

## Starlit Path 601

### Chapter 601: Ancient Emperor Hao's Choice

This was a golden star orbiting the outer edge of the Five Phoenix Continent. Waves of majestic Gold Origin mysteries radiated from it.

Lu hadn't placed the Gold Origin Beast Ancestor statue on the Five Phoenix Continent itself.

After all, the entire Five Phoenix starry void now formed a single world. Placing the statue on a star was perfectly fine.

In fact, it had advantages. If something went wrong with the statue, Lu could easily relocate the entire star out of the Five Phoenix starry void without affecting the countless lives on the continent.

Tonggu landed on the star. His eyes fixed on the golden pyramid, reflecting its brilliant golden light. He clicked his tongue in admiration, praising it endlessly.

"As expected of a saint's work. Look at this grandeur, this meticulous design. Using pyramid stairs ensures fairness while maintaining beauty. It's ten thousand times better than the Elemental Realm's comprehension ground. Those god-demons' designs are garbage."

"Amazing. Just looking at it brings endless benefits. No wonder the senior is a starry saint—far beyond what a quasi-saint like me can compare to. The difference is like heaven and earth!"

Tonggu clasped his hands behind his back, sighing in wonder, praising nonstop.

Lu sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair, white robes fluttering. Beside Tonggu, his old face reddened slightly.

Such praise actually made him a little embarrassed.

But Lu didn't show it. He remained calm, as though sharing in the honor.

This only convinced the old daoist further that everything had been arranged by Lu's mysterious starry saint master.

"Now humanity possesses a Beast Ancestor statue..."

Tonggu sighed. His eyes flickered with countless emotions.

"Is this Beast Ancestor statue really that powerful?"

Lu asked curiously.

“Of course. There are five Beast Ancestors in total, representing five primordial starry forces... the origin of all things, the root of heaven, earth, and all life!”

“These five forces transformed into countless lives and gave birth to the gods and demons of the heavens...”

“Originally, the ancient starry void was pure chaos. It was the five Beast Ancestors’ energies that brought life to the dead starry void.”

Tonggu said.

“Each Beast Ancestor is an ultimate chaos creature. Even human starry saints might not gain the upper hand against them. That’s how terrifying the Beast Ancestors are.”

Lu’s eyes widened in surprise as he looked at the little statue atop the pyramid.

This adorable little Beast Ancestor statue... was actually this powerful?

“Little brother, since the senior has already built such a comprehension ground, I can’t waste it... I plan to return to the human ancestral land once and secretly bring some prodigies with talent for mystery comprehension to the Five Phoenix to study these Gold Origin mysteries.”

Tonggu suddenly grew serious and looked at Lu.

Lu nodded. He didn't refuse.

"This Beast Ancestor statue is incredibly important... perhaps the foundation for humanity's rise, the key to standing against god-demons. So, little brother, you must guard it well."

Tonggu drew a deep breath.

He glanced lovingly at the pyramid again. To him, its value wasn't in its grandeur—it was in its potential to cultivate countless human Heavenly Emperors.

That was what mattered.

"Unfortunately, the Five Phoenix is too far from the human ancestral land. We can't build a spatial passage. Even if we did, it would easily be detected by god-demons. Otherwise, a passage would connect the Five Phoenix and Primordial Immortal Domain. Bringing prodigies here for comprehension wouldn't be difficult."

"Though humanity lacks talent in mystery comprehension compared to god-demons, we excel in diligence. No talent? Then make up for it with effort. If one day isn't enough, try a hundred, a thousand..."

Tonggu said.

“At least we won’t have to beg god-demons pitifully for a few slots like before.”

“And even with slots, we had to hide our excellence in the comprehension ground to avoid being killed by god-demons.”

Tonggu exhaled.

“So this time, I’ll go back and forth myself. Besides preventing god-demons from discovering the Five Phoenix, it’s also to ensure the safety of the human prodigies.”

Tonggu said to Lu.

Lu nodded slightly.

A streak of light arrived. Chai Feng, awakened from meditation, stared in shock at the pyramid and the little Beast Ancestor statue at its peak.

As someone who had comprehended Gold Origin mysteries in the comprehension ground, he knew exactly what this statue meant.

So he was excited.

Chai Feng never imagined he could continue comprehending Gold Origin mysteries here.

“Chai Feng, stay here. I’ll return to the ancestral land and bring some prodigies with talent for mystery comprehension... to comprehend the Gold Origin mysteries and advance further.”

Tonggu said to Chai Feng.

“Bring others here?”

Chai Feng froze, his expression changing slightly.

“But the risk is huge... so many god-demons are watching our human immortal domain.”

Chai Feng said.

Tonggu naturally understood.

He glanced back at the pyramid, eyes shining.

“Fortune favors the bold. Now that humanity possesses a Beast Ancestor statue, this is our chance to rise.”

“Besides, I’m quite accomplished in spatial mysteries. Unless three or more Elemental Gods come to hunt me, they won’t be able to keep me.”

Tonggu spoke with confidence.

“Little brother Lu, I’ll take my leave for now.”

Tonggu smiled at Lu.

Lu nodded.

Then Tonggu soared into the sky, turning into a streak of light. Space compressed around him as he crossed the Void Abyss, left the Five Phoenix, and entered the Nine Heavens.

On the golden star, only Chai Feng remained.

Chai Feng drew a deep breath. His eyes burned with excitement as he gazed at the pyramid.

“Don’t rush. Wait until Senior Tonggu brings the geniuses from the ancestral land. Then we’ll compete in Gold Origin mysteries comprehension with the Five Phoenix cultivators.”

Lu said.

Chai Feng paused.

“Compete?”

His eyes flickered. He didn’t mind.

The Five Phoenix was impressive—a newborn immortal-martial world. But aside from Lu, who made Chai Feng wary, no one else in the Five Phoenix caught his attention.

Zhu Long might count as half. After all, she had surprised Tonggu and earned his high praise. He took her somewhat seriously.

Besides, comprehending mysteries depended on talent. The prodigies from the human ancestral land were carefully selected. It wasn’t arrogance—Chai Feng simply believed the ancestral land prodigies started far ahead of the Five Phoenix cultivators.

Lu naturally sensed Chai Feng's attitude.

The Five Phoenix was being looked down upon?

Lu smiled.

Though some Five Phoenix cultivators indeed had mediocre talent... only he, Lu Ping'an, was allowed to criticize them.

"Brother Chai should understand—comprehending mysteries has little to do with cultivation level. It's more about affinity with the origin power, right?"

Lu sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair and said to Chai Feng.

Chai Feng still gave Lu face. He smiled and cupped his hands.

"Of course. Cultivation level doesn't prove much in mystery comprehension..."

Lu looked at Chai Feng and narrowed his eyes.

The corner of his mouth curved into a gentle smile.

Anyone familiar with Ni Yu and the others would know—Lu was about to scheme.

“Brother Chai... how about a bet?”

“A bet?”

Chai Feng paused.

“What kind of bet?”

Lu tapped the armrest lightly.

“Just compete in mystery comprehension...”

Chai Feng’s expression changed slightly. He quickly waved his hand and smiled awkwardly.

“No, no. Little brother Lu’s talent in mystery comprehension is far beyond mine. You dominated the comprehension ground and suppressed countless god-demons. Comparing myself to you would be asking for humiliation.”

“It’s not me competing with you.”

“I’ll select three from the Five Phoenix to compete with Brother Chai in mystery comprehension... The winner will be decided by who climbs the most stairs. How about it?”

Lu said.

Chai Feng exhaled in relief.

Not competing against Lu himself? Then he relaxed.

And from Lu’s words... he was being challenged.

Though Chai Feng lacked confidence in his Gold Origin mystery comprehension—his performance in the comprehension ground had been poor, greatly disappointing Tonggu.

But Chai Feng was still a prodigy from the human ancestral land. He had his own pride. He might not match god-demons in mystery comprehension.

But against Five Phoenix cultivators—who were also human—he was confident.

“Since it’s a bet, there should be stakes. Little brother Lu... what are the stakes?”

“If Brother Chai climbs the most stairs, I, Lu Ping’an, will give you a top-grade innate spiritual treasure. How about that?”

“If Brother Chai loses, for each person who beats you, you’ll cultivate ten emperor-realm powerhouses for the Five Phoenix. Fair?”

Lu smiled lightly.

Chai Feng narrowed his eyes. The stakes were reasonable—not excessive.

In Chai Feng’s view, he might even profit slightly.

After all, cultivating emperor-realm powerhouses was easy for a Heavenly Emperor like him—just took some time.

But a top-grade innate spiritual treasure... that was something rare and precious.

Above innate spiritual treasures were innate supreme treasures.

For Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouses, possessing an innate spiritual treasure was already impressive.

Thinking of this, Chai Feng's lips curved upward.

"Then I'll thank little brother Lu for the innate spiritual treasure in advance."

Chai Feng said.

Oh?

Lu glanced at Chai Feng. This guy... very confident.

...

Tonggu entered the Nine Heavens.

Looking at the dead-silent Nine Heavens once more, he sighed heavily. The fate of the Nine Heavens was the fate of many human worlds in the ancient starry void.

Not every human world was as fortunate as the Five Phoenix—with a starry saint backing them.

He soon found Ancient Emperor Hao sitting alone on a star.

Ancient Emperor Hao was shrouded in thick resentment.

These were the resentments of the countless lives that had died in the Nine Heavens. Though most had been gathered into the twelve-petaled blood lotus and entrusted to Tianling to beg Lu for reincarnation,

resentment still lingered.

This was karma—unbreakable, inescapable karma.

Tonggu floated over, his quasi-saint aura radiating.

Ancient Emperor Hao looked up.

“Would you follow this old dao to the human ancestral land, Primordial Immortal Domain?”

Tonggu asked.

For Ancient Emperor Hao, he felt mostly sympathy. He had seen too many such cases among humans.

But those who walked this path were ruthless—and geniuses.

Moreover, a Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouse was valuable to humanity.

Ancient Emperor Hao’s gaze was calm. It seemed he had been waiting for Tonggu.

In truth, during this time, his heart had been struggling.

Now, seeing Tonggu, Ancient Emperor Hao suddenly understood his own thoughts. He had made his choice.

“No.”

“I may choose to wander the ancient starry void, hunting god-demons.”

Ancient Emperor Hao said.

“This is the consequence I must bear for the sins I carry.”

Tonggu froze. He hadn't expected Ancient Emperor Hao to refuse—and choose to wander the ancient starry void.

This was a very dangerous decision.

Though the ancient starry void was vast, powerhouses could sense each other's auras.

With Ancient Emperor Hao's cultivation, encountering a few great-path rank god-demons would spell doom.

So the best choice was to follow Tonggu back to Primordial Immortal Domain, find ways to wash away his karma, and try for quasi-saint realm.

Though Ancient Emperor Hao could never become a saint, quasi-saint was still possible.

“Wandering the ancient starry void—you’ll die.”

Tonggu said.

“Many human Heavenly Emperors made similar choices. In the end... they vanished without a trace, silently falling in the starry void.”

Ancient Emperor Hao smiled faintly.

“Since I’ve made this choice, I’ve already prepared myself for death.”

Tonggu said nothing more.

Since Ancient Emperor Hao had decided, he wouldn’t force him.

“Then take care of yourself...”

Tonggu clasped his hands behind his back and prepared to step into the void and leave.

But before departing, he glanced meaningfully at Ancient Emperor Hao.

“Before wandering the starry void, you could calm your heart and visit the Five Phoenix Continent. Feel its atmosphere. Wash away some of the killing intent on you.”

Ancient Emperor Hao paused, then nodded.

“Thank you for the advice, senior.”

Then Tonggu said no more. He sighed.

Each person had their own path. Even saints wouldn't lightly change someone's resolve.

Tonggu soon left the Nine Heavens. He concealed his aura. Space folded around him, and in an instant, he vanished.

In the Nine Heavens.

On a desolate, ruined continent.

Ancient Emperor Hao's gaze was calm. Following Tonggu back to the human ancestral land was indeed the best choice.

But he swept his gaze across the Nine Heavens. He needed to restore life and vitality to this world. That was the promise he had made to her.

Tonggu's final suggestion had also made him think.

He turned and looked toward the other end of the abyss.

Compared to the dead silence of the Nine Heavens, the Five Phoenix Continent on the other side brimmed with vitality.

Ancient Emperor Hao rose from the desolate continent.

The next moment, he stepped forward.

Crossing the abyss, he entered the Five Phoenix Continent. His aura rapidly concealed and sealed itself...

Becoming plain and unremarkable. He vanished into the vast Five Phoenix Continent.

...

Lu naturally sensed Ancient Emperor Hao entering the Five Phoenix.

But when Ancient Emperor Hao sealed his cultivation layer by layer, Lu paused.

“What is this guy planning?”

“Washing his heart and starting anew?”

Lu tapped the armrest lightly. He didn’t stop Ancient Emperor Hao.

But a wisp of his divine soul followed, locking onto Ancient Emperor Hao. Lu still needed to watch him. If this guy planned revenge or something, Lu could intervene quickly.

With that done, Lu withdrew his mind.

He had made a bet with Chai Feng.

Lu cared deeply about this bet.

After all, if he won, Chai Feng would cultivate thirty emperor-realm powerhouses for the Five Phoenix—thirty Golden Immortals. His spiritual energy share would skyrocket...

He might even break through in cultivation!

So Lu was very serious.

...

North Luo City.

Nie Changqing and his son Nie Shuang sat meditating on a pleasure boat on North Luo Lake.

Now that the world was at peace, all they could do was cultivate.

Nie Changqing had reached Golden Immortal realm. In the Fortune Tower, he had completed his third-turn Golden Immortal breakthrough and entered sixth-turn. Further progress would be difficult for now.

So he focused on guiding Nie Shuang.

Nie Shuang's talent was excellent. He had already reached Profound Immortal.

The father and son were like immortals in North Luo City.

Luo Yue and Luo Cheng, father and son, had also retired long ago. Their cultivation was solid.

Luo Yue was at True Immortal, while Luo Cheng had used the world's transformation to reach Profound Immortal.

The boat rocked gently on the lake.

Suddenly.

Spatial energy fluctuated.

Nie Changqing, meditating with eyes closed, abruptly opened them.

Hm?

On the lake, a silver boat shone with extreme light. On it stood a white-robed youth, ethereal and immortal.

“Young Master?!”

Nie Changqing’s calm face lit up with excitement.

On the lake, Luo Cheng and Luo Yue also rushed over excitedly. Seeing Lu’s familiar yet distant figure, their faces filled with joy.

Lu smiled and nodded.

“Old Nie, come with me. There’s a small opportunity.”

Lu said.

Nie Changqing quickly shouldered his Dragon-Slaying Blade and stepped off the boat.

White light swept over.

Nie Changqing and Lu vanished.

...

Not far from North Luo City was a blessed cave heaven.

Though called a blessed cave heaven, it was extremely perilous—a sharp sword peak piercing the clouds.

Atop the sword peak sat a figure in meditation.

A sword case was strapped to his back.

Inside the case was a single sword.

Its name—Jing Tian.

Jing Yue meditated with eyes closed. His white robes fluttered. His bearing was lofty.

Sitting at the sword peak's summit, he resembled a jade carving.

A condensed sword intent surrounded him—steady but unleashing. Once drawn, it could cleave the heavens.

For so many years, he had nurtured a single sword.

Suddenly.

Jing Yue opened his eyes.

On the peak, without him noticing, Lu appeared—white robes fluttering, seated in the Thousand-Blade Chair, smiling at him.

“Young Master!”

Jing Yue’s calm heart rippled. He grinned with nostalgia.

“Not bad. This sword has been nurtured with great care.”

Lu looked at Jing Yue in surprise.

If not for this Gold Origin mysteries comprehension competition, Lu might not have remembered Jing Yue.

This guy was too low-key.

His cultivation was decent—peak Profound Immortal. But the sword he nurtured was terrifying.

“Come with me. There’s a small opportunity.”

Lu said.

Jing Yue stood. Sword qi roared from his body. The entire sword peak trembled.

White light soared. The two vanished.

...

On the golden star.

At the base of the Beast Ancestor pyramid.

Nie Changqing stared in shock at the towering golden pyramid. A vast, majestic aura made his face flush.

It was an overwhelming pressure that left him unable to muster any resistance.

When Lu arrived with Jing Yue, Nie Changqing paused. Jing Yue—an old friend he missed dearly.

Jing Yue and Nie Changqing exchanged smiles.

In Lu's mind, Jing Yue and Nie Changqing were the best at comprehending Gold Origin mysteries.

Jing Yue's relentless sword intent matched Gold Origin mysteries perfectly. Though his cultivation talent was average, in Gold Origin comprehension, he might surprise Lu.

Nie Changqing's Dragon-Slaying Blade had similarities with Jing Yue's sword intent. Gold Origin mysteries suited him best.

Besides Old Nie and Jing Yue, Lu had called one more person—Lu Jiulian.

As Lu's clone, he was Lu's guarantee of victory. Even if Nie Changqing and Jing Yue lost, Lu Jiulian would ensure Chai Feng cultivated at least ten emperor-realm powerhouses for the Five Phoenix.

Though Lu Jiulian's Gold Origin mystery talent might not match Lu's, it wouldn't be far off.

After all, he was a clone.

Around them, the Overlord, Tang Yimo, Sima Qingshan, and other Five Phoenix Golden Immortals watched curiously.

They had all heard about Lu and Chai Feng's bet.

"Young Master Lu, these are the people you've chosen?"

Chai Feng clasped his hands behind his back, looking somewhat elegant. His appearance was indeed handsome.

In Chai Feng's senses, Lu Jiulian and Nie Changqing had decent cultivation.

Jing Yue's cultivation didn't even register in his eyes.

Not arrogance—after all, he was Heavenly Emperor level. Even if mystery comprehension didn't depend on cultivation, at least they should be emperor-realm, right?

Competing with him without even reaching emperor-realm—how could he take it seriously?

If not for Lu's sincere expression, Chai Feng would have thought Lu was mocking him.

Lu smiled.

“This pyramid contains Gold Origin mysteries. Comprehending them can lead to breaking through to Great Luo Immortal level...”

“This is Chai Feng, a prodigy from Primordial Immortal Domain. I've called you here to compete with him in mystery comprehension...”

Lu explained the rules clearly.

Then he waved his hand. The barrier at the pyramid's base opened.

The four stepped forward.

Chai Feng smiled and said nothing. He took a step onto the first stair of the pyramid.

Lu Jiulian and Nie Changqing exchanged a glance and followed.

Jing Yue didn't rush.

After so many years, this was the first time Young Master had sought him out and given him an opportunity. His heart surged with excitement.

Along with excitement came nervousness.

He feared disappointing Young Master. After all, among those present, his cultivation was the weakest.

“Go. Unleash your relentless sword intent...”

“Treat this as simple sword intent cultivation.”

Sensing Jing Yue's tension, Lu transmitted.

Jing Yue paused.

He tightened his grip on the Jing Tian sword in the case on his back and exhaled slowly.

The next moment.

He took a step.

The instant his foot landed—

Sword qi erupted from beneath his sole.

