

The Gate 1031

Chapter 1031: Can't Leave

He couldn't let this Dao Essence Holy Emperor do anything else. Therefore, Ning Cheng raised his hand and ripped apart the sound restriction in the room, "Junior Apprentice Sister Kong Ning, It's me. I've disguised myself."

"Senior Apprentice Brother Ning?" When Kong Ning heard Ning Cheng's voice, she immediately recognised Ning Cheng. Then, she understood that something must have happened to Ning Cheng, which was why he was impersonating a disciple of her River Luo Sacred Sect.

"That's right, it's me. I was ordered to investigate the situation and was about to rush back to the sect. I didn't expect to meet you here; what a fortunate thing." Ning Cheng didn't remove his disguise as long as Kong Ning knew what he meant.

Yu Xing didn't expect Ning Cheng to be a disciple of the River Luo Sacred Sect, especially since he knew that Ning Cheng had disguised himself. But now, with Kong Ning addressing this cultivator 'Senior Apprentice Brother', how could he still be suspicious of Ning Cheng being a disciple of the River Luo Sacred Sect?

"Junior Apprentice Sister Kong Ning, I have an urgent matter that needs me to return to the sect, but right now, the teleportation array to the Grand Essence Domain isn't open, so I can't leave." Ning Cheng immediately spoke up. He believed that closing the teleportation array was related to City Lord Yu in front of him.

Kong Ning didn't even ask Ning Cheng about this urgent matter and could only look at Yu Xing.

Yu Xing spoke up with an embarrassed look, "That's because when we established the teleportation array, Cheerful Treasure Chamber of Commerce had also lent us their strength. Now that the Cheerful Treasure Chamber of Commerce asked us to close the teleportation array for three months, I had to give in to that favour. Fortunately, we're less than half a month away from that three-month limit; otherwise...."

Ning Cheng sneered in his heart. Kindness? Isn't it an exchange of benefits?

"City Master Yu, although this matter might be very difficult for you, I have no choice. I must bring the findings back to the sect in the shortest time. I would like to ask for Patriarch Yu's understanding of this inconvenience."

After Ning Cheng politely said that, he also took out a jade box and handed it to Yu Xing with both hands, "City Lord Yu, consider this as a token of the sect's appreciation for your troubles."

After confirming that Ning Cheng was really from the River Luo Sacred Sect, Yu Xing was internally deliberating on what to do. Offending the River Luo Sacred Sect wasn't a wise thing to do. Don't look at the fact that the River Luo Sacred Sect was far away from here; once something happened, people would know about it very quickly.

But then his spiritual consciousness unconsciously landed on Ning Cheng's jade box. An instant later, he hurriedly reached out to take it, "Then, many thanks, fellow daoist Ning."

Ning Cheng's jade box didn't have a forbidden restriction, so he could clearly see a Loyal Heart Spirit Zoysia, a Dao Transformation Dao Fruit, resting inside it. What's more, it was something that he needed the most. Even if he took a step back and put it up for auction instead of using it, it would still fetch him a lot of spirit crystals.

"Then, let me accompany Senior Apprentice Brother Ning." Kong Ning immediately spoke up.

After saying this, she looked at Ning Cheng. Ning Cheng should also be aware of her reasons for coming here. If Ning Cheng knew about the situation of the Five-elements Star, she could also go back with him. Even if Ning Cheng didn't know about it, she could at least fill in the gaps.

Ning Cheng, fortunately, understood Kong Ning's meaning. Therefore, after Kong Ning finished speaking, he quickly said, "It would be best if Junior Apprentice Sister Kong Ning could also accompany me back."

Yu Xing put away the jade box, smiled and said, "The two of you belong to the River Luo Sacred Sect and naturally are not within the scope of the ban on teleportation arrays. Please follow me."

Ning Cheng felt overjoyed and quickly sent a message to Kong Ning, "How many spirit crystals does it take for a one-way trip?"

Kong Ning immediately replied, "Disciples of the top ten sects pay half price. It would cost three million spirit crystals for the two of us."

Ning Cheng sighed in his heart; it was still so expensive. He took out a ring, handed it to Yu Xing, and said, "City Master Yu, please find the required spirit crystals for Junior Apprentice Sister and me for the teleportation."

Yu Xing's spiritual consciousness swept in and found that it contained six million spirit crystals, and he quickly said, "You are disciples of River Luo Sacred Sect, only half price."

Ning Cheng pushed the ring back into Yu Xing's hand and said, "This time, because of the urgency and also to reduce City Lord Yu's trouble, we should pay the full price."

With this, Yu Xing's view of Ning Cheng changed greatly. Not many disciples came here from the big ten, but hardly any were as polite as Ning Cheng.

The three of them had just reached outside the teleportation tower when a red light fell and landed in Yu Xing's hand.

It was a message sword. Yu Xing's spiritual consciousness swept into the message sword, but his face didn't show any change in expression. Instead, he put away the message sword, smiled and said to Ning Cheng and Kong Ning. "I have to take care of a few things; it will need half an hour at most. You guys can wait here for a while."

Seeing Yu Xing walking away, Ning Cheng's face turned ugly. He guessed that the message sword should have something to do with Deacon Xia. Since it had something to do with Deacon Xia, it had something to do with him.

Kong Ning also noticed Ning Cheng's anxiousness and asked through a voice transmission, "What happened?"

Ning Cheng sent back another voice transmission and asked, “Are you going to investigate the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura on the Five-elements Star?”

Kong Ning nodded, “Yes, I just finished shaping my dao and stabilising my cultivation. So I purposefully took a mission away from home to train myself. But because it was forbidden to go out of this place for three months, I didn’t care about it too much and stayed here for more than a month.”

Ning Cheng replied in a low voice, “No need to go over there. The Five-elements Star is a trap. A powerful essence spirit is lying in wait in the depths of the Five-elements Star, and it wants to recover its strength by using the spiritual roots, foundation, and dao rhythms of cultivators that enter the Five-elements Star. But because too many people entered the Five-elements Star this time, that essence spirit slipped up, causing many to grab the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura and escape.”

“It really has the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura?” Kong Ning almost shouted in shock. She came from a big sect, so she naturally knew how precious the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura was.

Ning Cheng affirmed, “It’s true. If not for unexpected problems, I’m afraid none of the people who went to the Five-elements Star would have survived.”

Ning Cheng’s words were falsely exaggerated. After all, that essence spirit slipped up and made such a mess because Ning Cheng’s Sea of Consciousness was too strong and also because of the existence of the Dark Nether Spirit Devouring Scroll. Without the Starry Sky Sea of Consciousness, Ning Cheng couldn’t have survived even if he had fully mastered the Dark Nether Spirit Devouring Scroll.

Because of his involvement, it interrupted that essence spirit’s solidification and forced it to consume most of its strength to attack his Sea of Consciousness. It allowed others to grab the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura and even escape. Otherwise, based on that essence spirit’s plan, no one who entered the Five-elements Star would have escaped.

In addition, there was another reason; Ning Cheng had set up a teleportation array before entering the Five-elements Star. He couldn’t have escaped without the teleportation array, even if Ning Cheng decided to abandon the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura. Likewise, if the essence spirit hadn’t formed that large hand to catch Ning Cheng in anger, forcing it to consume another major chunk of energy, the rest of the cultivators who entered the Five-elements Star would still not have been able to leave.

So many impossible things had come together because of Ning Cheng. One could even say that the fellow on the Five-elements Star was too unlucky.

“Then, what’s the matter with you?” Kong Ning asked again. The Ning Cheng she knew rarely had such an anxious expression as now, so she couldn’t help but ask for clarification.

“Some rumours are flying around that I might have some Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura, and it ended up on the ears of a Dao Essence Holy Emperor from Cheerful Treasure Chamber of Commerce. It resulted in the Dao Essence Holy Emperor asking City Lord Yu to block the teleportation array and wait for him to arrive. If I hadn’t met you, I’m afraid I would have had to force a fight with that Dao Essence Holy Emperor.”

There was another sentence that Ning Cheng didn’t say. That is, the message sword made Ning Cheng’s sixth sense scream ‘run’.

Hearing Ning Cheng's words, Kong Ning's voice transmission faltered, "You are still so bold. If I wasn't here, wouldn't you have died?"

Ning Cheng laughed, "I wouldn't have died, but I would have been forced to use my ace cards. In the end, I'm afraid I would have been forced to head into the Grand Essence Sea."

Before meeting Kong Ning, Ning Cheng had already readied the bead that had formed after chopping off those foreign strands of spiritual consciousness. With that bead, even if Yu Xing was a late-stage Dao Essence cultivator, he wouldn't be able to stop him from leaving, not to mention right now, when Yu Xing was only slightly stronger than Deacon Xia. As for the defensive formation around the Soul Sea Territorial City, it also wouldn't be able to stop him. However, going that route would guarantee him not participating in the Five Grand Realms' Alchemy Competition, as he would be forced to flee into the Grand Essence Sea.

However, he also didn't want to let go of the bead, as it could save his life at a critical time. Using it casually like this, Ning Cheng naturally was unwilling to do so.

Ning Cheng took out two jade bottles and handed them to Kong Ning. "There are some cultivation pills here, along with a Strange Crossing Dao Pill. You may need it in the future when you want to reach the Dao Raising Realm."

Kong Ning knew that Ning Cheng was a Dao Essence Pill Sage. But she still blushed and rejected Ning Cheng reluctantly, "I haven't even returned the points I borrowed from you last time; how can I take your stuff again?"

