.

"Is this the Yellow Dragon Star System?" Lu Ye asked again.

"No, this is the Destroyed Illusion Star Cluster, considered the fringes of stellar space." Gu Sheng replied, "It's actually very far from my Yellow Dragon, but recently an Insect Path connected the two star systems, making travel convenient. This area is also one of the weak points of stellar space, so Yellow Dragon, under the Tree Elder's orders, gathered manpower to guard this place, for which that battle city was built."

The two major omens before the Star Abyss invasion are the activation of spiritual energy in stellar space, making cultivation simple, and the proliferation of Insect Paths.

For stellar space cultivators, this is actually a good thing, because the birth of many Insect Paths means that traveling to various locations becomes more convenient.

If not for the Insect Path connection, the Yellow Dragon World would never be able to guard this side, given the great distance.

As they spoke, the group arrived at the battle city.

Seen from afar, the battle city seemed enormous, but only upon entering did they realize this battle city was not only large but constructed with grim precision.

The entire battle city could almost be described as a super battleship, capable, if necessary, of heading into battle to kill the enemy.

Chen Wulei looked around, unable to suppress a sigh.

Compared to the battle fortresses of Cover Armor stellar space, the battle city here is undoubtedly better constructed, but that's inevitable. In Cover Armor stellar space, battle fortresses were only built after the Star Abyss invasion began. The urgency of the situation naturally couldn't compare with the preparations made here in advance.

If Cover Armor stellar space had such a battle city back then, it could have definitely held out longer during the final battle.

In a courtyard within the battle city, a small tree was rooted here. Such a little tree would appear common if seen outside, and no one could discern anything special about it.

However, when Gu Yunliu brought everyone to this place, he respectfully bowed to the little tree, "Tree Elder, Fellow Daoists have returned!"

The little tree immediately swayed, its body suffused with light, vaguely revealing a human figure within.

When the light dissipated, the little tree had vanished, replaced by a boy with rosy lips and white teeth, looking only seven or eight years old.

Moreover, the boy seemed to be somewhat ill, his face pale.

Lu Ye looked shocked, "Tree Elder?"

"It's me." The boy smiled and nodded, "No need to be surprised!"

How could Lu Ye not be surprised? In his impression, the Tree Elder was the image of a wise and amiable elder, and he never could have associated it with the little boy before him.

Gu Yunliu explained from the side, "The Tree Elder has entered the stage of reincarnation, and adding the effort to bring you back from the Star Abyss, so..."

The boy waved his hand, indicating he needn't say more.

Only then did Lu Ye understand that bringing them all back from the Star Abyss cost the Tree Elder greatly, his pale face proving it.

As for the boy's appearance, it was a sign of the Reincarnation Tree entering its reincarnation phase, unrelated to Lu Ye and the others.

Years ago, Yang Qing told Lu Ye, the Reincarnation Tree undergoes a cycle every ten thousand years. At this time, it is its weakest, so the Reincarnation Tree picks some individuals to mark them, so when it's weak, these grown-up powerhouses can protect it.

After all, the title of supreme treasure is quite enticing, and there are always some who want to seize this opportunity to see if they can refine the supreme treasure.

"Sit and talk, I believe there are many things you wish to know." The boy spoke and then sat directly on the ground.

Gu Yunliu was prepared, taking out prayer mats and distributing them to everyone.

A group of people sat in a fan shape around the Tree Elder.

The Tree Elder looked at Chen Wulei and the other two, a gentle smile on his youthful face, "First, a welcome to our three guests from afar. If you don't mind, from now on, this Yiyuan stellar space is your home as well."

Chen Wulei clasped his fist, "Tree Elder is kind, we indeed have this intention."

"May I ask your names, the three are..." Gu Yunliu looked at Chen Wulei and the others with curiosity.

He is the Yellow Dragon World Lord, well-informed, but he truly had never seen people like Chen Wulei and the others until now, and from the Tree Elder's words, they seemed quite extraordinary.

Lu Ye said, "Brother Chen and the other two are survivors from another Primordial Star Sky whose stellar space was destroyed by a Star Abyss invasion more than ten years ago."

Gu Yunliu was visibly taken aback. Although over the years he had learned many secrets never known before from the Tree Elder, and knew that the stellar space was not solitary, he hadn't expected to meet cultivators from another stellar space so soon.

Moreover, the stellar space of the opposite party was destroyed by a Star Abyss invasion just over a decade ago.

Chapter 2130: Five Major Flaws

"My apologies." Gu Yunliu nodded apologetically.

"No matter." Chen Wulei waved his hand, "The deceased are gone, and the only thing those who remain can do is avenge them, which is why we've followed Fellow Daoist Lu here!"

"There will certainly be an opportunity!" Gu Yunliu clasped his fists, "When the time comes, Brother Chen will have to lend much support."