A soaring sword intent surged upward—like peerless sharpness ready to cleave everything.

Chai Feng, already on the pyramid stairs, sensed it and turned back in surprise.

Chapter 602: I'm Still the Young Master's Favorite Child!

In the ancient starry void.

A dead silence.

Space folded layer upon layer. Tonggu stepped forward, compressing space around him. His speed was astonishing—a profound divine ability.

Tonggu was cautious. The moment he left the Five Phoenix Continent, he severed every trace he left behind, preventing god-demons from tracking back to the Five Phoenix's location.

But just as Tonggu departed—

The starry void trembled. One god-demon after another emerged from the darkness.

“It’s Tonggu... is he returning to the human immortal domain?”

“The Elemental Gods ordered us to patrol and report any developments immediately!”

“The human prodigy Chai Feng he took... has disappeared!”

“Chai Feng didn’t return to the ancestral land. So... where did he go?”

The wills of great-path rank god-demons clashed.

Doubt. Speculation.

But in the void, Tonggu chuckled lightly.

With a flick of his hand, a whisk appeared.

“What are you staring at? Never seen a handsome old daoist before?”

“You blind god-demons—why are you blocking this old daoist’s path?”

Tonggu said.

He swung the whisk. Silver threads stretched across the starry void like a galaxy. Each thread carried the terrifying power to cleave stars.

“Damn it! Is Tonggu declaring war on the god-demons?”

“This bastard! Who’s blocking his way?!”

“Run! This is a human quasi-saint! And a shameless one at that!”

Shouts of alarm erupted.

Great-path rank god-demons appeared from the darkness, faces changing drastically as they fled frantically.

But the silver threads lashed out.

Puff! Puff!

One great-path rank god-demon after another exploded into bloody mist, filling the void with thick carnage.

Tonggu laughed heartily. He found an excuse and slaughtered these god-demons—relieving some pressure on humanity. Then he compressed space again and vanished.

Long after.

Space shattered layer by layer.

A terrifyingly powerful god-demon emerged from the void. Looking at the exploded god-demons, cold killing intent flashed in his eyes.

“Indeed Tonggu’s doing. What a shameless old daoist...”

“What is Tonggu trying to hide?”

The next moment, this god-demon tore through space and entered the spatial turbulence, continuing to pursue Tonggu’s trail.

...

On the golden star.

The atmosphere was tense.

Five Phoenix Golden Immortals hovered outside the pyramid, staring at the scenes within.

Though they were deeply curious about the pyramid, since Lu hadn’t permitted entry, they didn’t insist.

Chai Feng, Nie Changqing, Jing Yue, and Lu Jiulian were competing in mystery comprehension. This piqued their interest.

Chai Feng came from the human ancestral land—Heavenly Emperor level, Great Luo Immortal equivalent.

Whether Dantai Xuan, the Overlord, or others, they all sensed Chai Feng's subtle arrogance. Aside from Young Master Lu, he looked down on Five Phoenix cultivators.

Many felt a surge of anger, but there was nothing they could do. Chai Feng's strength was real.

So when they learned Young Master Lu was betting with Chai Feng in a mystery comprehension competition, they thought he would choose them.

After all, they were the top Golden Immortals of the Five Phoenix.

But Lu's choices shocked them.

Selecting Lu Jiulian was understandable—his monstrous talent was well-known. Only Zhu Long surpassed him slightly.

Selecting Nie Changqing was acceptable too. He was among the earliest Golden Immortals in the Five Phoenix.

But...

Why Jing Yue?

Many were puzzled. The Overlord, Sima Qingshan, Tang Yimo, and others couldn't understand why Lu chose Jing Yue over them.

In terms of strength, peak Profound Immortal Jing Yue had little to show.

They didn't look down on Jing Yue—he was a White Jade Capital disciple. But the gap in strength naturally created a sense of hierarchy.

“Young Master Lu must have his reasons for choosing Jing Yue.”

They thought.

They stopped doubting.

Their eyes fixed on the pyramid, gleaming with golden light.

Lu sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair, white robes fluttering, wine cup in hand, gaze on the pyramid.

Choosing Jing Yue was somewhat of a gamble for Lu. But with Lu Jiulian guaranteeing victory, Lu wasn't too worried.

In truth, mystery comprehension talent couldn't be judged by cultivation level. Even Lu couldn't know who had the best affinity with Gold Origin mysteries.

He simply felt Jing Yue's sword intent style matched somewhat.

So he gave Jing Yue a chance.

For Jing Yue, Lu sighed with slight disappointment.

He had once held high hopes for Jing Yue. But Jing Yue had fallen behind for a while. His current achievements were middling.

"Do your best."

Lu sighed softly and took a sip of wine.

...

Chai Feng turned back. Sensing Jing Yue's soaring sword intent, he was slightly surprised.

That relentless momentum carried an unreasonable pressure.

"Interesting."

Chai Feng's lips curved slightly.

But Jing Yue's strength was still beneath his notice. Not even emperor-realm—just that.

Boom!

He stepped onto the stairs.

Chai Feng's brows rose in astonishment. He felt... this pyramid's comprehension method was easier than the god-demons' comprehension ground!

The Beast Ancestor statue at the top trembled. Then Gold Origin mystery ripples surged downward like a cascading waterfall!

“Here it comes!”

Chai Feng drew a deep breath. He knew this was like the mystery ripples from before.

As golden mystery waves poured from the statue atop the pyramid, Chai Feng faced them seriously.

Boom!

The waves crashed into him. Chai Feng trembled slightly.

It felt like his body was being tempered. Many mystery ripples washed over him, but he also captured some.

An ocean of mysteries formed above his head!

Joy flashed across Chai Feng’s face.

So easy!

As expected of a comprehension ground built by a human saint!

Chai Feng's heart surged!

If he could master Gold Origin mysteries, his combat power would skyrocket!

Chai Feng couldn't help smiling and continued climbing the stairs.

Next, the Beast Ancestor statue's pressure spread—not mystery ripples, but pressure.

This pressure weighed on Chai Feng's body.

With each step, under the pressure's tempering, his mastery of power grew more refined!

Climbing the stairs helped master Gold Origin mysteries!

Wonderful!

Compared to the god-demons' comprehension ground, this was the most comfortable one Chai Feng had experienced!

Chai Feng glanced sideways and froze.

Beside him, Lu Jiulian followed with hands behind his back, relaxed.

This made Chai Feng's face twitch slightly.

He kept up?

The Five Phoenix had grown from weak low-martial to immortal-martial. There were indeed monstrous geniuses!

Chai Feng put away his disdain.

He continued climbing.

The pyramid had nine thousand nine hundred ninety-nine stairs.

In total, ten thousand—the final step held the Beast Ancestor statue.

The statue released mystery ripples like a fountain, surging from top to bottom.

The onlookers watched closely.

Chai Feng and Lu Jiulian competed fiercely, neither yielding.

Their climbing speed was astonishing.

Nie Changqing lagged slightly behind, but his face was excited, as though he'd discovered a new world.

Jing Yue, with the weakest cultivation, climbed slowest.

The Beast Ancestor pressure oppressed him most.

Jing Yue gritted his teeth. The statue's pressure made him want to turn and flee.

But a voice in his heart urged him to maintain his soaring sword qi, as though to cleave through the statue's pressure and continue ascending.

Boom boom boom!

Mystery ripples surged like ocean waves crashing against a beach.

They seemed ready to sweep Jing Yue away.

Jing Yue's face paled slightly.

But he gritted his teeth and endured.

Each ripple washed over him. He stabilized his footing, refusing to be swept away.

Compared to Chai Feng, Lu Jiulian, and the others, Jing Yue fell further and further behind.

At first, this discouraged him. The gap was so vast he felt lost.

But he quickly cast aside the despair. He focused entirely on resisting the statue's pressure and the cascading mystery ripples.

Gradually, a golden ocean of mysteries formed above Jing Yue's head.

"Huff..."

"Jing Yue, keep going! Young Master hasn't forgotten you! You're still his favorite child!"

Jing Yue exhaled. His eyes grew even more resolute.

Boom boom!

The first thousand stairs unleashed ten mystery ripple waves.

With prior experience comprehending Gold Origin mysteries, Chai Feng progressed smoothly, leading the way. After the first thousand stairs, his ocean of mysteries reached a diameter of five thousand li!

Behind him, Lu Jiulian soon caught up. Nie Changqing followed closely.

As for Jing Yue, he had barely reached five hundred stairs.

The gap in cultivation had indeed become his weakness.

Outside the pyramid.

The Five Phoenix Golden Immortals watched intently, drawn into the tense atmosphere.

Lu sipped wine while observing.

“After the first thousand stairs, the maximum ocean of mysteries diameter is ten thousand li. Chai Feng reached five thousand li—a two-to-one ratio. Not bad.”

Lu’s gaze shifted to Lu Jiulian. To Lu’s slight surprise, Lu Jiulian’s ocean of mysteries didn’t inherit his own talent.

After the first thousand stairs, it was also a two-to-one ratio—same as Chai Feng.

Nie Changqing, however, performed better. After a thousand stairs, his ocean reached six thousand five hundred li in diameter.

Lu nodded slightly and continued watching.

After all, this was only the first thousand stairs. Eight thousand eight hundred eighty-eight remained. Early leads meant little.

Endurance was key.

As for Jing Yue, Lu watched him struggle in the first hundred stairs and sighed.

He hadn't held high hopes.

Time passed.

The Beast Ancestor statue grew more lifelike. As they climbed higher, its gaze seemed to follow them. The pressure grew stronger, more terrifying!

The second thousand stairs unleashed ten more mystery ripple waves.

This time, Chai Feng felt pressure. He realized his cultivation wasn't as useful here.

It depended more on Gold Origin mystery talent.

Lu Jiulian gradually caught up. Nie Changqing trailed close behind.

Chai Feng suddenly felt pressure.

He didn't want to lose. Though he didn't represent the entire ancestral land,

if he lost now, it would still disgrace the ancestral land and make Five Phoenix cultivators lose respect for it...

Then he'd be a sinner.

"I have prior experience. I can't lose!"

Chai Feng drew a deep breath and continued climbing.

His conviction pulled him ahead of Lu Jiulian by a wide margin.

He led the way, climbing steadily. Though he knew pausing at each stair to absorb would benefit his ocean of mysteries,

he dared not stop. He couldn't be overtaken.

Lu Jiulian and Nie Changqing pressed close. He couldn't afford to rest.

After the second thousand stairs, Chai Feng's ocean reached ten thousand li in diameter!

Chai Feng felt his condition improving.

Far better than in the god-demons' comprehension ground!

Climbing higher, golden light seemed to flash past him.

The third thousand stairs. Mystery ripples grew stronger. What was once waves lapping a beach now became raging river torrents.

But Chai Feng endured!

His ocean reached fourteen thousand li in diameter!

It began declining, but Chai Feng was satisfied.

Decline was normal with prior experience.

He ignored Lu Jiulian and Nie Changqing. He sensed they were catching up, so he didn't rest or relax.

But the difficulty increased further.

Not just the mystery ripple waves—the Beast Ancestor statue's terrifying pressure made lifting his foot feel impossibly heavy.

Had he reached his limit?

In the god-demons' comprehension ground, his ocean limit was fifteen thousand li...

He might be slightly better now, but he wasn't satisfied.

He wanted to go further!

He looked up. The tiny, almost cute Beast Ancestor statue atop the pyramid suddenly seemed to swell to heaven-sized proportions, looming over him.

It inspired awe and reverence.

On the other side.

Lu Julian gradually caught up to Chai Feng.

His expression calm, as though everything came naturally.

Nie Changqing's pressure was no less than Chai Feng's. Sweat poured from him, dripping onto the stone stairs.

But now, Nie Changqing's ocean reached twenty thousand li in diameter...

In Gold Origin mystery talent, Nie Changqing seemed slightly better than Chai Feng.

Perhaps because his blade technique suited it. Dragon-Slaying Blade emphasized offensive power, and Gold Origin mysteries excelled in offense—perfect synergy.

If it were the Overlord or Tang Yimo, they'd be far behind Chai Feng in Gold Origin mysteries.

Talent was like that. Some excelled effortlessly. Others struggled despite effort.

The ocean diameter was just a reference. The true measure was stairs climbed.

Chai Feng still led.

But his climbing speed had slowed.

Lu Jiulian was now only one stair behind.

Chai Feng's pupils shrank. A chill ran down his back.

Lu Jiulian's ocean diameter was similar to his, yet climbing seemed effortless.

Why?

Lu Jiulian was Lu's clone—cheating.

He was sent to guarantee victory.

Nie Changqing lagged behind Chai Feng but was steadily closing in.

Finally!

Chai Feng stopped.

Six thousand seven hundred ninety-eighth stair.

The terrifying pressure had reached its limit.

Chai Feng was sweating—a rare sight for a Heavenly Emperor.

He stood silently on that stair for a long time.

Then gave up.

Boom!

Explosive force launched him off.

Chai Feng floated down to the golden star. His fatigue vanished instantly.

He raised his hand. Gold Origin mysteries flowed slowly on his palm. He had mastered them—though only twenty percent power. Barely passable.

But it was good news for him.

He looked up at the Five Phoenix cultivators still climbing.

Chai Feng's record: six thousand seven hundred ninety-eighth stair. He was satisfied with this result...

His gaze shifted to Lu Jiulian.

Lu Jiulian had nearly reached his record.

Chai Feng's mouth twitched. He smiled bitterly.

Lu Jiulian lightly overtook his record.

"Close enough. Two stairs ahead—round number. One would feel too deliberate."

Lu watched Lu Jiulian about to continue and smiled.

His mind stirred.

Lu Jiulian, stepping onto the six thousand eight hundredth stair, suddenly froze. His foot felt slippery.

As though stepping on soap.

He slipped.

Lu Jiulian tumbled off the stairs...

Ultimately stopping at six thousand eight hundred stairs.

Throughout, Lu Jiulian looked utterly confused. He felt he could have gone further.

As though someone had pushed him!

He, Lu Jiulian... refused to accept it!

Chai Feng smiled awkwardly at Lu Jiulian.

Exactly two stairs ahead. Two stairs meant he lost. He now had to cultivate ten emperor-realm powerhouses for the Five Phoenix...

Two stairs for ten emperor-realms...

He felt he'd been had!

Chai Feng sighed. No resentment though—just outmatched.

He knew he wasn't outstanding in Gold Origin mysteries.

In the god-demons' comprehension ground, his performance... had been disappointing.

But humanity gaining Lu Jiulian—a genius in Gold Origin mystery comprehension—pleased Chai Feng.

The ancient starry void was harsh for humanity—not just words.

The Five Phoenix, a newborn immortal-martial world, hadn't yet felt the cruelty...

But Chai Feng, raised in the ancestral land, had seen too many humans oppressed for being weak.

On the pyramid.

Nie Changqing and Jing Yue continued climbing.

Suddenly.

Chai Feng's pupils shrank.

“No way...”

Not just him—the Five Phoenix Golden Immortals watching also lit up.

Their eyes fixed on Nie Changqing climbing the pyramid. Excitement surged within them.

Boom rumble!

Mystery ripples poured down relentlessly.

Nie Changqing roared. His white robes whipped.

He gripped Dragon-Slaying at his waist and slashed forward, as though cleaving the giant waves before him.

He swung his blade repeatedly. Golden Origin mysteries coated the blade light. Step by step, he climbed higher.

Six thousand eight hundred stairs—surpassed in one go!

Lu Jiulian felt aggrieved. If not for the invisible push, how could Old Nie overtake him?

Chai Feng felt awkward...

But after the awkwardness came realization.

“So that’s how... using comprehended Gold Origin mysteries to cleave the pressure ahead!”

Chai Feng slapped his forehead. How hadn’t he thought of that!

He’d learned something!

He could have gone further!

Nie Changqing ultimately stopped at seven thousand seven hundred eighty stairs...

Though unwilling, the pressure from the statue above felt like an unbreakable wall. Forcing through would break him.

Finally, he was launched off.

But he was satisfied. Landing, he recovered.

He drew Dragon-Slaying. The black blade now gleamed with golden light...

That was Gold Origin mystery power. Nie Changqing felt his blade could now split the heavens!

He had grown stronger!

Nie Changqing's eyes shone!

But he looked up at the pyramid.

Jing Yue hadn't finished yet.

He and Jing Yue were old comrades—once fought side by side for Young Master.

Now fighting together again, he hoped Jing Yue would achieve something great.

“His cultivation is still too low.”

Chai Feng said.

Lu Jiulian nodded slightly. Though pyramid mystery comprehension didn't depend on cultivation—mostly talent—the statue's pressure still required cultivation to resist.

Tap tap...

Jing Yue was already hunched over, as though carrying the weight of the world.

“Keep going... you're still Young Master's favorite... child!”

Jing Yue gritted his teeth.

Sweat poured like rain, dripping nonstop.

“This child's will and conviction are strong...”

“What is he reciting? A mantra?”

Chai Feng was curious.

To everyone, Jing Yue seemed on the verge of failure.

Yet under that firm conviction, he staggered upward...

At four thousand stairs, he seemed ready to collapse.

Yet he wobbled to five thousand.

Five thousand soon passed. Step by step, he reached six thousand.

Chai Feng drew a sharp breath. His backside felt cold...

Was he about to be overtaken by this little Five Phoenix cultivator who wasn't even emperor-realm?

Being surpassed by Lu Jiulian and Nie Changqing, Chai Feng could accept.

But if Jing Yue surpassed him too...

That would be truly humiliating.

When Jing Yue stopped at six thousand seven hundred stairs, Chai Feng barely breathed a sigh of relief.

He felt Jing Yue had reached his limit!

At least someone was below him.

However.

On the stairs.

Jing Yue gritted his teeth. His eyes reddened. The Jing Tian sword in the case on his back suddenly soared upward.

A thousand years forging one sword!

This sword—for Young Master!

He couldn't disappoint Young Master!

"I'm still Young Master's favorite child!"

Jing Yue roared.

Gold Origin mysteries coated it. Combined with the sword nurtured for a thousand years...

In an instant, unstoppable momentum surged.

Jing Yue climbed as though divinely assisted.

In this moment, his speed skyrocketed.

He opened a hundred-stair gap!

From six thousand seven hundred, he rushed to six thousand eight hundred...

Reaching this point, Jing Yue fainted instantly.

Everyone froze.

Not because of Jing Yue's final shout—but because of his performance...

Chai Feng's face darkened. He instinctively pursed his lips like Tonggu.

He... had been surpassed again!

Three times in a row—surpassed by three Five Phoenix cultivators.

Meaning...

He now had to cultivate thirty emperor-realm powerhouses for the Five Phoenix for free...

Chai Feng's mouth twitched.

He turned to the white-robed Young Master Lu.

Lu smiled warmly and sincerely at him—even raised his wine cup slightly.

Chai Feng's mentality wavered. He suddenly felt...

He'd been thoroughly tricked!

Chapter 603: The Importance of Washing Hands Before Drawing Lots

Chai Feng's face darkened slightly.

He had lost—and lost to three Five Phoenix competitors, finishing dead last.