Ning Cheng stuffed the bottle into Kong Ning's hand, "I'm afraid I won't be able to leave through the teleportation array. If I'm not wrong, the message sword Yu Xing received just now should be related to me; it most likely came from Deacon Xi of the Cheerful Treasure Chamber of Commerce. City Lord Yu will still take action even if I was an actual River Luo Sacred Sect disciple."

"He wouldn't dare; if he dared to make a move against my River Luo Sacred Sect, he'd be dead." Kong Ning spoke with the confidence of a disciple of a large sect. The statement wasn't nonsense; if someone knew that they were a disciple of the River Luo Sacred Sect and still dared to make a move, they would die a burial-less death.

Don't look at Ning Cheng taking out Guo Hao; after all, Ning Cheng had been on the side of reason at that time. Plus, he had also escaped too fast; otherwise, how could Ning Cheng still be alive right now?

Ning Cheng was about to speak when he heard someone say from the side, "Kong Ning, who dares to make a move against my River Luo Sacred Sect's disciples?"

Only then did Kong Ning see three more people walking out from the teleportation tower. She quickly went forward and bowed, "Kong Ning greets teacher. How come the teacher came here?"

When Ning Cheng saw the three people come over, he understood that things had worsened. The female cultivator Kong Ning called 'teacher' was a Dao Essence powerhouse. Ning Cheng also knew the other two, and both were people he wasn't on good terms with; one was Tong Mingzi, and the other was Shan Yaocen.

Damn it! Ning Cheng had enough confidence to walk away if facing one Dao Essence Holy Emperor. But he had no chance at facing several Dao Essence Holy Emperors.

Ning Cheng's spiritual consciousness forcibly broke through the restrictions and swept out only to see Yu Xing coming this way, with Deacon Xia tagging right behind him.

"Dao Friend Kong Ning, I'll take my leave first. By the way, you can help me get back my stuff when the time comes." Ning Cheng turned around and left after he finished speaking. He couldn't use the teleportation formation anymore, which meant he was only left with one way. That is, quickly leaving the Soul Sea Territorial City and entering the Grand Essence Sea.

Kong Ning understood what Ning Cheng was talking about. It was the thing he had given to Yu Xing. Now that the two Dao Essence Holy Emperors from River Luo Sacred Sect were here, it would be easy to get that item back from Yu Xing. Unfortunately, even if she was anxious, she couldn't help Ning Cheng at all at this moment.

"Help me stall Yu Xing and that Deacon Xia by his side for some time." When Ning Cheng's back disappeared, Kong Ning received a voice transmission from Ning Cheng.

Chapter 1032: Crazy Sea Demons

"Dao Friend Luo, Dao Friend Tong Ming; the two of you coming to my Soul Sea Territorial City makes this Yu Xing really happy. Please come to my humble City Lord's mansion for a cup of tea." Yu Xin recognised Tong Ming and Kong Ning's teacher as soon as he came.

"Oh, could it be that City Lord Yu only welcomes people from the River Luo Sacred Sect and not us...." Several more people walked out of the teleportation tower again as he spoke.

Yu Xing immediately recognised that all these people were Dao Essence powerhouses from the top ten sects. He quickly cupped his fists and extended the invite to them as well.

Kong Ning had been paying attention to Deacon Xia since Yu Xing arrived. Seeing that Deacon Xia showed intentions to back off when Yu Xing greeted them, she hurriedly called out, "This Dao Friend, please stay. Why are you backing away from welcoming our River Luo Sacred Sect? Could it be that you are the one rumoured to have plans against me?"

"What? You dare to make a move on my disciple?" Kong Ning's teacher looked like a genteel woman; however, she was famous for having an extremely irritable temperament. Therefore, after hearing Kong Ning's words, she suddenly stepped forward in anger, with such a tremendous momentum that it fully suppressed Deacon Xia.

She had been in retreat for many years and wasn't much involved in guiding Kong Ning. One could even say that Kong Ning was only her disciple in name and received no tutelage from her. But now that Kong Ning relied on her own efforts to reach Dao Sculpting, she naturally felt sorry for her and started to care for Kong Ning in her heart.

Deacon Xia felt his heart almost bursting from anxiousness. Previously, he heard from Yu Xing that Kong Ning suddenly had a Senior Apprentice Brother, but now he didn't see Kong Ning's Senior Apprentice

Brother beside her. Ning Cheng might be able to silently break through the spiritual consciousness shielding restriction here, but he could not do so. After all, even if Ning Cheng got discovered, he could still try to escape as he didn't have any identity. As the Deacon-in-charge of the Sea Sky Pavillion, once he was discovered, he would have to forcibly break the restrictions in the Soul Sea Territorial City, which would end up creating a massive diplomatic dispute.

Yu Xing naturally didn't want to see the people from River Luo Sacred Sect get into conflict with Sea Sky Pavillion here. Therefore, he quickly changed the subject and asked, "Dao Friend Kong Ning, where is your Senior Apprentice Brother? Since he is also from River Luo Sacred Sect, let's all go and relax at my City Lord's mansion. Now that Dao Friend Luo and Dao Friend Tong Ming just arrived here, you're not going to rush back to the sect, right?"

Naturally, Yu Xing did this on purpose. He vaguely felt something was wrong with Ning Cheng after listening to Deacon Xia's words and observing his actions.

"City Master Yu he had something urgent to attend to. By the way, he said that since you can't help him with the things he gave you before, he asked you to give them to me for now." Kong Ning quickly spoke up.

Faced with Kong Ning's request, Yu Xing didn't dare to disagree, and he could only return Ning Cheng's ring to Kong Ning. He felt regretful. He should have ignored the message sword and sent the two away before saying anything. It cost him a dao fruit and tens of thousands of spirit crystals for nothing.

"Oh, someone else came here from my River Luo Sacred Sect? Who is it?" As an old monster, Tong Ming felt slightly puzzled once he heard the vague answer from Kong Ning.

When Yu Xing heard Tong Ming's words, coupled with Deacon Xia's hint from earlier, he became even more suspicious and said, "Previously, a Daoist Ning came here and said he was from River Luo Sacred Sect. He wanted to take the teleportation array to the Grand Essence Domain. Later, Dao Friend Kong Ning also confirmed that he was from River Luo Sacred Sect....."

Kong Ning spoke with an ugly expression, "City Lord Yu, you shouldn't talk nonsense. When did I say that he belonged to my River Luo Sacred Sect? He's just someone I know, and I always call him Senior Apprentice Brother."

Yu Xing's mouth opened in surprise, and then he recalled what Kong Ning had said earlier. It was true that Kong Ning didn't say that the cultivator surnamed Ning was from River Luo Sacred Sect but only called him Senior Apprentice Brother. But despite knowing that Kong Ning's words and behaviour made him misunderstand that the cultivator surnamed Ning belonged to the River Luo Sacred Sect, Yu Xing couldn't do anything.

When Deacon Xia heard this, he immediately understood it wasn't good news and no longer cared about offending others. He apologised, "I suddenly remembered something urgent; Friends, please excuse me for a moment; I will come back to make amends once I finish my business."

After saying this, Deacon Xia disappeared with a flash of his body.

Watching Deacon Xia disappear, Kong Ning could only sigh in secret. She could only help this much; she didn't have the strength to physically stop Deacon Xia.

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Ning Cheng acted without hesitation this time. Quickly arriving at the Soul Sea Territorial City entrance, he immediately activated the Twin Wings of the Heavenly Clouds and forcibly rushed out. By the time the four cultivators guarding the entrance reacted, Ning Cheng had long since disappeared without a trace.

Therefore, by the time Deacon Xia rushed to the exit of the defensive formation, Ning Cheng had already entered the depths of the Grand Essence Sea.

Deacon Xia's expression turned gloomy. He understood that there was no way to chase Ning Cheng anymore. He also had no way to vent his anger, as the Soul Sea Territorial City wasn't his.

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Several days later, Ning Cheng finally slowed down a bit. Just as Deacon Xia's expression had soured, Ning Cheng also felt equally down.

Crossing the Grand Essence Sea, he couldn't tell how many years it would take to reach the Grand Essence Domain. Not to mention participating in the Five Grand Realms' Alchemy Competition, he might not even be able to rescue Sheng Houtian in time.

After all, Sheng Houtian got poisoned by the Ripple Bone Poison, most likely, because of him. The only consolation was that Sheng Houtian was a full-circle Dao Essence powerhouse, so his detoxification could be delayed by a few years. After all, no matter how powerful the Ripple Bone Poison was, it shouldn't be able to kill a Dao Essence Holy Emperor in a few years. Plus, Sheng Houtian being a Dao Transformation Pill Sage, should also count for something, right?

But now that he was forced to cross the Grand Essence Sea, there would be no way to ensure that the poison would be detoxified from Sheng Houtian in time.

Ning Cheng felt helpless; he should have given Ba Meng one of the detoxification pills. After all, he had talked to Ba Meng and had requested him to do one thing for him. In fact, that thing was to help Sheng Houtian by bringing him a Renewing Heaven Ripple Bone Pill. It's just that he never expected to have an accident in the netherworld, and he almost didn't make it out.

Even if he ignored the time needed to cross the Grand Essence Sea, the Grand Essence Sea simply had too many dangers. He couldn't even say if he could cross the sea or not in one piece.

While Ning Cheng still thought about how he should cross the Grand Essence Sea, a dense sea of demons quickly surrounded him.