Though Chen Wulei and his people failed to repel the Star Abyss invasion, they have much more experience than them. Having such veterans to aid, is of great benefit to this stellar space.

"Of course."

Lu Ye turned to the child, "Tree Elder, the Star Abyss invasion is unavoidable, but there are always some things I can't quite understand."

"What is it?"

"In terms of stellar space, what exactly is the Star Abyss? Conversely, what is stellar space to the Star Abyss? And in what manner does the Star Abyss invade stellar space?" Lu Ye asked a slew of questions in one breath.

"The Star Abyss..." Tree Elder showed a reminiscing expression, "To be honest, I can't answer your questions because I've never been to the Star Abyss myself. Yet, ages ago, someone described certain things to me, which might clarify your doubts."

Saying this, he flicked his small, tender hand, and in front of everyone appeared layer upon layer of ripples, as if it were an illusory sea.

"This is the Star Abyss." Tree Elder spoke, "You can think of it as boundless, constantly expanding."

As he spoke, he raised his hand, and within that illusory sea, appeared clusters of blue, illusory spheres.

"These are units of stellar space, and you could say that every stellar space is enveloped by the Star Abyss. If stellar space is strong and stable, naturally all is well; but if a flaw appears..."

Most of the blue spheres vanished, leaving just one, and under their gaze, spots of light appeared on its surface.

"The Star Abyss ambience will infiltrate by these means!"

The illusory sea penetrated the blue sphere through those spots of light, and soon various parts of the blue sphere began to take on different colors, gradually expanding...

"Then at a certain limit..."

The blue sphere suddenly shattered, dissolving into countless parts, merging into various places.

Their emotions were heavy as they watched, Tree Elder's demonstration was simple, but if they substituted this demonstration for a shattered stellar space, it would be heartbreaking.

The scene of the final stellar space shattering inevitably made Lu Ye recall things he'd encountered within the Star Abyss.

They were on their way to Qing Palace, passing remnants of Cover Armor stellar space, where they encountered Fortress Master Narn from Hekan Battle Fortress, later contacting Du Qingsha and others.

At the time, Du Qingsha and others speculated that after stellar space shattered, it was divided into many parts, entered different locations within the Star Abyss.

Tree Elder's demonstration certainly proved it.

"Therefore, the root of Star Abyss invasion lies in the flaws of stellar space." Lu Ye realized, "So how do these flaws appear?"

Tree Elder replied, "The erosion by Star Abyss ambience is one aspect. Additionally, it's said there's a very special entity within stellar space, resembling star beasts. They can sense the ambience of stellar space from afar, with a peculiar talent that allows them to break stellar space's isolation and deliberately create flaws. These special entities are called Stellar Space Destroyers!"

Lu Ye slowly shook his head, "I haven't encountered them."

But the Star Abyss is enormous, and the places they've ventured into are only a small part of it, the living creatures within the Star Abyss they've seen aren't many.

"Then how many flaws are there in this stellar space?" Lu Ye asked again.

Tree Elder said, "Currently, we can confirm five flaws, all of which appeared during the previous Star Abyss invasion. I've made arrangements and deployed measures, but how many flaws there are this time remains unknown."

The circumstances of the two invasions might not be precisely the same, perhaps over the years new flaws in stellar space have emerged.

"There's one at All Phenomena Ocean?" Lu Ye inquired.

"Exactly!" Tree Elder nodded, "Back then, the Insect Race went to All Phenomena Ocean and used some methods to leverage the flaw there, thus opening the Star Abyss Gate!"

At this point, Chen Wulei asked, "Tree Elder, may I ask, how was the previous Star Abyss invasion resisted by this stellar space?"

Lu Ye was also intrigued by this question and immediately perked up his ears.

"Last time..." Tree Elder had a stronger reminiscing look in his eyes, "To resist Star Abyss invasion, one must deal with the Star Abyss Gate. The Star Abyss Gate cannot be destroyed, only sealed, or wait for it to naturally vanish."

Chen Wulei nodded, he naturally knew the Star Abyss Gate would disappear on its own. The first Star Abyss Gate that appeared in Cover Armor stellar space disappeared after a few decades.

No one knows how exactly it vanished, just as no one knows how exactly it appeared.

"Among the five flaws, three had their Star Abyss Gates naturally disappear, while the other two... were each blocked by the Power of Supreme Treasure." Tree Elder spoke as he looked towards Lu Ye, "At All Phenomena Ocean was the Constellation Palace, and back then there was no All Phenomena Ocean, it appeared because of the Constellation Palace. You could say this cosmic marvel was actually created by the power of supreme treasure."

As expected...

Lu Ye actually had some suspicions about this, because earlier, the Star Abyss Gate was sealed by the projection of the Constellation Palace. Now, after hearing Tree Elder's words, he confirmed that his guess was correct.

"There's another in the Tiangang Galaxy, known as the Universe Cauldron."