Of course, this was partly because Chai Feng hadn't gone all out. Compared to Nie Changqing and Jing Yue, he hadn't thought to use Gold Origin mysteries to carve a path forward—a habit left over from his previous comprehension sessions.

But Nie Changqing and Jing Yue's approach had opened a new path for him. He could try it next time.

With that thought, Chai Feng laughed heartily.

A loss was a loss. Mystery comprehension wasn't his strong suit anyway.

If humanity could gain so many prodigies talented in mystery comprehension, Chai Feng wouldn't mind losing a few more times.

“Not bad.”

Chai Feng sighed in admiration.

“Young Master Lu, I’ll honor the bet. Thirty emperor-realm cultivators? It’ll take some time, but I can manage.”

Chai Feng laughed freely.

He felt no resentment or dissatisfaction from the loss.

Instead, he felt rather pleased.

Chai Feng’s attitude surprised Lu slightly.

He couldn’t help but sigh inwardly—the other’s magnanimity was truly on par with his own, Lu Ping’an.

Jing Yue had fainted from the overwhelming pressure. After all, he had endured a force far beyond his current cultivation.

“That sword was stunning.”

Chai Feng said. “If possible, I can help Brother Jing quickly reach emperor-realm.”

Lu glanced at Chai Feng. “Tell him when he wakes.”

“As for the bet, no rush. There’s no time limit. Just cultivate thirty emperor-realm cultivators when you can...”

Lu smiled.

Thirty emperor-realm cultivators—was that a lot?

For the Five Phoenix Continent, it wasn’t trivial. There weren’t even thirty emperor-realm cultivators in the Five Phoenix yet.

But for Chai Feng, who was used to seeing emperor-realm powerhouses, cultivating them wasn’t difficult—just time-consuming.

After all, initial-stage emperors still counted.

Finding talented cultivators and guiding them properly made reaching initial emperor-realm feasible.

Moreover, Chai Feng had seen the Five Phoenix cultivators' talent through Nie Changqing and Jing Yue—it wasn't simple.

This made Chai Feng realize: the Five Phoenix had grown from weak low-martial to immortal-martial. Such world advancement meant repeated talent evolution for its cultivators.

The world's transformation influenced talent transformation.

Why did Primordial Immortal Domain value new immortal-martial worlds so highly?

Why did god-demons constantly suppress humanity's new immortal-martial worlds?

Because such worlds easily birthed prodigies with extraordinary talent.

Unlike those who started at a high level in Primordial Immortal Domain,

these cultivators grew alongside their world.

Figures like Ancient Emperor Hao and Lu Jiulian were astonishing to Chai Feng.

And Lu—someone valued by a mysterious starry saint—his talent needed no further explanation.

Lu revived the unconscious Jing Yue.

Jing Yue's cultivation had also broken through. He had essentially shattered his bottleneck and could now enter Golden Immortal realm. He only lacked fortune accumulation.

“You already possess Golden Immortal-level consciousness. You just need more accumulation. Go to the Fortune Tower and complete some god-demon missions to build fortune while tempering your strength.”

Lu smiled at Jing Yue.

“You did well this time. Young Master has high hopes for you.”

Jing Yue's eyes lit up the moment he woke. He was deeply moved—Young Master... still favored him most!

How long had it been since he heard those words?

Hearing Young Master's praise excited Jing Yue more than breaking through to Golden Immortal.

Chai Feng looked at Jing Yue.

"Brother Jing, you've comprehended Gold Origin mysteries. It will greatly enhance your sword path... I have the sword technique inheritance of a perfected Heavenly Emperor powerhouse. My talent is limited, but it might suit you perfectly."

"That Heavenly Emperor fell in battle against god-demons. His sword once nearly severed a heaven-god rank god-demon! It shocked the starry void... unfortunately, he fell just short."

"I've been searching for a worthy successor. If Brother Jing inherits this senior's mantle, his spirit can rest in peace."

Chai Feng said.

"When you have time, I'll teach you the technique."

Chai Feng smiled.

Jing Yue's eyes lit up. He quickly bowed in thanks.

The surrounding Five Phoenix Golden Immortals' eyes also brightened. They looked at Chai Feng like he was a treasure.

Chai Feng suddenly felt a chill, as though eyed by a pack of hungry wolves.

Though awkward, Chai Feng didn't mind.

Or rather, this was the effect he wanted.

Losing the competition could affect Five Phoenix cultivators' impression of Primordial Immortal Domain. By offering these inheritances, he salvaged some respect.

Lu smiled, very satisfied with the outcome.

But Chai Feng truly lived up to his Heavenly Emperor-level status—his magnanimity was impeccable.

Just as Lu was admiring Chai Feng—

A system prompt suddenly appeared before him, leaving Lu stunned.

“Congratulations, Host. Challenge mission completed. Completion rating: Excellent.”

“Reward: Chance to randomly draw one of Tonggu’s divine abilities. Begin drawing now?”

The system prompted.

Lu’s eyebrow twitched.

He looked at Chai Feng with newfound fondness.

He hadn’t expected winning against Chai Feng alone would complete the challenge mission. He thought he’d have to wait for Tonggu to bring the ancestral land prodigies for a unified competition.

This saved him a lot of time.

“Tonggu is a quasi-saint-level human powerhouse. His divine abilities... must be extraordinary.”

Lu drew a deep breath and prepared to draw.

But he paused.

He narrowed his eyes.

This was random. What if his luck was bad and he drew Tonggu's shameless divine ability? That would be disastrous.

So Lu decided to wash his hands thoroughly before drawing.

Wash away the bad luck.

Hum...

After a few words with Chai Feng, Lu vanished through space.

He returned to Lakeheart Island.

He called Ni Yu and borrowed her golden cauldron.

Ni Yu froze, confused. Young Master wanted to borrow her pot?

But she didn't dare refuse.

Of course, she was curious too.

Lu took the cauldron and personally refined a batch of pills—not precious ones, but pills infused with fortune.

The cauldron was full. The yield was massive.

The sheer volume made Ni Yu's chubby cheeks tremble with envy.

Then Lu rolled up his sleeves.

He plunged both hands into the cauldron full of pills and scrubbed carefully.

He cleaned every finger crease meticulously.

This bizarre ritual nearly made Ni Yu spit out the pills she'd eaten yesterday. Young Master... as unfathomable as ever.

Washing hands with pills to dispel bad luck, Lu was satisfied and ready to draw.

“Begin drawing.”

Lu said calmly.

Then the system prompt appeared.

“Drawing begins. Note: Random draw. There is a 10% chance of failure...”

Lu's expression remained unchanged.

He felt the atmosphere grow tense, as though streams of light were flashing before him.

After a moment—what felt like an eternity to Lu—

Just when he thought he'd see "Thank you for participating," the system prompt finally appeared.

"Congratulations, Host. Successfully drawn: Tonggu's divine ability—Spatial Severing Technique."

Hm?

Lu's eyes lit up.

Spatial Severing Technique?

The name alone sounded extraordinary.

Severing space?

Space was profoundly mysterious. Though Lu had grasped some spatial mysteries through Ancient Emperor Hao's "Travel" array word,

his understanding was still superficial.

Spatial mysteries were vast and deep.

Lu closed his eyes. A flood of profound information surged into his mind—a strange sensation.

His grasp of spatial mysteries deepened. His understanding became uniquely his own.

In his mind, all information about Spatial Severing Technique converged and transformed into Lu's knowledge.

“Truly powerful...”

Lu opened his eyes.

As expected of a quasi-saint's divine ability—its offensive power was terrifying.

“If I combine Spatial Severing Technique with Gold Origin mysteries and my Spirit Pressure Chessboard... it could become an exceptional killing move. Even without the Indestructible Body, I'd have cross-rank combat power.”

Lu's eyes gleamed.

Indeed, washing hands with a massive batch of pills before drawing had greatly boosted his luck.

Of course, Lu's mastery of Spatial Severing Technique was still shallow. He needed time to practice.

But at least this ability satisfied him greatly.

His luck this time was excellent.

...

Rumble rumble!

In the ancient starry void, space folded endlessly.

Tonggu stepped forward, compressing space around him.

Along the way, he casually found excuses to slaughter a few peeping god-demons. He felt refreshed.

He had no mercy for god-demons. Their blockade of humanity had caused countless deaths and destroyed many worlds on the verge of immortal-martial ascension.

So killing god-demons, Tonggu felt no hesitation.

Suddenly.

Tonggu's rushing body trembled.

He paused. Space exploded.

His body crashed into the void, face full of confusion.

He raised his hand and clutched his chest.

After a long moment, he exhaled.

"Oh~"

Why did he suddenly feel... hollowed out?

Tonggu was puzzled. He didn't know what had happened to him.

Why this sudden sensation of being hollowed out? As a quasi-saint, such emotions were extremely rare...

Moreover, with his quasi-saint body, how could he feel hollowed out?

Illogical.

But Tonggu's eyes rolled.

Then he turned and slowly reached toward a spot in the starry void.

That space instantly twisted, sliced into neat cubes by an invisible blade.

Puff!

Blood sprayed.

The terrifyingly powerful god-demon who had been tailing him tumbled out from the sliced space.

“Tonggu, you’re courting death!”

“This time, what excuse do you have?! Attacking us god-demons for no reason—does the human ancestral land want war?”

The powerful god-demon’s eyes blazed red as he roared.

Tonggu clutched his chest, eyes filled with grief and indignation.

“You stole this old daoist’s heart! Only you and I were here. This old daoist suddenly felt hollowed out—it must be your doing!”

Tonggu said.

The god-demon froze. Then he nearly exploded with curses.

Damn it, you shameless bastard!

Who would want to steal an old fart’s heart!

The god-demon didn't linger. He turned and fled. Tonggu's shamelessness had truly frightened him.

Tonggu sneered.

Having scared the other away, he didn't stay.

The hollowed-out feeling came quickly and left quickly. Soon, Tonggu continued on his way.

Humanity possessing a Beast Ancestor statue was immensely important.

If used properly, it could cultivate countless Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouses for humanity.

But he had to be careful. If the news leaked, the Elemental Gods would never let it go.

...

The pyramid housing the Beast Ancestor statue wasn't sealed after the competition.

Lu planned to open it soon, allowing Five Phoenix Golden Immortals to comprehend mysteries.

“But Jing Yue and Nie Changqing are the most suited for Gold Origin mysteries. Others might struggle to comprehend, or even catch up to Chai Feng.”

Lu pondered.

“Even a little comprehension is better than none.”

Comprehending mysteries meant mastering them.

Like Chai Feng, who had mastered about twenty percent. It still boosted his combat power considerably.

Nie Changqing and Jing Yue might master more, but likely not beyond twenty percent. After all, this was their first time. Chai Feng had prior experience in the god-demons’ comprehension ground.

Of course, as they climbed the pyramid and were influenced by the Beast Ancestor statue, their mastery would deepen.

But mastery was limited by talent.

Ordinary people might spend their entire lives mastering only one or two percent.

Those with talent like Jing Yue and Nie Changqing might one day reach over fifty percent.

“There are five Beast Ancestor statues in total. I wonder where the others are...”

“If I could bring them all to the Five Phoenix and let the cultivators master mysteries... the Five Phoenix’s strength would skyrocket.”

“The stronger Five Phoenix cultivators become, the stronger I, Lu Ping’an, become...”

“Looks like I need to find a way to get the other statues. This concerns my lifelong happiness.”

Lu muttered.

Chai Feng and the Five Phoenix Golden Immortals returned to the Five Phoenix Continent.

Chai Feng also passed on the perfected Heavenly Emperor’s sword technique to Jing Yue.

“Accumulation Sword Technique!”

Jing Yue's eyes lit up when he saw it.

This technique perfectly matched his current sword path and sword intent.

One sword nurtured for a thousand years. Once unleashed, it could cleave the heavens, earth, sun, moon, and stars.

This Accumulation Sword Technique perfected Jing Yue's sword path even further.

After learning it, Jing Yue entered the Fortune Tower and chose a heavenly-grade Profound Immortal mission.

Heavenly-grade Profound Immortal missions were extremely difficult.

Even for Jing Yue, who was already at peak Profound Immortal, it nearly cost him his life.

Finally, he fused his nurtured sword into one strike and slew an initial-rank god-demon. Fortune poured in, forming a sea!

In one thought, he entered Golden Immortal realm.

The Golden Immortal tribulation arrived, but Jing Yue passed it safely.

The Five Phoenix gained another Golden Immortal—a joyous occasion.

Chai Feng settled in the Five Phoenix Continent. He was quite satisfied with the cultivation environment—everyone was positive and full of vitality.

Since he had lost the bet, Chai Feng had to cultivate thirty emperor-realm cultivators for the Five Phoenix.

Cultivating ordinary initial emperors was easy for him—just took time.

But since he was cultivating, Chai Feng naturally wanted to select talented ones.

So he planned to venture into the Five Phoenix Continent and search for disciples.

With his Heavenly Emperor-level strength, establishing a sect was perfectly acceptable.

But before he could begin, Lu called him over.

“Brother Chai, I heard there are five Beast Ancestor statues in the ancient starry void?”

“Now that the Gold Origin statue is in the Five Phoenix, where are the other four?”

Lu asked curiously.

Chai Feng paused but didn't hide it. He knew this information well.

“I don't know their exact locations, but the Gold Origin Beast Ancestor statue was originally in the Gold Elemental Realm—Young Master Lu should know that.”

“The Fire Origin statue is likely in the Fire Elemental Realm.”

“The Water Origin statue is in the Water Elemental Realm. The Earth Origin statue should be in the Earth Elemental Realm.”

Chai Feng said.

“What about the Wood Origin statue?”

Lu asked curiously.

“Why isn’t it in the Wood Elemental Realm?”

Chai Feng smiled. “It was originally in the Wood Elemental Realm... but later, the Wood Elemental Realm was attacked by an extremely terrifying chaos creature—comparable to a heaven-god rank god-demon. Even the five Elemental Gods together couldn’t defeat it... so the Wood Origin statue was taken.”

“It became a laughingstock in the ancient starry void for a while.”

“But that chaos creature’s power is undeniable. According to Senior Tonggu, it may have half a foot in the Beast Ancestor realm!”

Chai Feng’s words made Lu draw a deep breath.

This seemed... quite troublesome.

Taking the other statues wouldn’t be easy.

And if he succeeded, it would surely enrage the Elemental Gods. The Five Phoenix would face a god-demon siege...

Possibly even provoking that chaos creature half a step into Beast Ancestor realm—far worse.

Lu sighed.

The path to the Five Phoenix's rise was long and arduous.

Having learned what he needed, Chai Feng bid Lu farewell and left Lakeheart Island. He drifted into the Five Phoenix Continent to search for talents and cultivate emperor-realm cultivators.

Lu sat in Lakeheart Island, feeling somewhat relaxed.

He had captured quite a few immortal-rank god-demons earlier. The Fortune Tower's strategic reserves were still sufficient.

So Lu wasn't in a hurry to lure more god-demons.

Lu looked up.

A resounding phoenix cry echoed.

The Five Phoenix immortal source—the phoenix that had just hatched—was flapping its wings freely.

It circled the golden star.

What surprised Lu was that golden threads drifted from the adorable little Beast Ancestor statue on the star.

They wrapped around the phoenix.

Gradually dyeing the immortal source phoenix with golden light.

Lu frowned. He wasn't sure if the Gold Origin mysteries' influence would harm the immortal source phoenix.

But he sensed no negative effects for now... so it should be fine.

Watching the silly, carefree phoenix soaring and flapping its wings, Lu felt a headache coming on.

“Is the Five Phoenix immortal source's transformation mostly due to Little Yinglong's Dao essence absorption? Could Little Yinglong's silliness have affected the immortal source?”

Lu's face darkened.

Thinking about it made him angry.

He reached out casually.

His understanding of space had deepened significantly.

With a grab, he directly seized Little Yinglong and smacked him a few times.

Little Yinglong was dumbfounded. His mouth was still stuffed with Ni Yu's pills—he hadn't even swallowed.

A sudden disaster!

Why was Father hitting him for no reason?

He'd been very good lately!

After a few smacks, Lu's anger subsided. The immortal source phoenix had already become like this—what could he do?

He couldn't remake it from scratch.

Lu sighed.

For the Five Phoenix, he had truly broken his heart.

He stopped worrying about it. If the immortal source phoenix wanted to play with the adorable little Beast Ancestor statue, let it play.

As long as no major problems arose.

Lu sat cross-legged and began considering his own strength improvement.

Through the Gold Origin statue, he could comprehend mysteries too. Currently, he had mastered about fifty to sixty percent of Gold Origin mysteries. He wasn't in a rush—with the statue in hand, full mastery was only a matter of time.

Ten percent mastery of Gold Origin mysteries combined with the Indestructible Golden Body—his combat power would probably explode!

But the Indestructible Fire Body also needed strengthening.

With that thought, Lu's mind stirred.

He raised his hand.

Boom!

A cluster of blazing flames appeared.

This was the pure fire origin power left after Qiang Huo's death.

The flames held strong attraction for the Indestructible Fire Body—otherwise, Lu wouldn't have taken it from Tonggu.

Though it was his spoil of war, if Lu hadn't claimed it, he had no doubt that shameless Tonggu would have pocketed it without hesitation.

Lu's mind moved.

His hair turned crimson. His white robes transformed into fiery red robes.

Threads of attraction surged from the Indestructible Fire Body.

Slowly absorbing the dancing flames.

...

In a vast sea of fire.

A terrifying existence suddenly opened its eyes.

"Tonggu, that old thing, has finally started absorbing..."

Cold words echoed. Then, overwhelming divine soul fluctuations erupted, shaking the heavens.

...

Boom!

A wisp of nearly imperceptible will trembled within the flames Lu was absorbing and refining into his Indestructible Fire Body.

Lu's eyes snapped open.

Something messy had slipped in!

Chapter 604: A Day and Night Alone with Young Master Lu

Lu indeed felt something strange had slipped into his body.

This made him frown.

Because that intruder brought a faint sense of crisis—though not particularly strong.

But Lu still took it seriously.

“Is it because of this fire origin flame?”

Lu narrowed his eyes. After thinking it over, he felt the problem lay in the fire origin flame he had just absorbed. After all, it came from Qiang Huo—a prized disciple of the Elemental God.

And Lu remembered that the flame will Tonggu had crushed belonged to the Elemental God himself.

“Could there be a remnant of the Elemental God’s will?”

Lu’s expression grew solemn. This was no small matter—he had to be extremely cautious and thorough.

After all, he was no longer the reckless youth who feared nothing.

He now carried the entire nascent immortal-martial Five Phoenix on his shoulders, still in need of nurturing. So Lu had to ensure his own safety.

After silently cursing Tonggu’s unreliability for leaving behind a trace of the Elemental God’s will,

Lu’s mind moved. His powerful divine soul surged into his body.

Following the flowing fire origin power within his Indestructible Fire Body, he began analyzing and probing.

Lu was patient—methodical, inch by inch, strand by strand, extremely serious.

But after a full sweep, he found nothing unusual.