Ning Cheng had noticed these sea demons previously but didn't care much about them. They had two wings and six feet, mainly using ice blades and water spikes as their main attacks. What's more, these sea demons' main attacks also carried poison.

Initially, there were just a few dozen sea demons, not enough to take seriously. But during the few moments of distraction, several million sea demons had surrounded him. The most powerful among them being equivalent to an ordinary Dao Sculpting Holy Emperor in strength. Although these sea demons couldn't understand the Dao or Laws, Ning Cheng could no longer ignore them.

After all, even though they didn't understand the Dao or the Laws, it didn't mean that their attacks didn't contain the laws of heaven and earth. Any living creature who cultivated to a certain extent would eventually form a resonance with worldly laws. They would instinctually follow it even if they couldn't comprehend it. Sea demons were one such type of demonic beast, and their demonic poison was a manifestation of one of the worldly laws.

Ning Cheng blasted out one Time Wheel after another, and the strength of the Time Wheel vividly came to light in this place. No matter how powerful were these sea demons, as the Time Wheel swept past, it only left a bloody mist vacuum. It's just that this vacuum quickly filled up with more sea demons, with a multitude of attacks pouncing on him.

Eventually, Ning Cheng was forced to bring out the Blue Thunder Form. After all, facing such dense attacks, if he only used his domain to resist, it would end up exhausting his strength.

Unfortunately, these sea demons didn't seem afraid of death or injury, and no matter how many died, more sea demons filled the gaps. Initially, only the sea demons in the vicinity were involved, but as the smell of blood spread out, sea demons from further away swarmed in. As the overwhelming number of sea demons rushed over, Ning Cheng started to feel more and more pressure. In just half an hour, tens of thousands of miles of sea around him filled up with sea demons.

As for Ning Cheng, he could no longer see even a single gap among the vast swath of sea demons around him.

As Ning Cheng continued to kill, the area around him continued to fill up with broken limbs and the gore of sea demons. Unfortunately, no matter how many Time Wheels he blasted out, it couldn't erase the stream of sea demons' blood flowing into the sea. Seeing this, Ning Cheng finally stopped killing them. He knew that a qualitative change in their attacks would occur once the number of demon beasts reached a certain level. Unless he had something that could erase several thousand miles around him with a wave of his hand, it would not help him escape this predicament.

Perhaps he could do such a thing in lower-level interfaces; after all, he could crush a planet with his own hand in those places. But he couldn't do the same in the Grand Essence Realm, even with broken laws.

If he continued killing more sea demons, he would either be fully surrounded by them and die or attract more powerful sea demons.

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At the periphery of this sea of sea demons, a male and a female cultivator were staring at the sea demons besieging Ning Cheng.

The male had long hair tied into an elegant immortal bun, a regal face and a handsome and elegant figure. As for the female figure, she was tall and sported eye-catching curves accentuated by the slightly tight-fitting robes hanging off her slender waist. Combined with a flawless and beautiful face, it was enough to make any woman jealous.

The enchanting figure and the beautiful face also gave her an extremely dignified demeanour.

This pair stood in the air looking like a divine couple, elegant and refined.

“Brother Man, why do you think those sea demons are attacking that person in such a craze?” The woman looked at the sea demons rushing towards Ning Cheng, wave after wave, and asked softly.

The man addressed as ‘Brother Man’ pondered for a moment and said, “There are only two explanations. One is that this person has somehow touched something taboo to those sea demons, or he has something that those sea demons desire....”

Speaking of this, the cultivator, addressed as Brother Man, paused before continuing. “Sea demons are most sensitive to natural origins and chaos aura. I heard that recently a Five-elements Star appeared at the edge of the Grand Essence Realm. And this Five-elements Star is rumoured to have the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura. Although this Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura isn’t the pure Primal Chaos Aura, it’s still quite a fortune, maybe.....”

Brother Man stopped, but the woman already understood Brother Man’s meaning, “Brother Man, you mean....”

Brother Man nodded, “Yes, as long as this person has come in contact with the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura, he would still have some residue of the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura on him. This person, I want to save him.”

“Okay, then, let’s give it a shot together.” The beautiful woman gave a quick reply.

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Because of Ning Cheng’s spiritual consciousness range, he didn’t want to use overly flashy moves. Those moves could eliminate enough of those sea demons, but more importantly, a couple with unknown intentions was watching him from afar.

The sea demons didn’t attack that man and woman but only attacked him, which puzzled Ning Cheng. Ning Cheng finally relented and decided to use the First Bridge of Coping, not to purely kill the sea demons around him but to create an opportunity to escape using the first bridge.

But just when he was about to bring out the first bridge, he saw the man and the woman take action.

Chapter 1033: Grand Essence Sea’s Secret City

The male cultivator was at the late-stage Dao Raising Realm, while the female cultivator was at the middle-stage Dao Raising Realm. Ning Cheng believed that, under normal circumstances, he could easily kill them even if these two besieged him. Moreover, how could those two deal with them if he couldn’t kill off these damned sea demons?

The truth, however, soon made Ning Cheng believe these two people could take care of these sea demons. The two didn’t even take out any artefacts. Instead, the male cultivator cast a fire dragon-shaped spirit technique, and the sea demons immediately scattered. Some sea demons who couldn’t get out of the way immediately turned to ashes under this fire dragon. As for the female cultivator, she didn’t do anything; she just followed behind the male cultivator.

Were these sea demons afraid of fire? Ning Cheng felt puzzled. When it came to fire-type spirit techniques, he also had one, the Maximal Flame Spirit Technique. It originally was a spirit technique that

simulated the Laws of Space, but now he had completely transformed it into a fire-type spirit technique. Moreover, his Celestial River Flame was much more powerful than this male cultivator's flame. But was it better to use a fire dragon instead of a Time Wheel?

Ning Cheng decided not to use his Celestial River Flame. His spiritual consciousness had noticed a peculiar aura from this male cultivator's fire dragon-shaped spirit technique. From this, he understood that it wasn't the fire dragon spirit technique that forced these sea demons back, but the aura of the flames was what had forced them away.

"This dao friend, please follow us if you don't mind." The male cultivator moved quickly. In less than half an incense stick's time, he reached a spot a few miles away from Ning Cheng. Not only that, but even the passage opened by his fire dragon was almost free of sea demons, except for some random demons of a different species.

Ning Cheng wasn't polite; he didn't use the First Bridge of Coping but instead used a Time Wheel to clear a path and landed at a fair distance from the two. He cupped his fists and said, "Many thanks for the help."

The male cultivator smiled and said, "Even if I hadn't taken action, I'm sure this dao friend has a way to get out. Unfortunately, this isn't a place to sit and chat; let's find one."

As he spoke, the male cultivator took out an airship, boarded it, and went through the passage that the sea demons had not yet closed up.

Ning Cheng also took out his Starry Sky Wheel and followed the male cultivator. An incense stick's worth of time later, no sea demons were around them. They couldn't even see a single sea demon within their line of sight.

"My name is Jiang Mann, and this is my dao companion, Mu Yueping. This dao friend, if you don't mind, you can come aboard my airship." After rushing out of the sea demon encirclement, the male cultivator stopped his airship to invite Ning Cheng from his Starry Sky Wheel with cupped fists.

Ning Cheng put away the Starry Sky Wheel without hesitation and boarded Jiang Mann's airship with a step. He cupped his fists again and said, "Rogue cultivator Ning Cheng, many thanks for the two dao friend's help."

Seeing Ning Cheng board his airship without any sign of caution made Jiang Mann a little puzzled. Was Ning Cheng really this careless? A Dao Sculpting Holy Emperor, yet dare to casually set foot on the airship of two Dao Raising Holy Emperors?

Ning Cheng could see Jiang Mann's doubts, but he didn't care. Jiang Mann and Mu Yueping were only Dao Raising cultivators, and the restrictions on this airship were nothing more than ordinary in his eyes. Even if Jiang Mann and Mu Yueping immediately attacked him, Ning Cheng could easily kill them.

Mu Yueping was also slightly surprised, but she immediately composed herself and smiled, "It's just as Brother Mann said. Regardless of us taking action, I'm sure Dao Friend Ning could easily escape quickly."

"Dao Friend Ning must be wondering how we broke through the siege of those sea demons so easily, right? In truth, in the Grand Essence Sea, those sea demons are the most difficult and also the easiest kind of sea demons to deal with. Difficult because those sea demons always move in droves, and once

they find a target, they will swarm the target endlessly. Plus, they're also not afraid of death. In fact, the more they die, the more they add to their numbers." Jiang Mann smiled while gesturing for Ning Cheng to sit down.

As Ning Cheng sat down, Mu Yueping poured a cup of spiritual tea for Ning Cheng.

"Then, why did you say that those sea demons were the easiest to deal with?" Ning Cheng asked in doubt.

Jiang Mann chuckled, "That's because those sea demons are most afraid of the Thousand Colour Stone's aura. As long as a cultivator incorporates the Thousand Colour Stone's aura into their spirit techniques when attacking those sea demons, they will immediately flee. My previous attack was just a simple fire dragon infused with the Thousand Colour Stone's aura, and as a result, it forced those sea demons to flee."

Ning Cheng suddenly understood a few things. No wonder when Jiang Mann attacked, only those species of sea demons had tried to escape. It didn't have much effect on the other species of sea demons.

"This is a Thousand Colour Stone." As Jiang Mann spoke, he put a multi-coloured stone on the tea table.