Chen Wulei frowned and said, "The power of the supreme treasure is indeed strong, but how can it be harnessed? And used to seal the cosmic cracks?"

The Cover Armor stellar space also has supreme treasures, such as the Sand Pot. When the Star Abyss Gate mutated, the power of the Sand Pot once emerged, but unfortunately, it couldn't prevent the destruction of the stellar space.

The cultivators in the Cover Armor stellar space cannot harness the power of the supreme treasure, they can only rely on some special methods to invoke a sliver of its power at critical moments. From his current understanding, that sliver of power, when erupted, is roughly at the level of Dao Fusion.

"Human effort determines success." Tree Elder spoke slowly, "There was once someone who fused with a supreme treasure, and though not wholly successful, in that instant, they could harness the power of the supreme treasure to do what they intended."

His casual remark sent a jolt through everyone's hearts, fleetingly showing them ancient historians in a distant historical scroll, valiant ancestors accepting their fate, even knowing how slim their hopes were, they fused with the supreme treasure, just to grasp that moment's power.

Countless potent beings' failures laid the groundwork for the lucky success of two among them.

"But many thousands of years have passed, and even the power of the supreme treasure is not eternal. The Star Abyss ambience has sensed this and is thus stirring restlessly." Tree Elder's tone was solemn, "But compared to last time, this time our situation is much better. Not to mention the experience from last time which allows us to prepare in advance, but also your return, which is an advantage we didn't have during the last Star Abyss invasion on this stellar space!"

Chen Wulei felt these words particularly deeply.

When the Cover Armor stellar space was invaded by the Star Abyss back then, there wasn't even a single cultivator in the Dao Realm. The initial enemies, while not overly powerful, consumed an unforeseeable amount of people's efforts before they were finally worn down.

Any one of them today could easily kill those invading enemies and preserve living strength; those fallen cultivators could have possibly advanced to the Dao Realm and become support for resisting the Star Abyss invasion in the future.

"However, we cannot be careless; once the Star Abyss Gate is opened, if it can't be sealed, the Star Abyss invasion will never cease!"

"Tree Elder, currently, besides here, in All Phenomena Ocean and the Tiangang Galaxy, where are the other two weaknesses in the stellar space?"

Tree Elder said, "One is in the Changyue Star Cluster, and another in the Mystic Frost Star System."

Lu Ye pondered for a moment, he had never heard of these two star systems, they are clearly not well-known, in other words, no prominent strong figures exist there.

"No need to worry about the All Phenomena Ocean." Lu Ye mused, "I will arrange things properly on my side, even if the Star Abyss Gate opens, strong enemies won't appear in the short term."

This fact has been confirmed in the Cover Armor stellar space, the Star Abyss Gate seems to have a travel limit. Initially, only a few weak Star Abyss living creatures could pass through, but as time progressed, the expansion of the Star Abyss Gate gradually allowed for stronger entities to come through.

Hua Ci is stationed at the All Phenomena Ocean, under the power of the Three Treasure Wishing Coins, entering the Path, even a Dao Fusion might not withstand it.

As to whether it can stop a Full Dao Harmony... Lu Ye does not know either.

And as long as the initial assault of the Star Abyss invasion can be held off, the stellar space cultivators will have the opportunity to cultivate in the area where the Star Abyss ambience permeates, thus forging their own Dao Realm and entering the Dao Realm!

"As for other locations..."

Gu Yunliu said, "This place will be headed by us from Yellow Dragon World, but we need some Fellow Daoists to stay behind and support us."

Lu Ye nodded, "That's not a problem."

The ones who returned from the Star Abyss number eleven, with five weaknesses, at least two people can be stationed at each weakness. For those all above the 7th Dao, handling the initial Star Abyss invasion is not difficult at all.

Moreover, at the initial stage, we need to intentionally allow some infiltration for the Star Abyss ambience to seep in; otherwise, it won't be easy for the home planet's cultivators to cultivate.

"I plan to have Mount Fangcun go to the Tiangang Galaxy." Tree Elder spoke, "Mount Fangcun is a supreme treasure, sparing the hassle of building a battle city. Currently, many people have already gathered at Mount Fangcun."

Lu Ye's eyes gleamed, "Tree Elder plans thoroughly."

Indeed, Mount Fangcun can guard a spot far more effectively than any battle city built with huge investments of financial, material, and human resources.

"However, only you can harness Mount Fangcun, so you still need to make a trip, and there is still the final part there that needs to be integrated." Tree Elder said.

He hadn't mentioned it, and Lu Ye had almost forgotten, having stayed long in the Star Abyss, far from the stellar space; the integration in the Western Region indeed slipped his mind.

Counting the time, it should be about right.

But...

"Will there be enough time to navigate Mount Fangcun to the Tiangang Galaxy?" Lu Ye asked.

Tree Elder smiled slightly, "Ample time, given the insect paths everywhere now, travel across the stellar space is very convenient."

"That's good then."