The fire origin power coursing through him was strengthening his Indestructible Fire Body considerably, faintly approaching perfection. Everything seemed perfectly harmonious.

Yet Lu was certain—that strange feeling earlier was no illusion.

So he became even more serious and cautious.

He even activated the preaching platform for a full-body scan.

Hum...

After repeated scans,

Lu finally detected an extremely faint will fluctuation hidden within a single drop of blood racing through his veins.

It was nearly imperceptible. If not for his meticulous attention, he might have missed it entirely.

A scorching heat emanated from that will.

Lu's expression turned cold and grim.

Sure enough—something filthy was coveting his body!

Lu slowly exhaled, feeling a trace of lingering fear. Fortunately, he had been cautious enough. Otherwise, this wisp of will would have taken root, absorbing nutrients, growing stronger, and eventually completing possession!

“The Elemental God... truly insidious. As expected of a heaven-god rank god-demon... old schemer.”

Cold light flickered in Lu's eyes.

This grudge—he, Lu Ping'an, would remember it.

One day, it would be repaid!

Boom!

Lu's powerful divine soul erupted outward, vast and surging like tidal waves crashing from the sea, slamming toward the wisp of will to obliterate it.

But to Lu's surprise, the will was incredibly resilient—like an unyielding rock, unmoved.

...

In the Fire Elemental Realm.

That terrifying existence's eyes gleamed with faint light.

"Hm? It was discovered? Impossible... with Tonggu's reckless nature, he shouldn't have noticed."

Tonggu was a quasi-saint-level powerhouse—supremely confident in his divine soul and quasi-saint body.

In truth, the Fire Elemental God hadn't intended to destroy Tonggu with this wisp of will. Killing a quasi-saint comparable to himself with such a small trick was nearly impossible.

But he could let the will continuously absorb the quasi-saint body's nutrients, growing into a monster inside, lying dormant—ready to erupt at the critical moment and catch Tonggu off guard.

Yet he hadn't expected his plan to be discovered so soon.

"This divine soul power... isn't Tonggu's?"

"Tonggu must have given this fire origin flame to a human prodigy?"

"Fine. Killing one human prodigy is still a profit."

The existence sneered.

His original target had been Tonggu. But since Tonggu hadn't fallen for it, any human prodigy would do.

"With this level of divine soul power, you think you can erase my will seed? Obediently become nourishment for my will seed—become my hidden pawn within humanity!"

The Fire Elemental God sneered coldly. He thought of many things. This human prodigy who earned Tonggu's favor must hold significant status in humanity. For Tonggu to entrust him with the precious fire origin flame showed how important this junior was.

Thus, the value of this hidden pawn was self-evident.

Boom!

The Fire Elemental God's eyes flashed. He secretly urged the will seed.

...

Lu reacted instantly.

Seeing the will seed suddenly erupt violently—like a blazing sun igniting within his body, its will surging as though to grind away Lu's own.

Lu was both angry and amused.

“Pushing your luck—do you think I, Lu Ping'an, am easy to bully?!”

Lu's fury ignited.

He had diligently nurtured the Five Phoenix for so many years. This was the first time he'd been bullied like this.

Without hesitation, he fully unleashed his divine soul power. Even innate purple qi surged forth, merging with his will to suppress the intruder.

The preaching platform manifested—descending from above, suppressing the void within Lu's body!

Boom!

Lu felt his flesh about to erupt like a volcano, terrifying auras exploding outward.

And that hidden will seed was now fully exposed.

Vaguely, it transformed into a roaring fire figure.

"I am the will of the Fire Elemental God..."

A faint will fluctuation emanated, then surged toward Lu's divine soul.

Lu's expression was ice-cold.

His divine soul will collided without hesitation. The two clashed.

Lu's divine soul was like a roaring heavenly river.

The will seed was as thin as a thread.

Yet their collision was evenly matched.

This surprised Lu and made him sigh at the might of quasi-saint powerhouses.

He, Lu Ping'an... was still too weak.

After all, he was just an ordinary cultivator.

But Lu wasn't without means. He directly summoned the preaching platform and smashed it down.

The preaching platform was divine. Its Eight Trigrams array words flowed, carrying supreme pressure.

Instantly, the will seed was crushed!

A vast, majestic power emanated from the preaching platform, suppressing and sealing the Elemental God's will.

“Cough tui~”

Lu opened his mouth.

A drop of pitch-black blood sprayed out.

Lu's eyes narrowed.

He raised his hand. The surrounding void was sliced into chaos like shredded silk.

He restrained the drop of blood.

“The Elemental God's will...”

Lu narrowed his eyes.

“This is an enormous fortune.”

“A tool god-demon above immortal-rank has been secured.”

“Thank you, Elemental God old pal, for the divine soul will.”

Lu chuckled lightly.

Then he clenched his five fingers.

Space sliced apart, severing the faint connection between the blood drop and the Elemental God.

Lu’s mind moved. His figure flickered like teleportation and appeared at the top of the Fortune Tower.

The giant beast Kui Si lay lazily. He had been living comfortably—until suddenly he felt a terrifying aura that made even sleep uneasy.

Opening his eyes, he saw the white-robed Lu Ping’an looking calmly at him.

Wasn't this the human who had beaten him senseless?!

"Human, what do you want?!"

Kui Si's eyes filled with fear. The aura on this human was growing more terrifying.

It now carried the pressure of a great-path rank god-demon!

Last time he didn't feel this way. How long had he slept? And the human had become this strong?

Human talent was too terrifying.

No wonder the god-demons' upper echelons wanted to suppress humanity.

Seeing Lu draw closer.

Kui Si panicked.

“Don’t come over!”

“No... don’t!”

Kui Si roared in terror.

He was already a prisoner—what more did this human want from him?

But Lu ignored Kui Si’s roars. With a flick of his finger, the separated Elemental God’s will shot into Kui Si’s mouth.

Kui Si was dumbfounded.

The next moment, he felt his body turn into a furnace. Every drop of blood split apart. Terrifying power surged within him.

Kui Si grew more terrified—what was this human doing?

Drugging him?!

Why was his body so hot?!

It felt like a fire needed release!

As his power grew, Kui Si's eyes lit up. His bloodline level soared. His strength rose continuously...

In one surge, he broke through the barrier and stepped into great-path rank!

Though he felt his great-path rank was unstable... he had grown stronger!

"I... I've become stronger?!"

Kui Si was overjoyed.

The next moment, he glared at Lu with murderous intent!

But Lu looked at him with disappointment.

“As expected—trash. Fusing a drop of blood containing the Elemental God’s will only produced this flashy but useless counterfeit. Still, it’s acceptable—at least it’s great-path rank, even if much weaker than Qiang Huo.”

Lu shook his head.

“Hm, the Fortune Tower now has a great-path rank god-demon resource reserve. When Zhu Long and Lu Jiulian want to break through to Heavenly Emperor, they’ll have a way...”

Thinking of this, Lu’s gaze toward Kui Si softened.

After all, Kui Si was now the Five Phoenix’s only artificially created great-path rank god-demon reserve. Though drug-induced, he was still unique and precious.

Kui Si originally thought his cultivation had increased—reaching the great-path rank he had never dared dream of.

In the ancient starry void, wandering god-demons like him who reached great-path rank could enter the Elemental Realm!

So he had a bold idea—to break free from this human’s control.

He wanted freedom!

He wanted the starry void!

He wanted to fly!

So he attacked—slashing a claw toward Lu!

This claw erupted with great-path rank power, faintly threatening to shatter star rivers.

Lu glanced over.

He raised an eyebrow.

Getting bold now, huh? Daring to scheme?

His mind moved. The Spirit Pressure Chessboard appeared before him.

Since he was free, why not use Kui Si to practice his newly acquired divine ability from quasi-saint Tonggu—Spatial Severing Technique?

Combining Spatial Severing Technique with the chessboard domain and Spirit Pressure!

Lu sat calmly in the Thousand-Blade Chair, white robes fluttering.

He rolled up his sleeve and placed a piece.

The chessboard domain expanded. Spirit Pressure beams twisted space and smashed down!

Puff!

In an instant, blood sprayed. Kui Si's claw was severed by spatial slicing...

Kui Si was defeated.

That day, the entire Fortune Tower shook. A god-demon's blood-curdling screams echoed through every corner.

Those who heard it felt heartache. Those who listened shed tears.

Ning Zhao and Yi Yue, managing the Fortune Tower, pretended not to notice.

Ni Yu held the golden scale token, Little Yinglong perched on her head, projecting the scene and watching with relish.

Little Yinglong saw Kui Si's miserable state and recalled being inexplicably beaten by Father. He felt a strange sympathy—and his mood greatly improved.

...

In the Fire Elemental Realm.

A stifled roar echoed.

Terrifying divine soul fluctuations surged with boundless fury, sweeping every corner. Flames erupted into ten-thousand-zhang waves.

“Damn it! How could a mere human brat sever my connection with the will seed?! And what did that brat do with my will?!”

The Fire Elemental God was furious.

Yet helpless. The connection was cut—the wisp of will was no longer his.

“When did such a figure appear among human prodigies...”

“Humanity is growing stronger and stronger. With such juniors, humanity’s future is unimaginable. Perhaps the ancient starry void will truly become humanity’s domain...”

“Teacher was right—humanity must be suppressed! We cannot give them any chance to breathe!”

Silence fell over the sea of flames.

After a long while, cold muttering echoed.

“The Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue’s mystery comprehension ground will open soon. Perhaps this time we can allocate more slots to humanity—even lure that Tonggu here...”

The words fell, and heaven-shaking killing intent surged through the sea of flames.

“Then...”

“Kill!”

Chapter 605: Ancient Emperor Hao’s Transformation of Mind

Empress Ni Chunchiu descended from the pavilion in a daze.

Her gaze was vacant, her mind drifting, her steps unsteady.

She felt utterly lost.

Was it over?

When she opened her eyes, she met Lu’s gentle and satisfied look. She didn’t know what he was satisfied with—she dared not ask, dared not speak.

Lu told her to leave, so she obediently descended.

Only at the foot of the stairs did she snap awake...

She had spent an entire day and night in enlightenment?!

She had wasted this precious, wonderful time alone with Lu on enlightenment?

In an instant, thunder seemed to explode in her mind. She froze, her heart heavy, chest constricted, soul on the verge of collapse.

Yet facing Lu's expectant gaze, Ni Chunchiu knew she couldn't push her luck.

Lu's personal guidance was an opportunity countless people dreamed of but never received.

Having received it, how could she demand more?

With this realization, Ni Chunchiu came to her senses. She exhaled, disappointed in herself.

Seeing Ni Yu blinking her big eyes, full of hope and gossip, Ni Chunchiu felt choked.

"Sister Ni, it's over? So soon?"

Ni Yu's mouth opened wide in astonishment.

Ni Chunchiu smiled bitterly, glanced at Ni Yu, and pursed her lips.

In the distance, Ning Zhao and Yi Yue nodded slightly at her.

“Yes, it’s over.”

Ni Chunchiu sighed.

“Young Master Lu’s guidance truly brought me extraordinary insight...”

She spoke with deep bitterness.

Inside, she was roaring, going mad.

What did she need enlightenment for?

What use was enlightenment?

But there was no regret pill in the world. The empress sighed deeply and finally turned to leave.

The beauty had departed, yet her sigh lingered over the island.

Ni Yu looked utterly confused—she really didn't understand.

She stopped paying attention and went back to refining pills. Gossip was fine in spare moments, but refining pills was her true calling—she couldn't get addicted to gossip.

The island returned to its usual calm.

Lu sat in the pavilion, one hand propping his chin, eyes on the chessboard.

A gentle breeze blew, stirring his white robes and lifting his sidelocks—refreshingly cool.

Ning Zhao and Yi Yue cultivated while managing the Fortune Tower.

Everything proceeded in an orderly manner.

...

Tianling Ancient Emperor walked across the waves. In his palm, a twelve-petaled blood lotus spun quietly. Within it, billions of wailing souls cried out.

These were the souls of all living beings from the Nine Heavens, condensed by Ancient Emperor Hao into a blood sea and formed into this lotus.

If Ancient Emperor Hao hadn't done this, these souls would have eventually dissipated into the Nine Heavens.

Now, they had a chance at rebirth.

Tianling was deeply uneasy. He wasn't sure if Lu would accept the souls of the Nine Heavens within the lotus.

But he had once been an Ancient Emperor of the Nine Heavens.

So he decided to gamble.

Originally, he planned to go straight to the Netherworld and find Dantai Xuan to handle it. But the little princess stopped him.

Her words struck Tianling like a revelation.

“I’ve heard Young Master Lu of White Jade Capital has a bit of a temper. You should go talk to him...”

“Don’t provoke him—you’ll suffer greatly.”

The little princess had grown up listening to tales of White Jade Capital, holding it in unparalleled awe. And Young Master Lu of White Jade Capital inspired even greater reverence.

Tianling thought about it and agreed. Lu Ping’an, that petty guy... had a tiny heart and loved messing with people’s heads.

If he mishandled this and gave Lu leverage, Tianling would suffer greatly in the future.

He had to think of the little princess too.

So he brought the blood lotus to Lakeheart Island.

Ning Zhao received him.

This time, there was no obstruction. Lu had divined Tianling’s purpose and allowed him entry.

Tianling stepped onto the island and immediately raised the blood lotus, asking Lu.

“The souls of the Nine Heavens...”

Lu sighed.

He had nothing to say about Ancient Emperor Hao’s choice.

After all, without sacrificing all life in the world, Ancient Emperor Hao could never break through to Heavenly Emperor realm, resist future god-demon calamities, or achieve immortal-martial ascension.

So Lu actually understood Ancient Emperor Hao somewhat. When cornered with no way out, what else could be done?

Better to gather all power and kill some god-demons.

Kill one to break even, kill two to profit!

That might have been Ancient Emperor Hao’s thinking.

It was just a bit extreme.

“Go. Enter the Netherworld and find Dantai Xuan. The Five Phoenix has now achieved immortal-martial status. Even if these souls reincarnate, the Five Phoenix can fully bear it—and it could even bring tremendous growth.”

Lu said.

Tianling froze.

He looked at Lu with some emotion.

He hadn't expected Lu to be so agreeable, without refusal.

He had thought Lu's petty nature would reject integrating the Nine Heavens' souls into the Five Phoenix. He never imagined it would be so easy.

That was why Tianling felt such emotion.

Lu Ping'an... wasn't so bad.

Tianling soon departed.

Lu smiled as he watched him leave.

Integrating billions of Nine Heavens souls into the Five Phoenix naturally brought great benefits.

Though reincarnation couldn't happen instantly, it would rapidly increase the Five Phoenix's population and fill its current labor shortage.

Moreover, many of these souls were cultivators. Even after reincarnation, they would retain cultivation talent and likely become cultivators.

In other words, Nine Heavens cultivators would gradually become Five Phoenix cultivators.

And the more Five Phoenix cultivators there were, the greater the benefit to Lu Ping'an.

By reason and emotion, Lu would never refuse.

Lu smiled. Though unified reincarnation meant no spiritual energy harvest for a century, if he wanted a wave of harvest, he'd have to wait a few hundred years.

But regardless, any spiritual energy share was welcome.

Tianling left and easily entered the Netherworld with Lu's permission.

Dantai Xuan personally received him.

Tianling walked through the Netherworld, following the Yellow Springs deep into its heart. He saw the endless Sea of Bitterness and the abyssal rift.

He marveled at the Netherworld's vastness and intricacy.

The Six Paths of Reincarnation left Tianling in awe.

This reincarnation system sustained the mortal worlds of the Five Phoenix, making heaven and earth stable and harmonious.

In the Nine Heavens, after death, souls returned to the Heavenly Dao as nourishment.

New lives would then be born in the Nine Heavens—there was never any talk of reincarnation.

That was why Tianling was so astonished.

Dantai Xuan took the blood lotus.

Looking at the billions of deeply resentful souls within, he sighed deeply.

He took the lotus and sat in the center of the Sea of Bitterness.

Activating the Six Paths Reincarnation Visualization Method, he washed away the resentment, converting it into karma, granting these resentful souls the right to reincarnate.

Of course, during this process, those who had committed countless evils and reveled in slaughter naturally sank into the Sea of Bitterness.

This was perhaps a form of screening.

The lords of the nine other cities of the dead also appeared. Now all at peak Profound Immortal realm.

They sat in the Sea of Bitterness, assisting Dantai Xuan in refining.

Vast karma surged. During the transcendence, the city lords gained tremendous power.

Their karma became vast oceans, stepping into Golden Immortal realm.

The Netherworld suddenly gained nine Golden Immortals—its strength greatly increased.

Tianling stayed in the Netherworld for a long time. He personally witnessed all Nine Heavens souls being transcended and, with Dantai Xuan's help, granted reincarnation. Their souls were purified, becoming pure and innocent, reborn in the Five Phoenix.

Dantai Xuan also broke through. This wave of karma propelled his cultivation forward, reaching ninth-turn Golden Immortal. But Dantai Xuan felt neither joy nor sorrow.

What was there to celebrate in such a breakthrough?

...

Five Phoenix Continent.

Great Xuan Dynasty.

Southern Region, South Chu City.

A city under the southern dynasty—not particularly prosperous, even somewhat remote.

No cultivators guarded it.

Deep night.

Stars twinkled.

Outside the city, a figure walked step by step—somewhat dazed, somewhat carefree.

Dressed plainly, wearing a bamboo hat—like an ordinary laborer.

“Is this the mortal world of the Five Phoenix Continent?”

Ancient Emperor Hao raised his head, calmly gazing at the frail city in his eyes.

All within were mortals—perhaps some martial artists, but to cultivators, they were mere ants.

When Tonggu left, he suggested Ancient Emperor Hao visit the Five Phoenix to wash away his killing intent.

At first, Ancient Emperor Hao refused.

But in the end, he chose to come.

He wanted to rebuild the Nine Heavens—perhaps he could draw inspiration from the Five Phoenix’s development model.

He understood the Five Phoenix well—from low-martial origins, rapidly growing to its current immortal-martial status...

What an inconceivable miracle of transformation. Not just him—Ancient Emperor Hao believed even powerhouses in the human ancestral land had never seen anything like the Five Phoenix.

Which immortal-martial world didn’t start as a high-martial one and require billions of years to ascend?

Where else was there something like the Five Phoenix—rising like a whale’s spout toward the peak?

Ancient Emperor Hao stopped sighing. He sealed his cultivation. Suddenly, an overwhelming urge arose—to experience the mortal world as a common man.

He entered South Chu City.

The city wasn't large, and he blended in seamlessly.

He entered as an outsider.

Ancient Emperor Hao felt the clamor of mortals, the various bustling scenes—dazzling to someone who had been in seclusion for tens of thousands of years.

From birth, Ancient Emperor Hao had been of noble status. Forget mortals—even cultivators below Immortal Abode realm were rarely seen by him.

After all, born into a great cultivation clan, even his servants were at Immortal Abode level.

At first, Ancient Emperor Hao felt extremely unaccustomed.

He felt somewhat out of place in this world.

He wandered the streets, walking and walking.

His strange behavior eventually drew attention. South Chu City was small—everyone knew each other.