Ning Cheng picked up the stone and looked at it carefully. He found the stone quite ordinary to touch, like roadside gravel, only slightly bigger. However, it had a multi-coloured hue. In fact, if one concentrated hard enough, one could count exactly a thousand colours within the hue.

"If I'm not mistaken, Dao Friend Ning should have been to the Five-elements Star and must have come in contact with the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura. After all, that particular sea demon species is the most sensitive to innate origins and the primal chaos aura. These auras are not something a cultivator can sense, but those sea demons can." Jiang Mann said with a smile.

Ning Cheng suddenly put two and two together. No wonder those sea demons kept swarming him. However, Ning Cheng knew that it wasn't the residual Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura on his body that attracted them but the residual aura from the Starry Sky Wheel. Ning Cheng had complete confidence in his concealment technique and senses and knew that no one could sense the residual Five-elemental Primal Chaos Aura from his body after such a long time. If the Mysterious Yellow Formless couldn't do such a basic thing, it wouldn't be a heaven-defying cultivation method.

However, because he had been continuously on the run, he didn't pay much attention to the residual aura on the Starry Sky Wheel. In other words, as he rushed out of the Five-elements Star, the Starry Sky Wheel had come in direct contact with the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura, which left residual traces on it.

"Many thanks, Dao Friend Jiang, for reminding me. Yes, I have indeed been to the Five-elements Star. Because of this, I was chased into the Grand Essence Sea. If not for the two dao friends, I might still be trapped by those sea demons." After understanding the reason, Ning Cheng felt greatly relieved.

Jiang Mann heard Ning Cheng's words, and his eyes lit up. He seemed to want to say something but hesitated before deciding not to say anything.

Ning Cheng could naturally see Jiang Mann's hesitation. Therefore, before Jiang Mann could speak, he took the initiative to say, "Dao Friend Jiang, I heard that the Grand Essence Sea is extremely dangerous, and the northernmost part of the Grand Essence Sea is full of sea demons who haven't opened their spiritual wisdom. So how come you two appeared here?"

Jiang Mann laughed after hearing Ning Cheng's question. Then, smiling, he said, "Dao Friend Ning must not be a frequent visitor to this place, right? The truth is that the northernmost part of the Grand Essence Sea is barren; however, there is a Secret City here, and we were on our way to this city."

"Secret City?" Ning Cheng looked at Jiang Mann in confusion.

Jiang Mann patiently explained, "This Secret City on the northernmost side of the Grand Essence Sea is about a month away from Soul Sea Territorial City. It's more appropriate to call it a hidden market rather than a city as it mainly deals in goods of questionable origins....."

Ning Cheng instantly understood and said, "So, it's a place similar to where stolen goods are sold?"

Jiang Mann nodded and continued smiling, "If someone finds a treasure at the edge of the Grand Essence Sea, then more often than not, they will choose to dispose of it in the Secret City. Rarely would people dare to sell those items in large cities. Moreover, unseen bounties and rewards are also released in the Secret City. As such, even though it has 'hidden' in its name, many people at the edge of the Grand Essence Sea choose to do most of their business there. In fact, you'd also find cultivators from the larger sects of Grand Essence Sea and Grand Essence Domain roaming around in the city."

Ning Cheng understood Jiang Mann's meaning. The treasures belonging to disciples of big sects would be too eye-catching. Once they die, it would be problematic to sell their valuable treasure openly.

But Ning Cheng also caught onto an important point in Jiang Mann's words. "Dao Friend Jiang, you mentioned something about people from Grand Essence Sea's big sects roaming the Secret City. But how far away is the Grand Essence Domain from here? How could someone from there come to the Secret City? Do they use a teleportation array to Soul Sea Territorial City first and then fly to the Secret City?"

Jiang Mann shook his head, "From the Grand Essence Domain, you don't necessarily have to pass through the Soul Sea Territorial City. And they can also take the route through the Grand Essence Sea, but it's longer and more troublesome."

"Please enlighten me," Ning Cheng stood up and said with cupped fists.

"Dao Friend Ning, please sit down. It's not a secret or anything. If someone wants to travel to the Secret City from the Grand Essence Domain, they must go through several teleportation points. The Thousand Leaf Sacred City in the Grand Essence Domain has a direct teleportation formation to the Grand Essence Sea's Profound Aquatic Palace. From there, you must take the direct teleportation formation to the Silver Dragon Clan, followed by another to the Sea Dragon Sacred City. Then, just take the sole ultra-long distance teleportation formation from Sea Dragon Sacred City. It leads directly to the Secret City." Jiang Mann replied in a very detailed manner.

Ning Cheng felt elated when he heard Jiang Mann's words. He could go to the Grand Essence Domain without going through the Soul Sea Territorial City's teleportation array. After all, Profound Aquatic

Palace and Silver Dragon Clan had good relations with him. Meaning that people wouldn't stop him from taking the formation.

"May I ask Dao Friend Jiang about the Sea Dragon Sacred City?" Ning Cheng asked gratefully.

Jiang Mann remained patient and explained, "When the Grand Essence Realm was still intact, there were ten great dragon clans in the Grand Essence Sea. Sea Dragon Sacred City was the largest sea city established by the ten great dragon clans. The city was so prosperous that there was nothing that you couldn't buy. Your imagination would be the only thing limiting you....."

"Quite a big tone." Ning Cheng sighed. According to such words, wouldn't the Sea Dragon Sacred City also have good fortune treasures for sale?

Jiang Mann smiled and continued, "Of course, this is just something from long ago. With the laws of the Grand Essence Realm currently in shambles, the ten great dragon clans of the Grand Essence Sea have withered considerably, leaving only the Barbarian Dragon Clan and the Silver Dragon Clan. Even the Five-clawed Sacred Dragon Clan, which once reigned over the entire Grand Essence Sea, has also disappeared. Although the current Sea Dragon Sacred City is still prosperous, it's far less prosperous than before."

After saying that, Jiang Mann smiled at Ning Cheng, "Does Brother Ning want to travel to the Grand Essence Domain through the Grand Essence Sea?"

Ning Cheng didn't hide it and said, "Yes, an expert chased me into the Grand Essence Sea, so I can only head to the Grand Essence Domain through this route."

"The two of us happen to be heading to the Secret City. Why don't we all go there together?" Jiang Mann extended an invitation.

Ning Cheng needed a way to reach this Secret City. Therefore, when Jiang Mann invited him, how could he refuse? "Then, many thanks, Dao Friend Jiang. I also plan to go to the Secret City. If it wasn't for the virtuous couple, I wouldn't have known about the existence of this Secret City."

"The Secret City is full of strong people and hidden experts, but more importantly, it's a place without any rules or codes of conduct. If Dao Friend Ning wants to go there, you must be careful." Jiang Mann heard Ning Cheng's words and immediately advised him.

Even without Jiang Mann's advice, Ning Cheng knew he had to keep a low profile. He was afraid that Deacon Xia would also guess he would head to the Secret City and wait for him there.

"Dao Friend Ning, I have an unpleasant request." After answering Ning Cheng's words, Jiang Mann hesitated before speaking out.

"Dao Friend Jiang, please speak freely," Ning Cheng was in a good mood after receiving all that information from Jiang Mann. He also had a vague idea about what Jiang Mann wanted but didn't know how to refuse. After all, Jiang Mann hadn't exchanged the information; rather, he told it to him honestly. It made Ning Cheng embarrassed about how to repay him for it.

"I don't know if Dao Friend Ning has any Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura, but if you have some, I wish to purchase some Fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura from you." Jiang Mann stood up and asked; he even bowed to Ning Cheng.

Chapter 1034: The Grand Karmic Spirit Technique

Ning Cheng watched Jiang Mann suspiciously, "Dao Friend Jiang, no one else here. Even your cultivation is superior to mine. Since you've identified the presence of the Five-Elements Primal Chaos Aura on me, why didn't you forcefully seize it? Why choose to exchange with me?"

Despite what he said, Ning Cheng couldn't help but doubt Jiang Mann's intentions for exchange. After all, the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura wasn't an ordinary thing. In fact, very few things he knew of could be of the same value.

Jiang Mann's face turned serious after hearing Ning Cheng's words, "Dao Friend Ning, so you mean to say that if you meet a cultivator with a lower cultivation and you want something from him, you will choose to rob it?"

Ning Cheng smiled, "I have my own principles in dealing with things, but I won't stoop so low as to rob others. Don't tell me that your principles are the same as mine?"

Jiang Mann replied with a hint of admiration, "There aren't many cultivators like Dao Friend Ning who live by their own principles. But that's not the point. The thing is, I cultivate the Dao of Karma; therefore, I believe that if I robbed Dao Friend Ning today, someone would rob me in the future. After all, karma encompasses everything, and the cycle of retribution will always close upon itself."

Ning Cheng couldn't help but feel a bit impressed. As a Dao Sculpting Holy Emperor and having spent considerable time in the Grand Essence Realm, he naturally had heard about the Grand Dao of Karma. It was counted as one of the realm's most powerful Grand Dao and ranked among the top ten known Grand Daos.

After all, everything in existence had some form of connection to the cycle of cause and effect. In fact, the only reason Ning Cheng's Grand Dao wasn't involved with the Dao of Karma wasn't because of his strength but because of the heaven-defying nature of the Mysterious Yellow Bead, which put it above this Grand Dao.

An idea suddenly appeared in Ning Cheng's consciousness. He owned the Mysterious Yellow Bead and might become a top powerhouse. Did it mean there was already a karmic connection between him and the Mysterious Yellow Bead before he came into contact with it? Maybe the karma between him and the Mysterious Yellow Bead was so supreme that it surpassed all other types of karma.

Ning Cheng quickly put this idea aside and cupped his fists, "I heard that the Grand Dao of Karma is one of the strongest Grand Daos in the world. Congratulations to Brother Jiang."

Jiang Mann showed a bitter smile and shook his head, "I'm just gilding my face with gold. Although I did say that I'm cultivating the Dao of Karma, the truth is that I haven't even touched the edge."

Ning Cheng couldn't help but ask doubtfully, "Brother Jiang should be a Dao Raising Holy Emperor, right? As a Holy Emperor in the Dao Raising Realm, how could Brother Jiang not even touch the edge of the Dao of Karma?"

Jiang Mann looked at Ning Cheng seriously and asked, "Has Dao Friend heard of the universe's Ten Great Spirit Techniques?"

Ning Cheng recalled what he had heard before and immediately replied, "Are you talking about Yin-Yang, Essence's Spirit Thunder, Origination's Spirit Light, Beginning's Spirit Trace and the Change's Incorporeal?"

"Dao Friend Ning is only partially right. Although I do not know about all the top ten spirit techniques, I know that the Yin-Yang Spirit Technique and the Spirit Thunder Spirit Technique are not among the top ten." Jiang Mann said categorically.

Ning Cheng didn't know much about this, so when Jiang Mann talked, he quickly asked, "I hope Brother Jiang can teach me about it."

Jiang Mann obliged but continued solemnly, "I don't know much about the first and second-ranked spirit techniques, but I do know that the Change's Intangible Spirit Technique is second only to them, while the Karmic Spirit Technique is ranked fourth."

Ning Cheng had always considered the Grand Change Realm the first among the five grand realms, so he thought the Change's Intangible Spirit Technique should also be the first-ranked spirit technique. He never expected that, according to Jiang Mann's words, the Change's Intangible Spirit Technique would only be ranked third.

"What about the other great spirit techniques?" Ning Cheng asked again.

Jiang Mann sighed, "Although I cultivate the Grand Dao of Karma, I only know about the name of the Grand Karmic Spirit Technique. Even after all these years, I haven't gained any understanding of it. As for the fifth-ranked spirit technique of the ten great spirit techniques, I have no idea about it. But I know a few things about the sixth, seventh and eighth-ranked spirit techniques. The sixth-ranked spirit technique is the Reincarnation Spirit Technique, the seventh in the Beginning's Spirit Trace, and the eighth is the Origination's Spirit Light."

Ning Cheng asked in surprise, "Dao Friend Jiang, as far as I know, the Reincarnation Spirit Technique is the seventh bridge of the Seven Bridges Spirit Technique. How come it's considered as the sixth-ranked spirit technique while the Seven Bridges Spirit Technique isn't even mentioned among them?"

Dazzled by the ten great spirit techniques, Ning Cheng didn't catch Jiang Mann's implication. That is, since he tried to comprehend the Grand Karmic Spirit Technique, it also meant that he had the corresponding cultivation method.

Jiang Mann laughed, saying, "I don't understand these rankings myself. Besides, I only obtained this information from others. Maybe the Seven Bridges Spirit Technique is the ninth-ranked spirit technique or maybe the tenth-ranked. It's just that no one I know can say for sure."

Ning Cheng didn't ask again. He understood that since the Reincarnation Spirit Technique was taken out and separately placed on the rankings as the sixth-ranked spirit technique, the Seven Bridges Spirit Technique should definitely be in this list of top ten spirit techniques.

"Dao Friend Jiang, I have a bit of Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura. It's just that even if I give it to Dao Friend Jiang, Dao Friend Jiang might not have anything to store it." Ning Cheng finally answered Jiang Mann's words positively. He concluded that Jiang Mann was a person worthy of his trade.

But to be on the safe side, Ning Cheng didn't mention how much Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura he could exchange. He understood that Jiang Mann wouldn't treat him poorly since he cultivated the Dao of Karma.

Jiang Mann immediately took out a black crystal made of unknown materials and handed it to Ning Cheng. "Dao Friend Ning, this is a Karma Dao Crystal that I obtained due to a fortuitous encounter. It also contains hints about the Grand Karmic Spirit Technique. I will lend this to Brother Ning for ten thousand years for a trace of Brother Ning's Fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura."

"Brother Mann....." Mu Yueping almost yelled out in surprise from the side when she saw Jiang Mann take out the black jade. She knew that this was the most valuable thing for Jiang Mann.

Ning Cheng couldn't help but look in shock at the black crystal in Jiang Mann's hand. If this truly was the crystallisation of Karmic Dao Insights, then his Primal Chaos Aura was far from enough to initiate the exchange. Even if Jiang Mann imposed a time limit, it would still not be enough. After all, Jiang Mann mentioned that the Grand Karmic Spirit Technique inside was the fourth-ranked great spirit technique.

Jiang Mann waved his hand at Mu Yueping and said to Ning Cheng with a smile, "Dao Friend Ning, I cultivate the Grand Dao of Karma because of this dao crystal. Although the origin of this dao crystal is unknown, I can stake my life that it contains insights into the Grand Karmic Spirit Technique. Unfortunately, my qualifications are insufficient, as even after tens of thousands of years of enlightenment, I can't even reach the edge of it. Truth be told, trading ten thousand years in exchange for a trace of Brother Ning's fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura can even be considered as me taking advantage of you."

Ning Cheng didn't accept the dao crystal but asked seriously, "Dao Friend Jiang, then how will I return this dao crystal to you after ten thousand years?"

Satisfied with Ning Cheng's response, Jiang Mann nodded and said, "I cultivate the Grand Dao of Karma, so this dao crystal naturally has my karmic imprint on it. After ten thousand years, this dao crystal will automatically escape Brother Ning's hands and return to me."

Ning Cheng's face had a faint smile as he heard those words. Looks like Jiang Mann is really confident. But was he confident that he couldn't crack his karmic seal in ten thousand years? Besides, even if he couldn't crack it, he could throw the dao crystal into the Mysterious Yellow Bead, and the dao crystal wouldn't be able to escape.

However, Ning Cheng didn't intend to do so; if he couldn't learn the Grand Karmic Spirit Technique in ten thousand years, it would be useless to keep it for more time. Besides, both sides were doing this exchange legitimately, so he wouldn't do such a shameless thing.

“How do I give Dao Friend Jiang the fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura?” Ning Cheng appreciated Jiang Mann’s way of conducting business. After all, even though it was a completely honest transaction, Jiang Mann never asked how much fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura he wanted, giving all the initiative to him.

Jiang Mann turned even more serious, “It will take us a month to reach the Secret City from here. Brother Ning can just inject a trace of the Primal Chaos Aura into my purple mansion.”

“Okay.” Ning Cheng agreed without hesitation. One month was enough time for Jiang Mann to refine that fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura trace.

“May I ask Dao Friend Mu about the attribute of your primary spiritual root?” Ning Cheng didn’t directly bring out the fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura but instead asked Mu Yueping a question.

Mu Yueping replied, feeling a bit suspicious, “My primary spiritual root is gold.”

Ning Cheng immediately said, “How about this? I will use a trace of fire-attributed and a trace of gold-attributed Primal Chaos Aura in exchange for ten thousand years of Brother Jiang’s Karmic Dao Crystal.”

When Jiang Mann heard Ning Cheng’s words, he knew Ning Cheng didn’t want to take advantage of him. In fact, it was still him taking advantage of Ning Cheng. Although the Grand Karmic Spirit Technique had a heaven-reaching reputation, it was impossible to comprehend. And even though he mentioned that his qualifications were low, in fact, until now, he really hadn’t seen anyone with better qualifications than him, Jiang Mann.

How could Ning Cheng understand it if he couldn’t comprehend the Grand Karmic Spirit Technique for tens of thousands of years?

“Then, wouldn’t this...” Nevertheless, Jiang Mann was very impressed with Ning Cheng.

Ning Cheng waved his hand and said, “Dao Friend Jiang is too polite. I can’t be too stingy in the face of such hospitality. Dao Friend Jiang and Dao Friend Mu should prepare to receive the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura.”

“Brother Mann, I will accept it later.” Mu Yueping quickly replied.

When Ning Cheng heard Mu Yueping’s words, he knew what Mu Yueping meant. Mu Yueping was afraid that both of them would get caught up in refining the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura and would be backstabbed by Ning Cheng.

Jiang Mann obviously also understood Mu Yueping’s meaning, but he waved his hand and said, “No need, we’ll just trouble Dao Friend Ning to protect us while we refine the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura.”

After saying this, Jiang Mann also took out an orientation jade strip and gave it to Ning Cheng while handing the airship’s control to Ning Cheng.

Jiang Mann said and did these things because he believed in Ning Cheng and could stop Ning Cheng even if Ning Cheng had other thoughts. Refining the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura was just a matter of refining; it wasn’t secluded cultivation.

Mu Yueping heard Jiang Mann's words and understood Jiang Mann's meaning. She nodded and said, "Okay. Then, I will have to trouble Dao Friend Ning."

Ning Cheng didn't say anything and directly took out what was agreed. Then, grabbing a strand of fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura, he slapped his palm onto Jiang Mann's forehead. Then, he grabbed the other strand of metal-attributed Primal Chaos Aura with the other hand and placed it onto Mu Yueping's forehead.