A sudden unfamiliar face wandering the streets in confusion—people assumed he was a refugee fleeing war.

So someone approached, spoke to him, and offered to take him in.

After all, Ancient Emperor Hao's muscular build looked strong—he'd be good labor.

With nowhere else to go, Ancient Emperor Hao agreed and became a porter in the city.

Dressed in coarse clothes, eating simple food.

At first, Ancient Emperor Hao thought he'd quickly tire of this life.

After all, the rough food was nearly inedible—ten thousand times worse than the worst pills.

But to his surprise, he slowly grew accustomed to it.

Even the raging killing intent from sacrificing an entire world began to calm.

The killing intent seemed washed away by the mundane world's hustle.

Ancient Emperor Hao gained some insight.

He gradually let go and tried to integrate into this world.

“Payday!”

“Hao boy, this is yours.”

The foreman tossed him a string of copper coins. Ancient Emperor Hao, sitting alone gnawing on a dry bun, accepted it expressionlessly.

This was his first wage.

He stared blankly at the modest string of coins. A strange emotion stirred in his heart.

“Hao boy, you’re not young anymore and still unmarried. Uncle Liu knows a girl—I’ll introduce you. Find someone, get married, have kids—it’s good.”

After distributing wages, the foreman smiled and patted Ancient Emperor Hao’s solid chest.

Marriage?

Ancient Emperor Hao silently shook his head.

But he did start thinking of settling in South Chu City.

Earn more money, buy a house. As for marriage—forget it.

Some people were hard to let go of.

Besides, he held a faint hope. He had entrusted Tianling with the blood lotus containing the Nine Heavens’ souls for reincarnation in the Five Phoenix. He didn’t know if Tianling had done it.

If he had... perhaps he could wait for her reincarnation.

Next, Ancient Emperor Hao worked diligently. His smiles gradually increased. He integrated into the city.

He earned enough to quit, bought a house, even opened a shop.

The shop didn't sell anything else—just various exquisite pastries.

This was something Ancient Emperor Hao learned after eating rough food.

He discovered that making exquisite pastries helped dissipate his killing intent.

He even became obsessed with the feeling.

At first, his pastries looked decent but tasted terrible.

But Ancient Emperor Hao didn't give up. He worked at it for years. His pastry shop gradually gained fame.

It became well-known in South Chu City.

Like jade washed clean of dust, he lived quietly in South Chu City, leading an ordinary life.

No disputes with others.

Rising with the sun, resting at dusk.

At night, he could sleep peacefully—without worrying about world calamities or god-demon wars.

Sometimes, even in sleep, his lips would unconsciously curve upward.

Ancient Emperor Hao settling in the Five Phoenix naturally drew Lu's attention.

After all, Ancient Emperor Hao was a Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouse—and his relationship with the Five Phoenix wasn't entirely harmonious.

So Lu kept watch over Ancient Emperor Hao from Lakeheart Island.

To his surprise, Ancient Emperor Hao truly stayed in a small city for decades, living like a mortal.

This felt somewhat familiar—like when Lu had entered the mortal world.

Lu didn't disturb him—just observed occasionally.

Ancient Emperor Hao lived very ordinarily.

Decades passed in a flash.

His appearance aged with time.

His pastries grew increasingly famous—even people from nearby cities came to buy from his shop.

Ancient Emperor Hao took apprentices. After all, as an old man with a mortal body, he couldn't manage alone.

Time passed bit by bit.

The killing intent around Ancient Emperor Hao grew thinner.

Gentle smiles began appearing on his face.

One day.

Ancient Emperor Hao opened the shop.

The apprentices placed freshly made, fragrant pastries on display.

Suddenly, Ancient Emperor Hao froze.

He looked at the white-robed youth sitting in a wheelchair in the distance. A gleam flashed in his aged eyes.

“Shopkeeper, one green jade cake.”

Lu looked at Ancient Emperor Hao and said lightly.

The apprentice laughed. “Sir, you must be from out of town? You look unfamiliar. Our Hopeful Studio’s pastries are the best in South Chu City—old brand, guaranteed satisfaction.”

The apprentice skillfully wrapped the green jade cake in oil paper.

Ancient Emperor Hao stepped forward. “Young Master Lu graces us with his presence—forgive the lack of proper welcome.”

Lu paused, then smiled and waved it off.

“I just wanted to try the pastries. Watching every day finally made me crave them.”

Lu said.

Ancient Emperor Hao didn’t mind being watched. He laughed.

“This meal’s on me.”

But Lu tossed a tael of silver to the apprentice.

“Do I look like someone short on money?”

The apprentice caught the silver, confused, and was about to give change when he realized Lu had vanished.

“Shopkeeper, do you know this young master? A distant relative?”

The apprentice asked curiously. They’d worked for the shopkeeper for years and never seen any relatives.

“This young master looks refined—like he has immortal aura. Shame about his legs... otherwise, I’d think he was an immortal descended to earth.”

The apprentice said.

Ancient Emperor Hao smiled and pointed at the apprentice. “I know him. He’s petty—watch your words.”

Lu returned to Lakeheart Island.

He opened the oil paper, took a green jade cake, and bit lightly. Closing his eyes, a unique flavor spread through his mouth—an emotion, an artistic conception.

“The killing intent is almost completely washed away. Is this still the Ancient Emperor Hao I know?”

Lu smiled. The pastry was surprisingly delicious.

No wonder it tempted him to sneak down for a pack.

Ancient Emperor Hao's transformation left Lu感慨.

Sometimes, an ordinary life really was good.

Ten more years passed.

Ancient Emperor Hao continued running his pastry shop in South Chu City.

He didn't expand it—though Hopeful Studio's reputation had spread far, even reaching the capital of the dynasty governing South Chu.

Ancient Emperor Hao increasingly enjoyed this ordinary life.

He even planned to end his days here, experiencing the full cycle of mortal birth, aging, sickness, and death.

But his plan fell through.

One day.

Dark clouds gathered over South Chu City.

The oppressive atmosphere weighed on everyone's hearts.

On the city walls, guarding soldiers felt an inexplicable dread.

Outside the city, a figure shrouded in black qi rapidly approached.

Ding ling ling!

A black banner shot skyward from the black mist.

“Jie jie jie...”

The banner soared. Black mist surged, smashing into the city wall and collapsing it.

The mist rose. Within it stood a gaunt, skeletal old man, eyes gleaming with malice.

“Sacrifice a whole city—today I form my Nascent Soul!”

The man inhaled deeply in intoxication.

South Chu City had already descended into chaos. It was just a small city. Though a cultivator guarded it, he was only at Foundation Establishment.

Against this perfected Golden Core evil cultivator intent on sacrificing the entire city for a Nascent Soul, he stood no chance.

But the Foundation Establishment cultivator charged out fearlessly. Treasures flew, red light flashed. He rallied martial artists and fought the evil cultivator.

City officials didn't flee either—they sent soldiers to join the battle.

The fight was brutal. Many soldiers died.

This only fed the evil cultivator's desires. Countless souls were drawn into the banner.

“Today, everyone in the city dies!”

The evil cultivator had waited a long time. Entering Nascent Soul—perhaps this was his only chance.

Chaos reigned in the city.

Even those queuing for pastries panicked. Fortunately, the Foundation Establishment cultivator and martial artists held on desperately, preventing the city’s fall.

When the Foundation Establishment cultivator’s spiritual energy ran out and the martial artists’ stamina failed, they would be slaughtered by the evil cultivator.

Ancient Emperor Hao remained calm.

While the apprentices panicked, he stayed serene.

He didn’t look at the evil cultivator.

He looked at the Foundation Establishment cultivator in the front line, the martial artists, and the countless soldiers.

They fought desperately to protect the citizens behind them, to give them a safe life.

This scene deeply moved Ancient Emperor Hao.

He stood stunned, eyes fluctuating intensely.

It reminded him of the Nine Heavens' situation—equally desperate and helpless.

Yet the Foundation Establishment cultivator and martial artists fought fearlessly for the mortals behind them.

The citizens also mustered courage, grabbing carrying poles, kitchen knives—anything to resist the evil cultivator.

Ancient Emperor Hao's eyes wavered.

“Back then... perhaps I should have given the world such a choice...”

Ancient Emperor Hao sighed.

There was no turning back.

Boom!

Just as the defending Foundation Establishment cultivator coughed blood.

Ancient Emperor Hao stepped forward from his hunched posture—firmly walking toward the city gates.

“Shopkeeper, go back!”

“We’re young—we don’t need old men and women fighting!”

Many soldiers saw Ancient Emperor Hao and shouted.

Ancient Emperor Hao smiled, emotions swirling in his heart.

The Foundation Establishment cultivator finally fell.

The evil cultivator shrouded in black mist saw his chance. Malice blazed in his eyes.

Massacre and sacrifice—now!

This was his moment to form a Nascent Soul with the blood of a hundred thousand!

Suddenly.

The evil cultivator's heart trembled.

Unbeknownst to him, an old man with white hair approached step by step. This elder gave him an overwhelming sense of dread.

The defeated Foundation Establishment cultivator, heart as dead as ashes, also froze.

In disbelief, he looked at Ancient Emperor Hao. He recognized him—wasn't this the shopkeeper of Hopeful Studio?

He'd bought pastries from him before.

Suddenly, the Foundation Establishment cultivator's pupils shrank.

Because the aged Ancient Emperor Hao gradually straightened as he walked. His white hair turned vigorous black. Terror gleamed in his dark eyes.

The Foundation Establishment cultivator drew a sharp breath!

This shopkeeper... was a hidden powerhouse?!

“All living beings have spirit. Mortals have their own persistence—to protect what they wish to protect...”

Ancient Emperor Hao said.

A sudden realization dawned.

Boom!

Terrifying aura erupted.

Ancient Emperor Hao clasped his hands behind his back and calmly glanced at the evil cultivator.

The evil cultivator panicked instantly. In that moment, Ancient Emperor Hao seemed vast as heaven and earth in his eyes.

What kind of existence was this?

Yin God?

Or Yang God powerhouse?

With the evil cultivator's realm, these were the only possibilities he could imagine.

Then his consciousness was erased. His entire body turned to ash, annihilated in the air.

Ancient Emperor Hao merely glanced—and he was gone.

The citizens of South Chu City were stunned.

The Foundation Establishment cultivator was speechless. What kind of big shot was this?

He had eaten pastries made by such a big shot...

Suddenly.

The Foundation Establishment cultivator's pupils shrank. Above the sky, space tore open. A white-robed youth in a wheelchair appeared within.

“Lu Ping’an, I understand now. Thank you for letting me stay in the Five Phoenix these years.”

Ancient Emperor Hao looked at Lu and said.

Lu leaned back in the Thousand-Blade Chair and nodded slightly.

The next moment, space closed. He paid Ancient Emperor Hao no further attention.

Ancient Emperor Hao looked back at South Chu City and smiled.

He stepped forward and vanished instantly.

The Foundation Establishment cultivator stood frozen. He didn't know Ancient Emperor Hao, but as a cultivator, how could he not recognize the figure who tore space—the Lu Ping'an that Ancient Emperor Hao had spoken of?

“I... I actually witnessed... Young Master Lu of White Jade Capital manifesting in the mortal world!”

...

Ancient Emperor Hao's released aura instantly drew the attention of many Five Phoenix cultivators.

Chai Feng, searching for talents to cultivate into emperor-realm, glanced in the direction of Ancient Emperor Hao's aura burst and smiled. He sensed the killing intent washed away from Ancient Emperor Hao and felt moved.

Tianling Ancient Emperor, Lu Jiulian, and other powerhouses also noticed.

But Ancient Emperor Hao quickly concealed his aura.

Hum...

Ancient Emperor Hao stood in the void. A vertical eye opened on his brow.

Radiant light poured down, seeking a graceful figure.

He stepped forward.

His aura concealed, worldly dust washed away.

He became an ordinary man walking through the bustling night market streets of Great Xuan Dynasty's imperial capital.

His eyes lifted, gazing straight ahead.

Searching through the crowd.

There, a graceful young woman in pale blue gauze, holding an umbrella, walked elegantly through the night market crowd.

She brushed past Ancient Emperor Hao, leaving her fragrance behind.

She took two steps, then stopped. It seemed... a figure deeply engraved in her soul had just flashed by.

She turned abruptly.

But the figure was already gone.

Chapter 606: The Fusion of the Nine Heavens

The night was lonely as snow.

Moonlight fell gently, carrying a light breeze.

Ancient Emperor Hao sat cross-legged in the void, gazing softly at the young woman who had rejoined the night market crowd.

He shook his head and slowly exhaled.

He didn't disturb her, even though he knew she was her reincarnation.

What good would awakening her past-life memories do?

What he planned next was far too dangerous. Better to let her live safely in the Five Phoenix than follow him.

With Lu Ping'an here, the Five Phoenix was safer than the Nine Heavens ever could be.

As long as she was here, Ancient Emperor Hao could rest easy.

"If one day I grow weary of battle, I'll retire to the Five Phoenix, find you—whenever many times you've reincarnated—and live out our remaining years in peace."

Ancient Emperor Hao murmured, silently making his decision.

With his strength, he could always find Shui Ling no matter how many times she reincarnated.

Because he remembered her mark—the imprint etched deep in her soul, unchanging.

Below, the lanterns flickered dimly.

The imperial capital's night market was bustling with life.

Ancient Emperor Hao's gaze was gentle. His time in the Five Phoenix had taught him many things he hadn't understood before.

Once he stood above the clouds—how could he have known the affairs of ordinary mortals?

He couldn't even think from their perspective, from the viewpoint of mortals or weak cultivators.

The sound of breaking air suddenly rang out.

Figures rose into the sky.

This was the imperial capital of Great Xuan Dynasty.

The most prosperous place in the entire Five Phoenix Continent—a mortal imperial city with thousands of years of history.

Ancient Emperor Hao hadn't concealed his aura. Or rather, at his level, simply floating released a terrifying presence.

Lu Julian, the Overlord, Tang Yimo, and other Five Phoenix Golden Immortals surrounded him with grave expressions.

They were on high alert. They recognized Ancient Emperor Hao.

So they were even more cautious—no one dared relax.

This was an unparalleled demon who had sacrificed billions of lives in the Nine Heavens.

A mountain of corpses and sea of blood meant nothing before him.

“You can’t stop me.”

“There’s no need to stop me.”

Ancient Emperor Hao calmly looked at the Five Phoenix Golden Immortals.

“Unless Lu Ping’an himself comes, no one in the Five Phoenix can stop me.”

His words were confident.

But they were also true.

The Overlord, Tang Yimo, and the others fell silent, unsure how to respond.

They believed that even if they fought with everything, they couldn't stop Ancient Emperor Hao.

That was his strength. That was his confidence.

Seeing their grave expressions, Ancient Emperor Hao smiled.

"Give my regards to Young Master Lu..."

Ancient Emperor Hao said.

"I should go."

He shifted from sitting to standing. The moment he rose, the heavens and earth seemed to tremble.

His terrifying aura made every cultivator in the world feel a chill.

The Overlord, Tang Yimo, and others erupted with aura, fortune like vast oceans.

But Ancient Emperor Hao didn't fight. He stepped forward and turned into a streak of light, instantly leaving the Five Phoenix Continent.

He walked through the starry void, step by step, steady and firm.

His gaze swept across the stars. He saw life-bearing planets. He saw the vibrant life stars of the Tianling Clan.

He saw the Holy Clan, who had abandoned the Nine Heavens and fled to the Five Phoenix. Their members were cultivating diligently, striving to enter the Five Phoenix Continent.

Everything brimmed with vitality and life force Ancient Emperor Hao could hardly imagine.

His eyes brightened slightly. In this moment, many thoughts came to him.

He thought of the wrongs he had committed.

"Perhaps... I'm not qualified to rebuild another Nine Heavens..."

Ancient Emperor Hao murmured.

He stepped into the abyss. The corrosive power of the Void Abyss had no effect on him.

A Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouse had a strong enough foundation.

Ancient Emperor Hao returned to the Nine Heavens.

Ruined. Dead silent. Still...

No trace of life. The entire world reeked of decay and rot.

The quiet was unsettling.

Ancient Emperor Hao slowly exhaled.

After experiencing the prosperity of the Five Phoenix, returning to this dead silence filled him with deeper guilt.

Then he turned and stepped back into the abyss.

Standing within the abyss, he spread his arms and slowly pulled, as though trying to close the vast rift.

Fully connecting the Five Phoenix and the Nine Heavens.

Boom!

The vitality of the Five Phoenix surged wildly into the Nine Heavens. Vaguely, Ancient Emperor Hao seemed to see a phoenix spreading its wings.

The dead Nine Heavens began to be assimilated, eventually merging completely with the Five Phoenix.

Ancient Emperor Hao felt an inexplicable sense of relief.

Perhaps integrating the Nine Heavens into the Five Phoenix was better than him rebuilding a world alone.

He had to admit—Lu Ping'an truly had a way.

Rumble rumble.

When the abyss connected the Nine Heavens and Five Phoenix, many cultivators sensed it and looked over in astonishment.

Space tore open. Spatial energy surged.

Lu appeared in white robes, seated calmly in the Thousand-Blade Chair, slightly surprised as he looked at Ancient Emperor Hao sitting in the Nine Heavens.

Ancient Emperor Hao nodded toward Lu.

Then he turned and walked away step by step.

He left the Nine Heavens and stepped into the boundless starry void, sticking to his choice—wandering the stars, slaying god-demons.

Perhaps countless years later, Ancient Emperor Hao would return, find her—whoever many times she had reincarnated—and live a quiet life together.

Boom!

Ancient Emperor Hao's figure vanished into the starry void.

Many were stunned.

Some sighed. Some felt sorrow.

Gu Mangran was now a Golden Immortal powerhouse. Watching Ancient Emperor Hao's departing back, he felt a pang of sadness.

Back then, he had been obsessed with Ancient Emperor Hao's unparalleled talent.

Unfortunately, their paths diverged.

He chose the Five Phoenix and broke with Ancient Emperor Hao.

Now, times had changed.

He was genuinely happy for Ancient Emperor Hao's transformation.

But this somewhat desolate ending left Gu Mangran feeling stifled.

Wandering the starry void, slaying god-demons.

This was redeeming his sins with his own life.

Because this path could be one of no return.

Even someone as strong as Ancient Emperor Hao, now a Heavenly Emperor, could still fall if surrounded by great-path rank god-demons—or if he encountered heaven-god rank god-demons.

The fusion of the Nine Heavens and Five Phoenix was gradual.

It required time.

Lu didn't refuse the addition of the vast Nine Heavens territory.

Spiritual energy poured in. The silly-flying Five Phoenix immortal source flew into the Nine Heavens, slowly transforming it.

The once lifeless Nine Heavens began to revive.

From the birth of the first life, it gradually evolved toward a prosperous world.

Lu expanded the time array to cover the Nine Heavens, accelerating its transformation.

The Five Phoenix's territory grew larger. Ancient Emperor Hao's act of merging the Nine Heavens with the Five Phoenix completed the Five Phoenix's immortal-martial transformation.