Feeling that the Primal Chaos Aura given to them by Ning Cheng was much more than just one strand as agreed, Jiang Mann couldn't help but feel overjoyed. But not waiting for him to feel grateful towards Ning Cheng, the raging fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura rushed into his purple mansion. In just a moment, he found himself unable to do anything apart from refining this influx of Primal Chaos Aura.

Jiang Mann's heart sank slightly. The elation he felt before had long since disappeared because he saw that Mu Yueping, like him, was also completely incapable of doing anything.

In other words, if Ning Cheng took action now, he and Mu Yueping couldn't resist. After all, Ning Cheng had given them so much Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura at once, leaving them completely vulnerable, which made him start doubting his decision.

Chapter 1035: Sea Dragon Sacred City

Jiang Mann's suspicion quickly receded when he saw Ning Cheng doing nothing to them. Instead, Ning Cheng simply walked to the airship's deck and gazed far away into the Grand Essence Sea.

He and Mu Yueping looked at each other and hurriedly closed their eyes, concentrating on refining this unintentionally obtained opportunity. Whether Ning Cheng had bad intentions or not, they couldn't do anything about it.

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Half a month passed, and Ning Cheng followed Jiang Mann's map, surprisingly only encountering a few scattered sea demons. These occasional sea demons were quite weak, and Ning Cheng cleared them off easily. Unfortunately, this airship wasn't his, so he couldn't increase its speed past its current maximum.

"Brother Ning, if you ever come looking for me, Jiang Mann, in the future, we will do our best to help you with anything." Jiang Mann's grateful voice arrived from somewhere behind him. Ning Cheng understood that Jiang Mann had fully refined and absorbed the fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura.

He turned back, cupped his fists, and said, "Congratulations Brother Jiang, for making great progress in your cultivation. Since Brother Jiang has said so, we will be friends from now on."

After saying that, Ning Cheng removed his disguise. "Since we're now friends, I want to let Brother Jiang see my original face. The disguise earlier was just to escape the pursuit of others."

Jiang Mann was now a person Ning Cheng trusted. Since Jiang Mann showed interest in becoming friends with him, Ning Cheng wouldn't refuse. Over the years, he offended many powerful people and made many friends like Cang Wei, Shushi, Meng Jingxiu, Lan Shu, Fu Shengnan and many more. It also

included lifelong friendships with Jing Wuming, Pan Qian, Lan Ya, Cang Caihe and others from the starry skies.

After coming to the Grand Essence Realm, he got to know Qi Shisanxing, Sheng Houtian, Liu Fanglin, Kong Ning, Ruo Xi, Ba Meng, Lan Ruo , Li Jianshan and others. Jiang Mann was also a person worth befriending.

“I told you that Big Brother Ning, with that elegant aura, can’t have a face full of beards. Hehe.” Mu Yueping’s soft laughter emerged, followed by herself. Apparently, she had also refined the gold-attributed Primal Chaos Aura.

Since Ning Cheng and Jiang Mann had befriended each other, Mu Yueping naturally changed her way of addressing Ning Cheng to ‘Big Brother Ning’.

The Five-element Primal Chaos Aura allowed the two to grow considerably stronger. Jiang Mann had reached the Dao Raising Realm’s peak, but it was just the tip of the iceberg. The fire-attributed Primal Chaos Aura had brought him other considerable benefits. As for Mu Yueping, although she didn’t reach the late-stage Dao Raising Realm, the refinement significantly enhanced her Dao Raising Realm’s dao rhythm.

After refining the Five-elements Primal Chaos Aura, they no longer needed to talk while hiding things.

Jiang Mann and Mu Yueping had been cultivating in the Grand Essence Domain since the start. In fact, although they were rogue cultivators, the inheritances they had obtained weren’t trivial at all. It was the main reason they could survive in the Grand Essence Sea and become Dao Raising Holy Emperors, displaying their exceptional strength. It definitely wasn’t something that could be achieved by cultivators who primarily relied on cultivating in seclusion.

Jiang Mann and Mu Yueping also learned that Ning Cheng was an alchemist, but they didn’t know that Ning Cheng was a Dao Essence Pill Sage. They didn’t ask about it because Ning Cheng’s cultivation and age restricted their viewpoint on what grade of alchemist Ning Cheng could be. In their opinion, it wouldn’t be too high.

Ning Cheng also learned much about the Grand Essence Sea from Jiang Mann and Mu Yueping.

The remaining half a month eventually passed as they discussed the various opportunities and speculations.

“Brother Ning up ahead is the entrance to the Secret City. Since it’s your first time here, I will help you as a guarantor when the time comes.” Jiang Mann slowed down the airship and said.

“Okay.” After talking for over ten days, Ning Cheng had long since understood the workings of the Secret City. All first-timers needed a guarantor or someone to introduce them. Otherwise, they would have to pay 50,000 spirit crystals for an entry.

But more importantly, if you were a non-familiar person, no one would help or even protect you if you got caught up in something in the Secret City. But the Secret City wouldn’t trouble you if you had a guarantor. Instead, they would look for that guarantor for an explanation or compensation as required.

What's more, looking at the surroundings, Ning Cheng felt sure that he wouldn't have been able to find the entrance to the Secret City if Jiang Mann didn't personally lead him here. After all, in front of him was just a vast expanse of the sea. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't sense any restrictions or special markings. Even Jiang Mann could only find this place because of a jade token in his hand that guided him to this location.

"Actually, the entrance to the Secret City often changes at random. So if you want to enter the Secret City, you must rely on this directional jade." Jiang Mann finished speaking and levitated the jade token in his hand.

Once the jade token floated high enough, a teleportation platform suddenly appeared on the originally calm and waveless sea. Ning Cheng and the others walked onto the platform, and the jade token above Jiang Mann's hand erupted with bright rays of light before falling back into Jiang Mann's hand.

Ning Cheng and the others had already disappeared when the flash of light dispersed. And the patch of sea where they were just standing a moment ago returned to the same calm state.

"What a dense spirit aura." Ning Cheng said with some surprise after he walked out of the teleportation formation. He didn't expect a place famous for shady deals to have such a dense spirit aura.

However, all around him were black streets, and he could only see the area right before him with his eyes. Everything farther away was completely blocked by various shielding restrictions.

"Truth be told, many people have made the Secret City their home and cultivate all year round since the spirit aura here is naturally abundant." Jiang Mann explained while winking at Ning Cheng.

Ning Cheng understood that even though no one had come looking for him right now, his arrival was already being watched. Jiang Mann had already mentioned that Ning Cheng first had to apply for the Secret City's identity card. In fact, his actions just now reminded him to not comment on anything before that.

Fortunately, with Jiang Mann as his guarantor, Ning Cheng didn't have to wait long before receiving the Secret City's identity card.

Ning Cheng didn't want to waste Jiang Mann's time, so after he got the identity card, he said, "Brother Jiang, you should head to the Secret City and conclude your business. With the identity card, I can teleport to the Sea Dragon Sacred City by myself."

Jiang Mann's face turned serious as he said, "Initially, we were just trading. But now that we are friends and someone is after you, I should at least accompany you to the Sea Dragon Sacred City."

Ning Cheng laughed, "As long as there is a way forward from here, I won't be afraid of the guy chasing me. No matter how bold he is, he wouldn't dare to chase me into the Grand Essence Domain."

Ning Cheng wasn't boasting. With his current fame, no one would dare to openly make a move on him, let alone a small early-stage Dao Essence cultivator from the edge of the Grand Essence Sea.

"Big Brother Ning, just listen to Brother Mann. After all, you haven't reached Dao Raising yet, while Brother Mann is just a sliver away from full-circle Dao Raising Realm." Even Mu Yueping started to persuade Ning Cheng from the side.

Ning Cheng felt a bit helpless. He couldn't just say aloud that although he was a Dao Sculpting cultivator, he could easily take on the two simultaneously.

"Brother Jiang, Sister Mu, you have also seen my flight-type artefact. I will be much faster if I go alone. Besides, the person I offended is a Dao Essence powerhouse. If we three went together, it would be difficult to defend against such an existence even if we combined our strengths."

Ning Cheng decided to say it bluntly. If his enemies did try to chase after him, then there definitely would be at least one Dao Essence expert among them. Therefore, even if they went together, it wouldn't help. In other words, if you followed me, you won't be able to help.

Jiang Mann and Mu Yueping immediately understood what Ning Cheng meant. The two hesitated and said nothing more about accompanying Ning Cheng. Ning Cheng was correct. Facing a Dao Essence Holy Emperor, the two combined would have no chance of surviving. On the contrary, Ning Cheng could at least escape if alone.

"Alright, we can at least send you to the teleportation array." Jiang Mann was very straightforward. After understanding the reasoning, he immediately wanted to send Ning Cheng away.

Few people used the teleportation array from the Secret City to the Sea Dragon Sacred City, especially since the price was even more outrageous than the Soul Sea Territorial City. It usually took 50,000 spirit crystals to teleport from the Secret City to Sea Dragon Sacred City. But spending over 10 million spirit crystals wouldn't be out of the question if one wanted to leave urgently.

"Brother Ning, you can go take the teleportation array. In a few years, we will also be visiting the Grand Essence Domain." Jiang Mann and Mu Yueping brought Ning Cheng to the side of the teleportation array.

Ning Cheng took out a jade bottle and handed it to Jiang Mann. "Brother Jiang, Sister Mu, we'll meet again later. Also, since I'm an alchemist, I will give these two pills to you."

Jiang Mann didn't care too much about the pills but still accepted the jade bottle from Ning Cheng as he watched him leave.

"Brother Mann, what kind of person do you think Brother Ning is?" Only after Ning Cheng left did Mu Yueping ask in a small voice.

Jiang Mann smiled and said, "Ning Cheng is quite open and honest, completely different from those unscrupulous people from before. But since he can obtain that thing, it also shows that he has great luck and good fortune. Becoming friends with him is my biggest gain from this trip to the Secret City."

Jiang Mann casually opened the jade bottle as he spoke but immediately capped it the next moment looking slightly aghast.

"What happened?" Mu Yueping and Jiang Mann deeply understood each other and each other's way of doing things. Therefore, this action immediately caught her eye.

"Two Violet Heaven Dao Pills." Jiang Mann sent her a voice transmission.

"Ah...."

.....

The teleportation array from the Secret City to the Sea Dragon Sacred City was an ultra-long-distance array. Even with Ning Cheng's cultivation level and resilience, he still felt dizzy.

But as soon as Ning Cheng stepped out of the teleportation array, he felt the prosperity of the Sea Dragon Sacred City as he heard from Jiang Mann's mouth.

Before coming here, the most prosperous sacred city Ning Cheng had seen was the Heaven Essence Sacred City. But after coming to Sea Dragon Sacred City and observing his surroundings, Ning Cheng felt sure that even the prestige of the Heaven Essence Sacred City couldn't compare to that of the Sea Dragon Sacred City.

Moreover, this was even when the laws of the Grand Essence Realm were broken, and the ten major dragon clans of the Grand Essence Sea had withered away. From this, Ning Cheng could already imagine how prosperous the Sea Dragon Sacred City was many years ago when the ten great dragon clans managed it together.

"Kneel down." An extremely sharp and overpowering voice sounded out on the street in the distance, and soon Ning Cheng saw the people around him get out of the way. In the middle of the spacious old street, a woman riding a horned beast was whipping a tall man with messy hair.

From the looks of it, the woman riding the horned beast said the two words. It should be for that tall man with messy hair who must have offended her.

Ning Cheng didn't care. This kind of thing happened almost everywhere, and besides, he wasn't even qualified to care about such things. Moreover, the Sea Dragon Sacred City's teleportation array leading to the Silver Dragon Clan wasn't near the teleportation array leading to the Secret City, which meant that he had to quickly rush to the Silver Dragon Clan's teleportation array as soon as possible.

However, when Ning Cheng was about to turn around, something clicked in his mind about this tall man with messy hair. He quickly recalled that this fellow was named Mo, an ascetic monk-type martial cultivator. From what he knew about Mo, he never caused trouble, and only if someone bullied him would he take action, and that too only when he could no longer stand it.

Ning Cheng's gaze swept over Mo's body, still with the same messy hair, barefoot, carrying a cloth sack, an iron rod on his back, and a gourd around his waist. Ning Cheng couldn't help but think this fellow hadn't changed a bit over the years.

Although he had never interacted with martial cultivators or spoken to Mo before, Ning Cheng had always had a good impression of him. This was mainly because of Pan Qian, as Ning Cheng felt that Mo and Pan Qian shared similar personalities. It's just that he never expected a martial cultivator like Mo to come so far and even appear in the Sea Dragon Sacred City.

Chapter 1036: One Punch to blow away Dao Raising

Originally, Ning Cheng didn't intend to intervene, but after realising that this person was Mo, he immediately changed his mind. From what he could sense, Mo's cultivation should be equivalent to full-

circle Eternal Realm, but the woman riding the horned beast was a middle-stage Dao Sculpting cultivator. No matter how powerful a martial cultivator was, they would have a tough time fighting against a middle-stage Dao Sculpting cultivator with Eternal-level cultivation.

Facing the woman's voice ordering him to kneel down, Mo remained standing with tightly closed lips. Obviously, he had no intention of complying.

A trace of anger and ridicule flashed through the woman's eyes, and she again drew the whip down.

If the previous strike was just to let Mo suffer some flesh and blood injuries, then this strike could definitely slice off one of Mo's arms. A whip strike containing a cultivator's dao charm was something that an Eternal cultivator couldn't block. It wouldn't be strange if the target even died from it.

It's just that although Mo was just a martial cultivator, he had an extraordinary insight. When he saw the whip come down, he understood he would lose one of his arms. But despite that, he still didn't move and closed his eyes. Maybe he already knew that he couldn't escape.

However, there was no sound or the usual sense of pain when the whip fell, forcing Mo to open his eyes in disbelief.

The surrounding cultivators remained silent; no one could even dare speak now. All eyes were fixed on the end of the whip because it didn't strike its intended target. Rather, someone had grabbed the tail end of the whip before it hit Mo.

A Dao Sculpting Holy Emperor had used the whip with their dao rhythm, yet someone had silently caught it with their hands. How could this be a weak person? This person should be a late-stage Dao Raising Holy Emperor or even higher.

The woman holding the whip also felt shocked. It took her a while to sober up, but instead of using caution, she shouted angrily, "Who are you? How dare you stop me?"

Ning Cheng's hand shook slightly, and the woman's whip broke free from her grip and fell into his hand. "Be merciful dao friend. Why be so aggressive?"

"Who are you?" The angry woman finally calmed down and stared at Ning Cheng. At the same time, she controlled the horned beast to take a few steps back as if afraid that Ning Cheng would suddenly attack her.

Ning Cheng gave a calm reply, "Just a rogue cultivator. He is my friend; I don't know how he offended you, but since this dao friend hasn't lost anything, why not forget about it?"

When Ning Cheng said he was Mo's friend and even a rogue cultivator, the woman's face instantly flared up with anger again. She raised her hand and threw out a red light before saying, "If you don't get lost within three breaths, you will also die with that ant."

If Ning Cheng was a disciple of a major faction, she might have given some leeway. But how could she let a rogue cultivator meddle in her affairs?

She naturally didn't think that Ning Cheng was lying. Any disciple from a sect would never introduce them as a rogue cultivator in such a situation. After all, it pertained to the reputation of the faction.

So in her mind, if Ning Cheng said he was a rogue cultivator, he really was.

Ning Cheng's expression turned cold, and his hands suddenly closed. The whip taken from the woman's hand suddenly gave a cracking sound, and a moment later, the whip turned into a pile of crumbs that blew into the street around Ning Cheng.

"If you dare do it again, your head will follow the same fate as your whip." Ning Cheng's tone also turned icy cold after his flames finished burning down the whip. Ning Cheng had cultivated for a long time, so he knew there was only one way to deal with an unreasonable cultivator. He had to be even more unreasonable than the other party.

The woman's heart turned cold, unconsciously sucked in a deep breath. She guessed Ning Cheng was likely a late-stage Dao Raising Holy Emperor, but her whip was at least a mid-grade spirit artefact. Who could turn a middle-grade spirit artefact into ashes in just a moment?

Casually turning a genuine middle-grade spirit artefact into crumbs, only the artificer who crafted it could do so, as they would know its structure like the back of their hand. No, even an artificer who created and knew the structure couldn't do it this easily. Unfortunately for her, Ning Cheng was also a decent artificer who could craft and destroy middle-grade spirit artefacts. He didn't need much force to destroy an ordinary middle-grade spirit artefact.

The woman didn't dare to speak again, while the people around them started to marvel at Ning Cheng's strength.

"Junior Apprentice Sister Xiuqian, what seems to be the problem here?" Three figures landed beside the woman riding the horned beast. The one who asked was a young man with half-silver and half-red hair.

Beside this man were two women; one with a veil covering her face and a cold demeanour, the other tall but with a head full of silver hair.

What surprised Ning Cheng was that the woman with a veiled face and cold demeanour was someone he knew. She was from the Profound Aquatic Palace. Back then, this woman, with Cen Ruxuan and Zhongmeng Yuxiu, had come to his place and asked him for two Harmony Bodhisattva Pills.

Moreover, she was also the one with the highest cultivation among the three at the early-stage Dao Transformation Realm. Apart from that, the young man with half-silver and half-red hair was at the middle-stage Dao Raising Realm, while the other tall silver-haired woman had the same cultivation as the 'Junior Apprentice Sister Xiuqian' riding the horned beast. Both were at the middle-stage Dao Sculpting Realm.

"This man wants to teach me a lesson. He also destroyed my whip." Seeing these people coming over, the fear of the woman riding the horned beast immediately faded. She flew up and landed in the middle of the three people before pointing at Ning Cheng and speaking.

After hearing what the woman called Xiuqian said, the man with half-red and half-silver stepped forward, clasped his fists towards Ning Cheng and said, "Silver Dragon Clan's Gong Chi. I wonder why this friend wants to make a move against Profound Aquatic Palace's Junior Apprentice Xiuqian? Why did you go so far as to destroy her artefact?"

Although Ning Cheng looked like a late-stage Dao Sculpting cultivator, Gong Chi didn't dare to underestimate him.

These guys were from the Silver Dragon Clan, or at least a few. Ning Cheng knew Silver Dragon Clan's Gong Hanyu and the silver-haired woman and could even be considered their friend. Yet, as soon as Gong Chi came forward, he reported his and Xiuqian's origins.

Apart from the Mysterious Ferry Ancient Clan, whose members haven't been seen for thousands of years, the Silver Dragon Clan and the Profound Aquatic Palace were the most powerful existences in the Grand Essence Sea, second only to the Barbarian Dragon Clan. They were also among the top ten factions in the Grand Essence Domain. Gong Chi said this naturally to let Ning Cheng report his background. They could negotiate if he was also from a major faction.