Now, the Five Phoenix Great World was truly an immortal-martial great world!

...

Origin Lake, Lakeheart Island.

Ancient Emperor Hao's departure didn't surprise Lu much. Perhaps from the beginning, he had planned this.

His time living as a mortal had only solidified his resolve.

"Tonggu still hasn't returned from bringing ancestral land prodigies to the Five Phoenix for Gold Origin mysteries special training?"

That old daoist really seemed unreliable.

Lu thought for a moment and decided not to wait any longer.

He opened the Gold Origin Star and lifted the pyramid's barrier.

After thinking, Lu entrusted the Gold Origin Star to Nie Changqing and Jing Yue to manage. Their talent in Gold Origin mysteries made them suitable.

News that the Gold Origin Star was now open for mystery comprehension spread instantly.

The Five Phoenix Great World stirred.

Countless powerhouses swarmed.

Unfortunately, Lu restricted entry—only Profound Immortal realm and above could climb the Gold Origin pyramid.

Just like the Fortune Tower's level restrictions.

This restriction caused an uproar among countless cultivators.

Many True Immortals, stimulated, cultivated diligently and rapidly broke through to Profound Immortal in a short time.

The Overlord, Tang Yimo, and others eagerly climbed the Gold Origin pyramid.

As top Golden Immortals, they wouldn't miss this chance. After all, Lu had said that breaking through to Great Luo Immortal required mastering mysteries.

So comprehending mysteries was essential.

After all, which cultivator didn't dream of becoming a Great Luo Immortal?

Even if it was still far away, comprehending mysteries early would make the future easier.

However.

To everyone's shock,

the Overlord and Tang Yimo's performances were disappointing.

Even with Seven Meridians open, Tang Yimo barely reached four thousand stairs before giving up.

His talent in Gold Origin mysteries wasn't even as good as Chai Feng's.

The Overlord did even worse...

His talent in Gold Origin mysteries could only be described as dull.

This stunned the world. After all, the Overlord and Tang Yimo were famous Golden Immortals in the Five Phoenix—yet they performed so poorly.

Many suddenly understood.

No wonder Lu chose Jing Yue and Nie Changqing to compete with Chai Feng. If it had been the Overlord or Tang Yimo, they would have been utterly crushed.

Mystery comprehension depended on talent.

As expected, Young Master Lu's judgment was sharp.

This poured cold water on cultivators who thought they were no worse than Jing Yue and Nie Changqing.

Lu watched with interest.

Five Phoenix cultivators flocked to try the Gold Origin pyramid.

They started full of confidence, but soon wilted like eggplants after frost—their results were too embarrassing.

Those with poor talent were ejected after barely ten stairs.

Dantai Xuan, Sima Qingshan, Kong Nanfei, Bai Qingniao, and other Five Phoenix Golden Immortals also tried, but their talent was worse than Tang Yimo's. The only consolation was that they did better than the Overlord.

Of course, not all Five Phoenix cultivators had poor talent in Gold Origin mysteries.

A few were quite gifted.

For example, Du Longyang and Ye Shoudao—newly advanced Golden Immortals—reached five thousand stairs and mastered one percent of Gold Origin mysteries.

Though weaker in overall strength than the Overlord or Tang Yimo, their talent in Gold Origin mysteries was unexpectedly excellent.

Jing Yue and Nie Changqing continued climbing the pyramid during this time.

Nie Changqing had reached seven thousand nine hundred ninety-eight stairs and was about to attempt eight thousand.

But the closer to the statue at the top, the more terrifying the pressure became. It felt as though the statue was watching him, multiplying the weight.

Every step became incredibly difficult.

Jing Yue refused to fall behind. After breaking through to Golden Immortal, he surged forward, closely following Nie Changqing.

Chai Feng occasionally came to comprehend mysteries, but most of the time he focused on training disciples.

Cultivating thirty emperor-realm cultivators was easier said than done.

After all, emperor-realm wasn't common.

Time passed steadily.

The newly formed immortal-martial Five Phoenix was undergoing a massive leap in overall strength.

Lu saw it clearly. Chai Feng, from the ancestral land, saw it too.

...

Space rippled.

Lu sneaked back to South Chu City and bought another pack of pastries.

After all, he was bored.

With the Five Phoenix steadily improving, spending his days playing chess and teasing Peach Blossom left him restless. Better to buy some pastries and enjoy the taste.

He finished the entire pack.

Lu sighed wistfully. “After Ancient Emperor Hao left, the pastries feel like they’re missing something.”

After finishing, he idled on the island for a while.

Then something occurred to him. He raised his hand and took out the Five Phoenix Bow.

Before, Lu had gathered the Five Phoenix Bow’s power and killed Qiang Huo with one arrow—a prodigy among great-path rank god-demons.

“At that time, drawing Gold Origin mysteries from the adorable little statue caused the arrow’s power to undergo a qualitative change.”

Lu narrowed his eyes.

Without the statue’s power, the Five Phoenix Bow wouldn’t have unleashed such might.

Lu reached out and gently stroked the bow. Cracks covered its surface.

Clearly, the bow's material could no longer withstand arrows of increasing power.

“Looks like when Tonggu returns, I'll need to ask about higher-grade materials... If the Five Phoenix Bow wants to withstand the fusion of multiple mysteries, its material must be upgraded.”

Lu sighed.

His mind moved.

He sent Lu Julian into the ancient starry void to mine rare ores from ancient stars.

But even so, Lu knew that if he unleashed another arrow infused with mysteries—even just one type from the adorable little statue—the Five Phoenix Bow would still crack.

Ordinary ancient star ores wouldn't suffice.

Finding rare materials capable of withstanding mystery energy collisions was essential.

...

Space rippled like water.

Tonggu emerged as though stepping out from the other side of a mirror.

“You all have quite a talent for Gold Origin mysteries. Now that humanity possesses a Beast Ancestor statue—what a blessing. I hope you can master at least thirty percent of the mysteries during this session!”

Tonggu looked at the thirty human geniuses before him and spoke seriously.

Ten of them were headed to the Five Phoenix to comprehend Gold Origin mysteries.

The remaining twenty had a different destination.

The Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue’s mystery comprehension ground was about to open.

These twenty were going to comprehend Fire Origin mysteries.

But Tonggu’s eyes remained grave. This time, the god-demons had given humanity thirty slots...

Normally, humanity only received nine mystery comprehension slots. This time, they were given thirty.

Such a sudden increase didn't bring Tonggu much joy.

“Something unusual is happening...”

“Be cautious. But... this is also an opportunity for humanity!”

Tonggu drew a deep breath.

With a sweep of his sleeve, the universe within enveloped all thirty geniuses.

Then he strode boldly toward the Five Phoenix's coordinates in the ancient starry void.

Tonggu moved domineeringly. As a quasi-saint, unless heaven-god rank god-demons acted, he feared nothing.

After his shameless display on the return trip, god-demons didn't dare monitor or probe him.

They feared Tonggu would find any excuse to kill them.

Tonggu enjoyed the peace and traveled unhindered.

Soon, he reached the Nine Heavens' coordinates.

After erasing his trail, he sneaked into the Nine Heavens like a thief.

Tonggu entered and didn't sense Ancient Emperor Hao's presence. He paused.

"That child... ultimately chose the path of nine deaths and one life?"

Tonggu sighed.

His emotions were complex.

After all, that path was unimaginably perilous.

Before entering the Five Phoenix, Tonggu waved his sleeve. The ten geniuses assigned to comprehend Gold Origin mysteries appeared in the Five Phoenix starry void.

Tonggu led them into the Five Phoenix.

Chai Feng sensed the aura and rushed over excitedly, ignoring his disciples.

At that moment, Lu finished repairing the cracks in the Five Phoenix Bow, stored it, sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair, and warmly welcomed them.

“Little brother!”

“Big brother!”

Lu and Tonggu’s eyes welled up as though they hadn’t seen each other in years.

The geniuses behind Tonggu exchanged glances.

Senior Tonggu was actually arm-in-arm with a young junior? Calling each other brothers?

Chai Feng wasn’t surprised. He quietly informed the geniuses that Lu was a starry saint’s disciple.

Of course, Chai Feng did this out of kindness.

After all, if these ancestral land geniuses acted arrogantly and offended Young Master Lu, it would end badly. Lu was the ruthless one who killed Qiang Huo, a great-path rank god-demon prodigy.

During this time, Chai Feng had heard much about Lu.

The most frequent rumor—Young Master Lu’s pettiness.

After Lu and Tonggu exchanged pleasantries,

Lu led Tonggu and the ancestral land geniuses to the Gold Origin Star.

Jing Yue and Nie Changqing flew over quickly.

“Young Master...”

They bowed.

Lu nodded and introduced Tonggu to them, also informing them of Jing Yue and Nie Changqing's pyramid records.

Tonggu's eyes lit up. He loved human geniuses most.

He didn't blame Lu for opening the pyramid early.

The Beast Ancestor statue belonged to Lu—he had full control.

Lu arranged for Jing Yue and Nie Changqing to guide the ten ancestral land geniuses in comprehending the pyramid.

Then he returned to Lakeheart Island with Tonggu.

"Little brother, I have good news..."

"The Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue's mystery comprehension ground in the Fire Elemental Realm is about to open. This time, humanity has thirty slots."

"I thought I'd leave some for the Five Phoenix. Would you like to go, little brother?"

“But something’s off. The god-demons giving so many slots is suspicious. We must be careful.”

Tonggu sat face-to-face with Lu. Ning Zhao brewed hot wine and filled their cups.

Lu took a sip and paused at Tonggu’s words.

The next moment... his eyes lit up.

Gathering all five Beast Ancestor statues and combining five types of mysteries—this concerned Lu Ping’an’s lifelong happiness.

Now, it seemed the second statue had been located!

Chapter 607: Planting an Eye in the Enemy Camp

“The Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue’s comprehension ground?”

Lu looked at Tonggu, his eyes gleaming.

He had been worrying about how to obtain the other Beast Ancestor statues, but unexpectedly, Tonggu’s trip brought him such crucial news.

In an instant, Lu's attitude toward Tonggu became much warmer.

He had Ning Zhao remove the warmed ordinary plum wine and instead brought out his treasured top-grade Heavenly Immortal Wine.

"Come, come, big brother—have a drink."

Lu poured the Heavenly Immortal Wine. The system-rewarded liquor had a unique, mellow fragrance.

Tonggu's eyes immediately reddened.

This kid was cunning. All that earlier enthusiasm had been superficial. Such fine wine—and he hadn't taken it out before. If Tonggu hadn't brought news of the Fire Origin statue, this kid probably would have kept it hidden forever.

Tonggu took a sip and shook his head with a laugh, looking at Lu.

"You little brat..."

"The Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue's comprehension ground is in the Fire Elemental Realm. The danger goes without saying. And this time, it's not soul-entry—it requires the physical body."

“That’s why I think this isn’t as simple as it seems. So many slots—it’s obviously bait. The god-demons are likely setting a trap to kill me.”

Tonggu said.

As a quasi-saint, his sense of crisis was sharp. To reach such strength under god-demons’ threat, he was no ordinary person.

“But I won’t avoid it. Comprehending Fire Origin mysteries... is that important? Most cultivators in the world rely on the four basic elements, and fire is the foremost...”

“Fire Origin mysteries are the easiest to comprehend and the easiest to master. If we succeed, humanity gains several more Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouses.”

Tonggu said.

Then he sighed, his gaze distant.

“So even if it’s a sea of fire, we have to dive in...”

“We can’t miss this chance.”

“It’s easy for humanity to produce Extreme Emperors, but Heavenly Emperors... far too difficult.”

Lu nodded slightly.

He hesitated to speak.

Tonggu seemed to understand what Lu wanted to ask.

“Little brother, you’d better not go. Last time, your master protected you. As a starry saint, his abilities are vast—he could help you escape even under siege from multiple Elemental Gods. But this time... it won’t be so simple.”

“The loss of the Gold Origin statue is an intolerable humiliation for the god-demons. They’ve definitely marked you...”

“Besides, last time you released your aura in the Gold Origin comprehension ground. With the Elemental Gods’ divine soul power, they can easily identify you.”

“So if you appear in the Fire Elemental Realm, escape will be nearly impossible. And with your master traveling the starry void, he can’t protect you. So don’t go.”

Tonggu shook his head.

He was advising Lu, knowing how tempted he was.

But if Lu went to the Fire Elemental Realm, Tonggu truly had no confidence in keeping him safe.

After all, Lu was tied to a Beast Ancestor statue. The moment he showed himself, the Elemental Gods would attack with fury.

Lu narrowed his eyes and said nothing.

Tonggu was right.

And this time, the system hadn't issued any rewards or missions. If Lu went rashly, even if he survived, borrowing the Fire Origin statue would be incredibly difficult.

Lu couldn't afford to fall. Behind him was the entire Five Phoenix. If something happened to him, the Five Phoenix could collapse. After so much hard work to reach this point, it couldn't be allowed to shatter—that was a price Lu couldn't bear.

So Lu had to ensure his own safety.

He exhaled slowly. Perhaps this was the trouble of being in a high position.

“Little brother, though you can’t go, I still have a few slots left. You can send some outstanding Five Phoenix cultivators with strong fire affinity.”

“Don’t worry—with me there, they’ll return the same way they went. I won’t let them lose limbs.”

Tonggu said seriously.

Lu nodded slightly. Hidden light flickered in his eyes. Deep down, he still had a bold idea.

This time...

Stealing the Fire Origin statue right under the Elemental Gods’ noses would be far harder than last time.

Without system help, he needed to think about how to escape after obtaining it.

This time, the only quasi-saint leading humanity was Tonggu. Against Elemental Gods of similar strength, if Lu was trapped... escape would be nearly impossible.

“Looks like I need a method that’s completely undetectable.”

“At least, make them unable to sense my presence and stay vigilant.”

Lu pondered. Gradually, a vague plan formed in his mind.

Tonggu didn’t disturb him.

After thinking for a day and night, Lu had a strategy.

His mind moved. He summoned Lu Jiulian.

Since they were going to comprehend Fire Origin mysteries, Lu needed to select a few Five Phoenix cultivators with strong fire affinity.

Lu Jiulian had to come.

Besides Lu Jiulian, Lu also called Dantai Xuan. Now at ninth-turn Golden Immortal, Dantai Xuan’s karma surged like vast oceans.

And karma could burn, transforming into seas of karmic fire.

That counted as fire affinity too.

Little Red Dragon was summoned. Fire affinity—Lu immediately thought of the straightforward Little Red Dragon.

Now at Profound Immortal realm, Little Red Dragon could already take human form.

A burly, dark-skinned man with thick brows and honest eyes.

Besides Little Red Dragon, Lu also called Bai Qingniao.

Bai Qingniao cultivated the 《Nine Phoenix Transformation》, a mysterious technique of unknown grade. But Lu had no doubt of its power.

Bai Qingniao's talent in Gold Origin mysteries was average—even poor. But her nine little chicks could all transform into fire phoenixes—innately fire-aligned. Lu could understand her mediocre Gold Origin talent.

So he had high hopes for her talent in Fire Origin mysteries.

Lu didn't select too many people. As Tonggu said, this trip might be extremely dangerous.

So he chose only Lu Jiulian, Dantai Xuan, Little Red Dragon, and Bai Qingniao.

If an emergency arose, fewer people would make escape easier.

Tonggu nodded at Lu's selections.

“This trip, I originally planned to participate in the Fire Origin mystery comprehension with twenty ancestral land geniuses... but I made a detour to the Five Phoenix. To avoid exposure, I need to leave before the god-demons notice my trail.”

Tonggu said.

The situation sounded urgent. Lu didn't waste time.

The Netherworld cracked open.

Dantai Xuan emerged from the passage between the Netherworld and the mortal world, arriving on the Five Phoenix Continent.

With one step, the ninth-turn Golden Immortal appeared on Lakeheart Island.

Lu Jiulian and Little Red Dragon received Lu's summons and rushed over.

Bai Qingniao stood gracefully, sitting sideways on Little Phoenix's back. A basket on her back held densely packed little chicks.

"Young Master Lu."

Bai Qingniao landed before the pavilion.

Little Phoenix transformed into a chick and hid in Bai Qingniao's collar, poking out its head and warily eyeing Tonggu.

This old daoist's gaze toward him was very unfriendly!

"This is Senior Tonggu, a quasi-saint powerhouse from Primordial Immortal Domain in the human ancestral land."

Lu introduced Tonggu and explained the opening of the Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue comprehension ground.

With the precedent of the Gold Origin statue, they weren't completely clueless about mystery comprehension.

Mystery comprehension directly determined whether one could achieve Great Luo Immortal—so it was vital.

“Now that everyone's here, let's go.”

Tonggu smiled.

He didn't waste time. He already faintly sensed god-demons searching for his trail.

After disappearing so long in the starry void, the god-demons were bound to grow suspicious.

“Little brother Lu, when we return victorious, don't hide the good wine anymore!”

Tonggu laughed heartily.

Lu nodded solemnly.

The next moment, Tonggu swept his sleeve. The universe within his sleeve enveloped Lu Jiulian, Bai Qingniao, Dantai Xuan, and Little Red Dragon.

Tonggu nodded to Lu, stepped forward, and vanished.

He tore through space, appearing in the Nine Heavens.

One more step—and he left the Nine Heavens, entering the ancient starry void.

In the distance, several immortal-rank god-demons stealthily spread their divine sense.

Tonggu glared and scared them off. The immortal-rank god-demons fled in panic.

Tonggu hummed a tune and continued on his way.

...

After Tonggu left.

Lu calmed down, brows slightly furrowed.

He summoned Ning Zhao, Ni Yu, and Yi Yue.

“I’m going into seclusion. The three of you stand guard.”

Lu said.

Though surprised that Young Master was secluding himself again, the three women said nothing.

After all, Lu’s seclusion was routine.

Ning Zhao nodded.

The three women left the pavilion.

They positioned themselves in three directions around the island. Their powerful divine souls intertwined, completely sealing Lakeheart Island. No one could approach without permission.

On the pavilion, Lu set up arrays to isolate his aura.

His expression was serious.

Was the Beast Ancestor statue important?

Extremely. Lu could feel that since the Gold Origin statue arrived in the Five Phoenix, it had subtly influenced the world.

One Gold Origin Star, one Gold Origin pyramid—endlessly producing cultivators who comprehended mysteries.

Mystery comprehension was one of the key factors in breaking through to Great Luo Immortal.

The Beast Ancestor statue was so important to all of humanity—let alone the Five Phoenix.

Its presence elevated the world's level.

Most importantly, Lu had no starry saint master. Everything was just Tonggu's assumption.

Lu had simply gone along with it.

Speak human to humans, speak ghost to ghosts—that was professional courtesy.

Lu took out the Spirit Pressure Chessboard.

He slowly exhaled, sat upright in his white robes.

The Spirit Pressure Chessboard grew profound, gradually transforming into a starry sky.

...

On the Gold Origin Star stood the Gold Origin pyramid.

Now, almost every notable powerhouse in the Five Phoenix had tried it.

A few with talent rivaling Jing Yue and Nie Changqing had emerged.

Among them, the most surprising was Jiang Li.

His performance on the pyramid was outstanding. Though slightly below Jing Yue and Nie Changqing, he seemed to have discovered another use for Gold Origin mysteries.

He could gather others' Gold Origin mysteries for himself.

Jiang Li even developed a tactic from this.

He could cultivate an army that comprehended Gold Origin mysteries. Even if each member only comprehended one percent, when gathered through Jiang Li, the power multiplied.

It might even explode to ten percent.

But this was only theoretical.

After all, building such an army was extremely difficult. Having everyone comprehend one percent was even harder.

Unless all these ancestral land geniuses served Jiang Li.

Jiang Li discussed this idea with Gu Mangran.

Gu Mangran thought it was feasible.

But the pity was that Jiang Li was only at peak Profound Immortal. Did he have the qualification—or the boldness—to lead such a powerful force?

The geniuses from the ancestral land were all Great Emperors or Extreme Emperors.

In this world, strength ultimately reigned supreme.

Though Jiang Li shone on the Gold Origin pyramid, his strength was still unimpressive.

“Let’s ask Young Master Lu. If we can keep these ancestral land geniuses in the Five Phoenix, we might really form a powerful Gold Origin army in a short time.”

“Tricking people into staying in the Five Phoenix—Young Master Lu is the best at it. If that fails, we’ll do it ourselves. Back then, I had no attachment to the Five Phoenix either, but in the end, I was tricked into staying.”

Gu Mangran laughed.

The two headed to Lakeheart Island but were stopped by Ning Zhao and the other maids.

“Young Master is in seclusion. If there’s anything, wait until he comes out.”

Ning Zhao said.

Gu Mangran and Jiang Li exchanged glances, both seeing surprise in each other’s eyes. Young Master Lu was in seclusion again?

But their matter wasn’t urgent.

They asked the reason.

Ning Zhao hesitated, then told them that Dantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, Bai Qingniao, and Little Red Dragon had left the Five Phoenix with Tonggu to comprehend Fire Origin mysteries.

When Jiang Li heard this, his face turned pale instantly.

Gu Mangran patted his shoulder comfortingly.

“Don’t worry too much. Bai Qingniao’s strength far surpasses yours now... she likely already has ninth-turn Golden Immortal power. She’s no longer a little girl—she can take care of herself.”

Gu Mangran consoled him.

Jiang Li quickly calmed down, his expression complex.

Indeed, Bai Qingniao had already learned to spread her wings and soar.

“I hope she returns safely...”

Jiang Li’s eyes flickered with complicated emotions.

“If anything happens to Qingniao, I’ll form a Gold Origin army. Even if I exhaust every ounce of strength, I’ll flatten the god-demons!”

“I’ll make them tremble in fear!”

...

On Lakeheart Island, silence reigned.

Lu naturally sensed Jiang Li and Gu Mangran's arrival.

But right now, he had no mind to deal with them.

Though Lu couldn't participate in the Fire Origin mystery comprehension this time, that didn't mean he was helpless.

Lu Jiulian was Lu's clone. Though he now had his own consciousness,

Lu could still connect with Lu Jiulian's divine soul.

In short, Lu Jiulian was Lu's remote viewpoint. Lu could easily see everything happening in the Fire Origin comprehension ground.

In other words, Lu had planted an eye in the enemy camp.

Even...

Lu could comprehend Fire Origin mysteries through Lu Jiulian.

Leaning back in the Thousand-Blade Chair, Lu propped his chin.

His Indestructible Fire Body wasn't yet perfected. If he could comprehend Fire Origin mysteries and use them, he might push the Indestructible Fire Body to perfection.

Even if not, comprehending Fire Origin mysteries would allow him to infuse some corpse worms with it, creating fake Fire Origin corpse worms to lure fire elemental god-demons.

If that worked, Lu would profit greatly.

As for borrowing the Fire Origin statue from the Elemental Gods...

Lu felt it was better to plan long-term. First mark it for future convenience.

After all, with so many Elemental Gods, asking to borrow would obviously be refused.

With this thought.

Lu grew serious.

He rolled up his sleeve and placed a piece, focusing on the chessboard.

If this trip to the Fire Origin comprehension ground was a chess game, Lu's position was very poor.

So he needed to find a way to turn the tables from a disadvantaged position.

From outside the board, change the situation entirely.

Pop!

A piece fell.

Around Lu, Eight Trigrams array words surged powerfully. The scene before him began to change.

A remote viewpoint centered on Lu Jiulian appeared.

The image manifested above the pavilion, as though Lu himself were traveling with the group.

Even Tonggu didn't notice anything unusual.

Though invisibly, one more person seemed to have joined the human team.

Tonggu flew swiftly through the void, tearing space, traveling through spatial turbulence while erasing his trail.

Soon, he reached the comprehension ground.

Boom boom boom!

Terrifying auras from the Elemental Gods erupted.

Especially the Fire Elemental God—his eyes blazed with killing intent.

“Tonggu, you really dare come?!”

“You killed my prized disciple! You dare show your face?!”

The Fire Elemental God's surroundings warped. Spatial turbulence seemed incinerated.

“Old Fire, we're old acquaintances. Why fall out over a mere disciple?”

“We've known each other for so many years. When you and your disciple were acquainted, I was already friends with you. To be blunt—when we were close, your prized disciple was still just a wisp of qi in the chaos, not even born yet.”

Tonggu grinned and waved his hand.

“Don't be so petty. Have a bigger heart, broader mind—that's how you live long!”

Tonggu's words nearly made the Fire Elemental God explode.

If not for the other Elemental Gods holding him back, a quasi-saint-level battle might have erupted early.

The Fire Elemental God endured and snorted coldly. He turned with his new disciple and flew toward the comprehension ground.

The other Elemental Gods followed.

Around them, powerhouses from various races streaked past like meteors.

“Something’s definitely wrong... this trip is truly dangerous.”

The more Tonggu saw the Fire Elemental God’s reaction, the deeper his frown grew. A bad premonition rose in his heart.

But he soon sighed.

No choice. Humanity was weak. Even if it was a sea of fire, they had to dive in.

He swept his sleeve, releasing the universe within.

Twenty ancestral land geniuses appeared, along with Dantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, Little Red Dragon, and Bai Qingniao.

Tonggu’s gaze fell on the four from the Five Phoenix.

“This trip might be a deadly sea of fire. There’s risk of death. If you’re afraid, tell me. I’ll send you back.”

Tonggu said.

He didn't ask the twenty ancestral land geniuses. When they left the ancestral land, they had already prepared to die.

Over the years, countless human geniuses had perished while comprehending mysteries.

Dantai Xuan glared.

“My race and theirs are irreconcilable. In my life as Netherworld Emperor, when have I ever feared anything?”

Dantai Xuan knew about humanity and the starry void's god-demons.

He had spoken with Chai Feng and heard too many stories of human powerhouses dying in the starry void, their blood dyeing foreign lands—for humanity's prosperity.

Humanity's rise from weakness to resisting god-demons was built on the blood of martyrs.

What peaceful times? Only because others bore the burden.

He, Dantai Xuan, rose from nothing. As a governor, he earned his position through bloodshed. He hated invaders most. Now that foreign enemies were at the gates, how could he flee like a coward?

Lu Jiulian naturally wouldn't leave.

Little Red Dragon was straightforward. Father sent him to cause trouble. The trouble hadn't even started—how could he run?

Bai Qingniao shook her head. She wouldn't retreat either. She was no longer the little girl who trembled at killing.

She was a person of the Five Phoenix. There was no reason to back down.

Moreover, Bai Qingniao's eyes trembled slightly. She stared deep into the comprehension ground.

She vaguely felt a powerful pull, making her body shiver uncontrollably.

Perhaps her mysterious technique had some unique connection to the Beast Ancestor statue deep within the comprehension ground?

Chapter 608: The Feeling of Taking the Blame

Tonggu didn't relax. From the moment he entered the Fire Elemental Realm, his mind tensed.

The god-demons' attitude had already revealed everything. This comprehension trip was undoubtedly a nine-deaths-and-one-life endeavor.

Yet Fire Origin mysteries were the easiest to comprehend. For human geniuses, it was the easiest path to Heavenly Emperor realm.

So even knowing the tiger awaited in the mountains, he had to go.

“Let's go. Just be careful.”

Tonggu said.

Then he led the way, turning into streaks of light and heading toward the comprehension ground.

Ancient stars flew past them rapidly—each one a blazing fireball radiating extreme heat.

The moment they entered this realm, the temperature rose noticeably.

Tonggu left the human geniuses behind and flew upward to negotiate with the Elemental Gods and powerhouses from various races.

The rules for each mystery comprehension ground were different.

The previous Gold Origin comprehension had been seated on stars. In Lu's hands, it became a pyramid.

Same principle.

This Fire Origin comprehension wasn't seated on stars either.

Tonggu returned with a grim expression—almost gloomy.

He was now absolutely certain: the god-demons' goal was to slaughter human geniuses.

He even considered retreating—taking the geniuses and leaving this dangerous place.

No wonder the god-demons generously offered so many slots.

They wanted more human geniuses to die.

Around them, countless eyes turned toward the human side.

This time's comprehension rules had already shown the god-demons' attitude.

Many powerhouses' expressions turned playful. Humanity... was probably going to bleed heavily this time.

So many geniuses dying at once would wound humanity deeply.

Perhaps this was the Elemental Gods avenging the humiliation of losing the Gold Origin statue last time.

Though the black-robed figure who caused trouble then didn't seem aligned with humanity.

But he was still human.

Boom boom boom!

Terrifying divine soul auras surged in the void, making Tonggu's expression change slightly.

These auras belonged to heaven-god rank god-demons.

Tonggu had no doubt—if he tried to take the geniuses and leave now, those god-demons would mercilessly attack.

His body trembled slightly—from rage.

Humanity had always been oppressed in the ancient starry void. But this situation filled Tonggu with both helplessness and fury.

Tonggu didn't choose to leave with the geniuses. It was no longer a matter of whether he could leave.

Now there was only one path: let the geniuses enter the comprehension ground.

And he had to think about how to get them out safely afterward.

“You must be careful. The god-demons will definitely set traps to kill you inside...”

“Protect yourselves. Comprehension is secondary—survival is paramount.”

Tonggu sighed and warned seriously.

He hadn't expected the god-demons to be so ruthless.

But a ruthless light flashed in Tonggu's eyes. If anything happened to these human geniuses, he wouldn't let it go. At the very least... he would turn the Fire Elemental Realm upside down and drown it in god-demon blood!

"This time's comprehension ground isn't the star-seated model."

"The Fire Elemental God placed the Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue in the center of a small world. Treat that small world as a secret realm. The statue will release waves of mystery ripples. Gathering the sea of mysteries remains the same."

"But the closer you are to the statue's area, the easier it is to gather the sea of mysteries."

Tonggu said.

"However... in this small world... it's essentially a battlefield. The god-demons can attack you at any time. Remember—survival comes first!"

"In that small world, heaven-god rank god-demons and quasi-saints are forbidden from intervening. So... everything depends on you."

Tonggu's words made the human geniuses' expressions change.

This format was extremely unfavorable to humanity. The previous star-seated model, though unfair, was at least safe.

This time, it was like throwing humanity into the midst of countless god-demons.

In the ancient starry void, humans and god-demons were irreconcilable enemies—let alone in a comprehension ground.

Moreover, gathering a sea of mysteries too prominently could make one a target.

In other words—the more talented someone was at Fire Origin mysteries, the more likely they were to be hunted.

Everyone sighed. The situation was worse than imagined.

“Let's go.”

Seeing the god-demons entering the comprehension ground, Tonggu spoke.

“Be careful. The moment you enter, you might face a terrifying siege.”

His words made everyone’s faces change.

But they had no choice. After bidding Tonggu farewell,

the twenty ancestral land geniuses and the four from the Five Phoenix turned into streaks of light and charged toward the comprehension ground.

Hum hum hum...

This time, heaven-god rank god-demons’ powerful divine souls swept over, verifying the participants’ qualifications to prevent another infiltrator like last time in the Gold Origin ground.

Dantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, Bai Qingniao, and Little Red Dragon were scanned but allowed through.

Tonggu hovered in the void.

In the distance, the five Elemental Gods watched coldly.

“Scan complete. All humans who entered are qualified. Those unqualified have been excluded. This time, no random intruders will slip in.”

“The black-robed figure who stole the Gold Origin statue last time didn’t appear.”

The Gold Elemental God said coldly.

The Gold Origin statue had been stolen right in front of him.

It was a complete slap to his face.

So this time, they changed the format to a small world.

Anyone entering would be screened.

The five Elemental Gods exchanged glances, then looked at Tonggu in the distance with cold killing intent.

Humanity’s rise was too fast—it threatened the god-demons’ dominance in the ancient starry void.

So this time, if the twenty-four human geniuses plus Tonggu were all killed,

it would be a devastating blow to humanity.

Even if it sparked war between humans and god-demons in the starry void—they didn't care.

Humanity... needed harsher suppression!

In the void, powerhouses schemed against each other.

...

Lu sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair. The scene before him showed everything Lu Jiulian saw.

Frowning, Lu felt the difficulty of this comprehension ground.

“These god-demons learned their lesson. They overhauled the comprehension ground and changed the rules—like guarding against thieves.”

Fortunately, unlike last time, Lu didn't sneak in personally.

If he tried the same trick again, it would be much harder.

The god-demons would be instantly alert.

In Lu Jiulian's perspective, the scene before Lu kept changing.

Soon, they entered the teleportation passage.

The transmission felt like stars flowing and constellations shifting.

After a long while,

the twenty ancestral land geniuses and Dantai Xuan's group appeared in a world of flames.

Fire seas roiled everywhere. Surging flames twisted like fire dragons.

But the moment they stabilized,

Dantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, and the others' expressions changed.

Boom!

Above their heads appeared a massive flaming claw.

The giant claw was entirely formed of flames, interwoven with terrifying mystery power.

"Damn it!"

Dantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, Bai Qingniao, and the others' faces changed.

The ancestral land geniuses were furious.

This was the heaven-god rank god-demon responsible for scanning them!

The terrifying claw carried deathly intent.

If they didn't dodge, they'd be crushed to death!

“Scatter! Run!”

The geniuses instantly decided.

The next moment, auras surged. They turned into streaks of light and scattered in all directions as the claw descended!

Dantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, and the other Five Phoenix participants also dispersed.

The tightly united human side was forcibly split apart!

...

In the void, Tonggu saw this and rage erupted.

“You want war?!”

Tonggu’s killing intent surged. He stood surrounded by terrifying spatial mystery fluctuations.

But the Fire Elemental God saw Tonggu's fury and smiled.

"What's the rush? No one's dead—just scattered."

The Fire Elemental God laughed.

If the human geniuses stayed united, they'd be hard to deal with—even if god-demons acted, there would be casualties.

Those qualified for mystery comprehension were geniuses to the god-demons too.

So the god-demons couldn't afford heavy losses either.

But if humanity scattered and couldn't reunite, the stronger individual god-demons could pick them off one by one.

As long as they killed before the humans regrouped.

How could Tonggu not understand their plan?

He was furious—but powerless.

This was humanity's reality. The rules were set by them—so they could only obey.

Tonggu's eyes reddened.

Humanity really needed to grow stronger. One day, they had to make and enforce their own rules!

Of course, right now, Tonggu was worried about those who had entered the small world.

...

The heaven-god rank claw was terrifying. Even the geniuses and Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouses couldn't muster any resistance.

After all, heaven-god rank equaled quasi-saint.

The only consolation was that the claw was casual—not deliberately locking space to kill them.

Still, it intentionally scattered everyone.

The four from the Five Phoenix were also separated.

Dantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, Bai Qingniao, and Little Red Dragon were all split apart.

This small world was strange. Space twisted continuously.

Each twist teleported people unpredictably. Regrouping was nearly impossible.

But one thing was certain: everyone's goal was the statue's location. Heading toward the Beast Ancestor statue was always right.

Lu Jiulian landed. The slender Azure Lotus Sword hung at his waist. His brows furrowed.

"Chaos."

"They scattered us... to pick us off one by one?"

Lu Jiulian exhaled slowly. He was now ninth-turn Golden Immortal, but in this small world comprehension ground, that strength meant little.

Almost everyone here was immortal-rank—some even great-path rank.

The pressure was immense...

“These god-demons planned well. Scatter us, then kill one by one. Easier than fighting us together.”

“And with that heaven-god rank god-demon secretly controlling, god-demons in the comprehension ground will be guided to find isolated human geniuses.”

“For now, the only way is to regroup quickly. Strength in numbers.”

Lu Jiulian’s eyes flickered. Then he tightened his grip on the Azure Lotus Sword and strode forward.

This was a world of flames. Fire seas surged. In the center stood a massive mountain. Atop it loomed the enormous Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue.

Lu Jiulian glanced once and determined the direction, rushing toward the Fire Origin statue.

But deep down, Lu Jiulian felt something strange.

It seemed... someone was following him.

Boom!

As he flew far, the fire sea exploded.

An immortal-rank god-demon had been lying in ambush beneath the flames, waiting to strike when he wasn't paying attention.

Lu Jiulian's brows furrowed.

Now at Extreme Emperor combat power—after all, he was ninth-turn Golden Immortal—he wasn't afraid.

The immortal-rank god-demons qualified to enter the comprehension ground were no weaklings. They had powerful divine abilities.

And the opponent didn't underestimate Lu Jiulian.

Humans and god-demons had restrained each other for countless years. Neither side underestimated the other.

Humanity... had no weaklings!

Boom!

“Die!”

This was a massive creature. Countless flames surged, forming an interwoven net of fire.

The Azure Lotus Sword unsheathed. Sword light slashed out.

In his hand, a seven-colored furious lotus rapidly condensed and was thrown along with the sword light.

A heaven-shaking explosion erupted in the fire sea!

The immortal-rank god-demon withstood the seven-colored lotus explosion and charged forward, clashing with Lu Jiulian above the fire sea.

Flames roiled. Fire seas surged.

The two fought fiercely.

Lu Jiulian had broken through with perfect foundation, so his combat power was solid.

The immortal-rank god-demon grew more shocked the longer they fought.

He hadn't underestimated Lu Jiulian—yet he was still stunned by Lu Jiulian's strength.

Perhaps the battle fluctuations attracted more immortal-rank god-demons.

Lu Jiulian's expression grew colder.

He couldn't die.

He, Lu Jiulian, had family too. If he died here, how heartbroken would they be?

So Lu Jiulian prepared for a fight to the death.

Dong dong dong...

Suddenly, deafening sounds like evening drums and morning bells echoed.

From the center of the small world.

Then the fire sea rippled. Vast Fire Origin mystery waves surged from the Beast Ancestor statue.

“It’s the first wave of Fire Origin mystery ripples!”

The mystery waves swept past.

The god-demons—and Lu Jiulian’s mind—calmed. They began comprehending the Fire Origin mysteries...

The tense battle instantly... quieted.

Not just Lu Jiulian—almost everywhere fell into the same situation.

Lu Jiulian began comprehending Fire Origin mysteries.

He didn't understand why Lu sent him to comprehend fire mysteries—he wasn't skilled in fire-attribute combat.

But he trusted Young Master Lu.

He closed his eyes.

Above Lu Jiulian's head, a sea of mysteries slowly formed. Not just him—the surrounding god-demons did the same.

The atmosphere became strangely calm.

Watching remotely, Lu was surprised—then laughed.

He thought Lu Jiulian was at a disadvantage and was about to intervene.

But unexpectedly... the Beast Ancestor statue's mystery waves forced the god-demons and Lu Jiulian into a temporary truce.

“You may truce with Jiulian, but you haven’t truced with me, Lu Ping’an...”

Lu sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair, eyes gleaming.

He rolled up his sleeve and placed a piece.

A crisp sound echoed on the chessboard.

Hum...

The phantom image beside Lu Jiulian faintly overlapped with Lu Jiulian.

Lu Jiulian continued comprehending.

But Lu controlled Lu Jiulian’s body. Gripping the Azure Lotus Sword, he tiptoed toward a god-demon comprehending with a flushed face.

Puff!

White blade in, red blade out...

The Azure Lotus Sword trembled slightly, carrying Lu's divine soul fluctuation as it erupted.

The immortal-rank god-demon's soul was instantly obliterated. Only the body remained.

Even the Fire Origin mystery sea the god-demon had painstakingly comprehended was completely sucked away by an unseen force.

Pulling out the Azure Lotus Sword, Lu controlled Lu Jiulian's body and systematically killed the other god-demons who had surrounded him.

Though Lu hadn't comprehended Fire Origin mysteries, by devouring these god-demons' mystery seas, he formed his own Fire Origin mystery sea.

Above White Jade Capital pavilion.

Above Lu's head, a sea of mysteries gradually took shape.

Lu's expression turned strange. His eyes gleamed. He never expected to smuggle Fire Origin mysteries out through such a covert method.

Lu felt he had found a low-key way to grow rich.

Looks like he needed Lu Jiulian to attract more god-demons. But wouldn't that be too cruel...

Lu hesitated.

In the comprehension ground.

When the first wave of mystery ripples dissipated.

Lu Jiulian opened his eyes. Above his head, the Fire Origin mystery sea reached eight thousand li in diameter.

But Lu Jiulian didn't focus on that. He frowned. His aura turned sharp and cold.

After all, before comprehending, he had been in a dangerous battle.

God-demons were still surrounding him to kill him!

But soon, seeing the surroundings, Lu Jiulian froze.

He looked at the bloodstained Azure Lotus Sword in his hand, utterly confused.

Around him, the god-demons who had surrounded him were now cold, lifeless corpses.

Their souls shattered. The Fire Origin mystery vortices above their heads had vanished.

What happened?

Looking at the bloodied Azure Lotus Sword, Lu Jiulian fell silent for a long time.

Did he do this?

One sword killing four immortal-rank god-demons.

Why... did he feel no satisfaction at all?

His heart felt extremely empty.

And faintly... he had the feeling of taking the blame.

Chapter 609: The Notorious Lu Jiulian

Lu Jiulian truly felt like he was taking the blame.

But he glanced around—no one else was nearby. He sensed no other presences.

And in this comprehension ground, the Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue's mystery ripples forced everyone into meditation. No other human genius could have helped him kill the enemies.

So...

Lu Jiulian guessed that perhaps... he really had killed these god-demons.

In his sleep?

Did he, Lu Jiulian... have some unknown powerful hidden divine ability?

Narrowing his eyes, a sharp light flickered in Lu Jiulian's gaze.

"No one else is here... then these god-demons were killed by me, Lu Jiulian."

Lu Jiulian sighed and walked among the corpses. The Azure Lotus Sword flicked, severing important parts from the god-demons' bodies.

God-demon corpses were treasures to humans.

Scales could be used for crafting spiritual treasures; certain flesh could be used for medicine or pill refining.

The same logic as god-demons devouring humans for cultivation.

Lu Jiulian didn't store the corpses. After all, this was god-demon territory. Taking even the bodies would make escape impossible.

After all, killing god-demons and not leaving a complete corpse...

The heaven-god rank god-demons would use that as an excuse to crush him.

Exhaling slowly, Lu Jiulian sensed his Fire Origin mystery sea.

“Eight thousand li in diameter... I never expected I, Lu Jiulian, would have such talent in Fire Origin mysteries.”

Lu Jiulian shook his head, filled with emotion.

“Perhaps I, Lu Jiulian, have many talents I haven’t even discovered yet...”

“Could I, Lu Jiulian... be all-rounder?”

He didn’t linger.

Lu Jiulian continued flying toward the depths of the comprehension ground. He discovered that the closer he got to the Beast Ancestor statue, the greater the insight he gained from the mystery ripples.

Moreover, Lu Jiulian knew well that being at the outer edge of this small world, only by reaching the center and narrowing the activity range could he reunite with the human geniuses. Then they could huddle together and form a strong force against the god-demons.

Among the human geniuses, there were still Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouses.

...

The first wave of mystery ripples ended.

Like a circle of waves spreading, the entire small world fell into eerie silence.

In the void above.

The atmosphere was tense.

Tonggu's eyes were cold and filled with killing intent.

He seemed ready to ignite at any moment.

The Elemental Gods appeared much more relaxed.

The heaven-god rank god-demon's strike had been arranged by them. The goal was simple—scatter the human geniuses and pick them off one by one.

Though they forbade heaven-god rank god-demons and human quasi-saints from acting,

this was their territory. The rules were theirs to make.

And that heaven-god rank god-demon hadn't killed any human geniuses—so no violation.

If Tonggu couldn't hold back and attacked, they'd have an excuse to strike, killing all human geniuses and Tonggu himself—dealing humanity a devastating blow!

Even if Tonggu endured, with more god-demons than human geniuses in the comprehension ground, the end result would still be humanity's annihilation.

Moreover, many races in the ancient starry void sided with the god-demons.

Neutral races had no chance to appear here. The god-demons not wiping them out was already merciful.

Humanity had gathered some starry races, but the god-demons didn't care. Those races were weak, their worlds only at early immortal-martial levels.

“Oh? The first wave of mystery ripples is over... let's see the casualties.”

“Tonggu, don't underestimate these mystery ripples. Fire Origin mysteries differ from Gold Origin—very lethal. If comprehension fails, the soul will be burned away...”

The Fire Elemental God looked at the grim-faced Tonggu and smiled.

This wave, humanity must have suffered heavy losses.

Hum...

Before Tonggu, the Elemental Gods, and many heaven-god rank god-demons, a map appeared.

Stars dotted it.

Tonggu looked at the positions representing human geniuses and exhaled. More survived than expected.

“First wave of mystery ripples ended. Humanity lost one. God-demons lost six.”

The heaven-god rank god-demon overseeing the comprehension ground sent the report through divine soul fluctuation.

The god-demon’s tone seemed hesitant...

After all... this report was somewhat embarrassing.

In the void.

The atmosphere became strange.

Though humanity lost one—painful for Tonggu—

Seeing god-demons lose six, Tonggu froze. A wave of emotion surged in his heart.

This report truly showed humanity's unyielding roar in desperation.

The next moment, Tonggu suppressed his sorrow and let out a mocking laugh.

"Oh? God-demons lost six? Looks like... your chosen batch of god-demons isn't up to par."

Tonggu's face twitched, perfectly portraying his infuriating demeanor. The mockery in his laughter was completely unrestrained.

The Elemental Gods fell silent.

Around them, the void twisted continuously, faintly tearing open as spatial turbulence surged.

They were furious. They were enraged.

Of course, also deeply shocked.

How could this be?!

Humanity only lost one?

What happened to picking them off one by one?!

And Tonggu's words stabbed like a thorn into their hearts, pushing their emotions toward explosion.

Tonggu was frantically messing with the Elemental Gods' mentality.

If they wouldn't let him live well, Tonggu wouldn't miss any chance to make them suffer.

“What happened?!”

The Fire Elemental God asked coldly.

The heaven-god rank god-demon overseeing the ground remained silent for a long time.

Then he relayed the report.

“Great-path rank god-demon Fire Eye killed one human Extreme Emperor genius.”

“Human Extreme Emperor Dantai Xuan killed one immortal-rank god-demon.”

“Human Heavenly Emperor Luo Yang killed one immortal-rank god-demon.”

“Human Extreme Emperor Lu Jiulian killed twelve immortal-rank god-demons.”

Tonggu and the five Elemental Gods’ gazes fell on the screen. Words appeared.

The report displayed vividly.

“Who is this Lu Jiulian?!”

The Fire Elemental God exploded in rage!

Four of the six dead god-demons fell to this person.

Tonggu was stunned for a long time. He never expected two of the four from the Five Phoenix to perform so outstandingly.

He naturally knew the human Heavenly Emperor Luo Yang—no weaker than Chai Feng. Killing one god-demon was normal.

But what was with Lu Jiulian?

Even Tonggu drew a sharp breath. Impossible. From what he knew of Lu Jiulian, the child’s strength could at most kill one god-demon.

After all, the immortal-rank god-demons qualified to enter this comprehension ground weren’t ordinary wanderers like Evil Eye or Kui Si. Each was an elite from the Elemental Realm!

The Fire Elemental God swept his sleeve. The screen vanished.

“Send people to surround and kill this Lu Jiulian! If he doesn’t die... he’ll become a grave threat to our god-demon race!”

“Such talent—must be eliminated!”

The Fire Elemental God roared.

“Understood.”

The heaven-god rank god-demon understood the gravity. So...

Ignoring Tonggu’s suppressed killing intent, he acknowledged the Fire Elemental God and departed.

Back in the comprehension ground.

He guided one great-path rank god-demon after another focused on comprehension.

“What? Humanity produced an unparalleled genius Lu Jiulian? He killed sixteen immortal-rank god-demons?!”

A great-path rank god-demon opened his eyes, shock flashing within.

What a fearsome reputation!

Killing twelve immortal-rank god-demons in one go—did he have cross-rank combat power?

Moreover, Lu Jiulian’s mystery sea reached thirty thousand li in diameter.

Even among these great-path rank god-demons, the most outstanding only had fifteen thousand li.

This Lu Jiulian... must die!

Rumble rumble!

In the comprehension ground, winds and clouds shifted.

One great-path rank god-demon after another stopped comprehending mysteries. With mystery seas above their heads, they flew toward the coordinates given by the heaven-god rank god-demon.

Many immortal-rank god-demons also received the message.

They drew sharp breaths.

Human Extreme Emperor Lu Jiulian—fearsome reputation.

If immortal-rank god-demons encountered him, do not engage—flee immediately.

Because of Lu Jiulian's fearsome reputation, the god-demons who planned to pick off humans one by one abandoned the pursuit and gathered together.

After all, against such a fearsome figure, fewer than twenty immortal-rank god-demons might get wiped out!

This also gave the pressured human geniuses some breathing room.

While all the god-demons' attention was drawn to Lu Jiulian's reputation,

no one noticed...

A young woman riding a fire phoenix had unknowingly crossed mountains and fire seas, arriving before the Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue.

Chapter 610: I, Lu Jiulian, Have Capsized

Lu Jiulian truly felt like he was taking the blame.

But he looked around—no one else was present. He sensed no other auras.

In this comprehension ground, the Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue's mystery ripples forced everyone into meditation. No other human genius could have helped him kill the enemies.

So...

Lu Jiulian concluded that he must have killed these god-demons himself.

Sleep-killing?

Did he, Lu Jiulian... possess some unknown, immensely powerful hidden divine ability?

Narrowing his eyes, a sharp glint flashed in Lu Jiulian's gaze.

"No one else is here... then these god-demons were slain by me, Lu Jiulian."

Lu Jiulian sighed and walked among the corpses. The Azure Lotus Sword flicked, severing vital parts from the god-demons' bodies.

God-demon corpses were treasures to humans.

Scales could be forged into spiritual treasures; certain flesh could be used for medicine or pills.

The same logic as god-demons devouring humans for cultivation.

Lu Jiulian didn't store the corpses. This was god-demon territory. Taking even the bodies would make escape impossible.

After all, killing god-demons and not leaving complete corpses...

The heaven-god rank god-demons would use that as an excuse to crush him.

Exhaling slowly, Lu Jiulian sensed his Fire Origin mystery sea.

“Eight thousand li in diameter... I never expected I, Lu Jiulian, would possess such talent in Fire Origin mysteries.”

Lu Jiulian shook his head, filled with emotion.

“Perhaps I, Lu Jiulian, have many talents I haven’t yet discovered...”

“Could I, Lu Jiulian... be an all-rounder?”

He didn’t linger.

Lu Jiulian continued flying toward the depths of the comprehension ground. He discovered that the closer he got to the Beast Ancestor statue, the greater the insight from the mystery ripples.

Moreover, Lu Jiulian knew well that being at the outer edge of this small world, only by reaching the center and narrowing the activity range could he reunite with the human geniuses. Then they could huddle together and form a strong force against the god-demons.

Among the human geniuses, there were still Heavenly Emperor-level powerhouses.

...

The first wave of mystery ripples ended.

Like waves spreading outward, the entire small world fell into eerie silence.

In the void above.

The atmosphere was tense.

Tonggu's eyes were cold and filled with killing intent.

He seemed ready to ignite at any moment.

The Elemental Gods appeared much more relaxed.

The heaven-god rank god-demon's strike had been arranged by them. The goal was simple—scatter the human geniuses and pick them off one by one.

Though they forbade heaven-god rank god-demons and human quasi-saints from acting,

this was their territory. The rules were theirs to make.

And that heaven-god rank god-demon hadn't killed any human geniuses—so no violation.

If Tonggu couldn't hold back and attacked, they'd have an excuse to strike, killing all human geniuses and Tonggu himself—dealing humanity a devastating blow!

Even if Tonggu endured, with more god-demons than human geniuses in the comprehension ground, the end result would still be humanity's annihilation.

Moreover, many races in the ancient starry void sided with the god-demons.

Neutral races had no chance to appear here. The god-demons not wiping them out was already merciful.

Humanity had gathered some starry races, but the god-demons didn't care. Those races were weak, their worlds only at early immortal-martial levels.

“Oh? The first wave of mystery ripples is over... let's see the casualties.”

“Tonggu, don’t underestimate these mystery ripples. Fire Origin mysteries differ from Gold Origin—very lethal. If comprehension fails, the soul will be burned away...”

The Fire Elemental God looked at the grim-faced Tonggu and smiled.

This wave, humanity must have suffered heavy losses.

Hum...

Before Tonggu, the Elemental Gods, and many heaven-god rank god-demons, a map appeared.

Stars dotted it.

Tonggu looked at the positions representing human geniuses and exhaled. More survived than expected.

“First wave of mystery ripples ended. Humanity lost one. God-demons lost six.”

The heaven-god rank god-demon overseeing the comprehension ground sent the report through divine soul fluctuation.

The god-demon's tone seemed hesitant...

After all... this report was somewhat embarrassing.

In the void.

The atmosphere became strange.

Though humanity lost one—painful for Tonggu—

Seeing god-demons lose six, Tonggu froze. A wave of emotion surged in his heart.

This report truly showed humanity's unyielding roar in desperation.

The next moment, Tonggu suppressed his sorrow and let out a mocking laugh.

“Oh? God-demons lost six? Looks like... your chosen batch of god-demons isn't up to par.”

Tonggu's face twitched, perfectly portraying his infuriating demeanor. The mockery in his laughter was completely unrestrained.

The Elemental Gods fell silent.

Around them, the void twisted continuously, faintly tearing open as spatial turbulence surged.

They were furious. They were enraged.

Of course, also deeply shocked.

How could this be?!

Humanity only lost one?

What happened to picking them off one by one?!

And Tonggu's words stabbed like a thorn into their hearts, pushing their emotions toward explosion.

Tonggu was frantically messing with the Elemental Gods' mentality.

If they wouldn't let him live well, Tonggu wouldn't miss any chance to make them suffer.

“What happened?!”

The Fire Elemental God asked coldly.

The heaven-god rank god-demon overseeing the ground remained silent for a long time.

Then he relayed the report.

“Great-path rank god-demon Fire Eye killed one human Extreme Emperor genius.”

“Human Extreme Emperor Dantai Xuan killed one immortal-rank god-demon.”

“Human Heavenly Emperor Luo Yang killed one immortal-rank god-demon.”

“Human Extreme Emperor Lu Jiulian killed twelve immortal-rank god-demons.”

Tonggu and the five Elemental Gods' gazes fell on the screen. Words appeared.

The report displayed vividly.

“Who is this Lu Jiulian?!”

The Fire Elemental God exploded in rage!

Four of the six dead god-demons fell to this person.

Tonggu was stunned for a long time. He never expected two of the four from the Five Phoenix to perform so outstandingly.

He naturally knew the human Heavenly Emperor Luo Yang—no weaker than Chai Feng. Killing one god-demon was normal.

But what was with Lu Jiulian?

Even Tonggu drew a sharp breath. Impossible. From what he knew of Lu Jiulian, the child's strength could at most kill one god-demon.

After all, the immortal-rank god-demons qualified to enter this comprehension ground weren't ordinary wanderers like Evil Eye or Kui Si. Each was an elite from the Elemental Realm!

The Fire Elemental God swept his sleeve. The screen vanished.

"Send people to surround and kill this Lu Jiulian! If he doesn't die... he'll become a grave threat to our god-demon race!"

"Such talent—must be eliminated!"

The Fire Elemental God roared.

"Understood."

The heaven-god rank god-demon understood the gravity. So...

Ignoring Tonggu's suppressed killing intent, he acknowledged the Fire Elemental God and departed.

Back in the comprehension ground.

He guided one great-path rank god-demon after another focused on comprehension.

“What? Humanity produced an unparalleled genius Lu Jiulian? He killed sixteen immortal-rank god-demons?!”

A great-path rank god-demon opened his eyes, shock flashing within.

What a fearsome reputation!

Killing twelve immortal-rank god-demons in one go—did he have cross-rank combat power?

Moreover, Lu Jiulian’s mystery sea reached thirty thousand li in diameter.

Even among these great-path rank god-demons, the most outstanding only had fifteen thousand li.

This Lu Jiulian... must die!

Rumble rumble!

In the comprehension ground, winds and clouds shifted.

One great-path rank god-demon after another stopped comprehending mysteries. With mystery seas above their heads, they flew toward the coordinates given by the heaven-god rank god-demon.

Many immortal-rank god-demons also received the message.

They drew sharp breaths.

Human Extreme Emperor Lu Jiulian—fearsome reputation.

If immortal-rank god-demons encountered him, do not engage—flee immediately.

Because of Lu Jiulian's fearsome reputation, the god-demons who planned to pick off humans one by one abandoned the pursuit and gathered together.

After all, against such a fearsome figure, fewer than twenty immortal-rank god-demons might get wiped out!

This also gave the pressured human geniuses some breathing room.

While all the god-demons' attention was drawn to Lu Jiulian's reputation,

no one noticed...

A young woman riding a fire phoenix had unknowingly crossed mountains and fire seas, arriving before the Fire Origin Beast Ancestor statue.