Truth be told, Gong Chi thought that Ning Cheng didn't come from an ordinary background. Would someone from an ordinary background dare to meddle in other people's stuff in Sea Dragon Sacred City? Do you think you've lived long enough?

"This matter is all because of me. Please don't blame this friend for the matter. I had accidentally startled that horned beast when it rushed into me." Mo, who hadn't spoken until now, suddenly walked forward and said. How could he not know the power of the Silver Dragon Clan and Profound Aquatic Palace after living in the Sea Dragon Sacred City for a long time? He didn't want to involve Ning Cheng, a rogue cultivator like him. Once he offended these two behemoths, he might not even get a chance to reincarnate.

Ning Cheng was about to speak when his eyes suddenly twitched as he saw Deacon Xia in the crowd. This fellow was like a ghost, chasing him to the Sea Dragon Sacred City.

As Ning Cheng looked at Deacon Xia, Deacon Xia's gaze also locked onto Ning Cheng. However, he didn't take action but stood in the crowd and watched the fun.

Ning Cheng's heart sank; he knew Deacon Xia had recognised him.

If not for Mo's matter, Ning Cheng would have already teleported out of this place. He could have escaped as long as he was one step faster than Deacon Xia. But now, getting involved in Mo's matter had delayed him, causing that old fox to catch up.

Since Deacon Xia chased him here, he had decided not to let him leave Sea Dragon Sacred City. As such, Ning Cheng was sure that once the conflict between him and Silver Dragon Clan and Profound Aquatic Palace was over, Deacon Xia would immediately take the initiative to accuse him of something. That way, he could use the opportunity to take him away. Even if the conflict blew out of proportion, Deacon Xia would take action to whisk him away.

After hesitating momentarily, Ning Cheng sent a message to Ba Meng. Except for Sheng Houtian, only Ba Meng had the highest cultivation level among his better friends. But Sheng Houtian was already poisoned, and in Heaven Essence Sacred City, he wouldn't be able to help him even if he asked for help.

Ba Meng lived in the Grand Essence Sea and might come over faster. Ba Meng was already a half-step Dao Essence cultivator back then, not because his cultivation accumulation wasn't enough, but because his dao heart couldn't be perfected because of his son, Ba Luo's situation.

Fortunately, he had given Ba Meng a Six Yin Soul Pill in the netherworld, so Ba Luo should have already woken up by now.

With Ba Luo waking up, Ba Meng's dao heart should have been perfected immediately, so it shouldn't be a problem for him to instantly reach Dao Confirmation's Dao Essence Realm. After all, a place like the Dragon Washing Pond wasn't available to everyone.

As long as Ba Meng reaches the Dao Essence Realm, along with his promise, he might actually be able to kill Deacon Xia. That's why, in his message to Ba Meng, he asked him to come to Sea Dragon Sacred City only if he reached Dao Confirming's Dao Essence Realm and not if he hadn't.

If Ba Meng didn't come, he would need to escape using the bead he had condensed by cutting off those foreign strands of spiritual consciousness. Unfortunately, if he did that, he wouldn't be able to use the teleportation array and would have to rely on the Starry Sky Wheel to cross the Grand Essence Sea.

Seeing Ning Cheng not talking, everyone thought Ning Cheng was afraid.

"Elder Brother Chi, he's just a rogue cultivator. Yet, he was arrogant before and didn't even put the Sea Dragon Sacred City in his eyes." Xiuqian also thought that Ning Cheng was afraid and said with a sneer in her tone.

When Gong Chi heard this and looked at Ning Cheng's silent appearance, a cold, cruel smile appeared on the corner of his mouth. Since he was a rogue cultivator, then don't blame him for being ungracious. Late-stage Dao Sculpting Realm, hehe, it was nothing but a joke in front of him.

He didn't directly make a move against Ning Cheng but raised his hand to grab Mo. He wanted to crush Mo in front of everyone in the Sea Dragon Sacred City and then ask Ning Cheng where he got the guts to dare prance around in the Sea Dragon Sacred City.

As a Dao Raising Holy Emperor's domain pressed down, Mo immediately felt its endless terrifying power. His body started trembling, while his legs kept shaking as if he would kneel down at any moment.

A moment later, a spirit essence-filled handprint, tinged with a bloody aura, suddenly appeared and fell from the sky vault, covering almost the entire street. The surrounding cultivators watching the fun immediately backed away at the sight of the handprint. No one dared to stand out and speak.

Ning Cheng had also noticed the bloody handprint right after he sent the message. He grunted and stepped forward, and the domain suppressing him and Mo shattered inch by inch like an eggshell.

Then, Ning Cheng blasted out with a punch. This punch nullified the spatial distance between him and Gong Chi and landed on Gong Chi's chest instantly.

When Gong Chi had formed the handprint, he felt as if he standing at the top of a ten-thousand-foot waterfall, and everything under his feet was at the mercy of the waterfall. But in just a moment, the ten-thousand-foot waterfall suddenly rolled backwards, and the majestic and boundless momentum mixed with the violent spirit essence blasted back at his chest.

Gong Chi only heard the sounds of his bones breaking inch by inch, and then a bloody mist erupted from the pores and cracked skin, and he flew back uncontrollably. His body only stopped after it hit the doorway of a store, opening a gap in the store's outer defensive formation.

His body bounced from the doorway and landed on the ground with a 'flop', convulsing wildly.

Ning Cheng's punch contained the laws of his Grand Dao, so even if Gong Chi was a Dao Raising holy Emperor, he wouldn't be able to recover quickly.

Chapter 1037: Using Yin Yueshu

Ning Cheng knocked Gong Chi out with just a single punch. From what the crowd could see, it would take Gong Chi several months to heal from the injury. As for Xiuqian, who had called in Gong Chi for help, she was even more stunned. She guessed that Ning Cheng might have been concealing his cultivation, but she had pinned it at most at the late-stage Dao Raising Realm. But even if Ning Cheng was a late-stage Dao Raising cultivator, her Big Brother Gong Chi shouldn't be weaker than him. Yet, Ning Cheng knocked him out in just one punch, something she found unbelievable. Was this something a late-stage Dao Raising cultivator could do?

Gong Chi's body continued to tremble as he painfully took a pill and swallowed it while keeping a wary eye on Ning Cheng.

As for that woman from the Silver Dragon Clan, who had been watching the battle from the side, after seeing Ning Cheng knock off Gong Chi, she immediately threw out a message talisman in panic.

Ning Cheng felt relieved when he saw the Silver Dragon Clan's woman, who had come with Gong Chi, throw out the message talisman. He had been merciful to Gong Chi; otherwise, he could easily kill Gong Chi with that punch.

It's just that he had deliberately struck hard to force Gong Chi to call his clansmen over. Once the people from Silver Dragon Clan did come and Ba Meng did not, he could simply urge the Silver Dragon Clan to solve the problem. After all, he knew Silver Dragon Clan's Gong Huayu, and as long as he took out his identity and called out Gong Huayu, he would most likely be treated as an honoured guest. No matter how daring Deacon Xia was, he wouldn't dare to go against the Silver Dragon Clan to make trouble for him.

Since this could help Mo and help him avoid Deacon Xia, why not use it?

However, things didn't necessarily go in the direction Ning Cheng expected. Despite keeping his sights on Xiuqian and Gong Chi, his attention remained on Deacon Xia.

Therefore, after knocking away Gong Chi with a punch, he immediately noticed Deacon Xia walking over towards him. He could even feel the fierce momentum directed at him.

Not good; this Deacon Xia decided to push as far as he could. Since this fellow decided to take action, he would use vicious methods, using Gong Chi as an excuse to help him out. This way, he would also curry favour with Gong Chi.

Ning Cheng secretly cursed himself for overlooking this issue. But just then, the woman with a veil on her face stepped forward, stared at Ning Cheng for a moment, and said in a deep voice, "Is your cultivation really at Dao Sculpting?"

Why would Ning Cheng care to answer this woman's question? He pulled up Mo and said, "Hurry up and come with me, or we both will have a bad time."

Ning Cheng had stepped up for Mo, but it also harmed Ning Cheng, causing him to feel guilty in his heart. Now that Ning Cheng wanted to pull him away, he naturally wouldn't object.

Seeing Ning Cheng pulling away Mo, Deacon Xia quickened his pace and pushed the crowd around him to rush over.

Ning Cheng didn't stop, pulled Mo into the nearest luxury rest inn, and said directly, "The best room."

The attendant of the rest inn had seen Ning Cheng make a move against the Silver Dragon Clan's Gong Chi. So how could he dare agree when Ning Cheng asked for the best room?

"I'm sorry, this dao friend, but our rest inn is completely full." The attendant quickly replied.

"Then, how many spirit crystals for the most expensive room for a day?" Ning Cheng didn't care. Instead, he asked about the price.

"9,000 high-grade spirit crystals." The attendant automatically replied.

Ning Cheng threw a storage bag on the counter and said, "I'll wait here. As long as there is an empty room, I'll take it immediately."

After saying that, Ning Cheng pulled Mo and walked to the guest waiting hall of the inn. Ning Cheng believed that even if Deacon Xia had guts, he wouldn't dare to take action here. This inn had countless formations and restrictions, so someone would immediately hold Deacon Xia back if he dared to attack.

Those who can open such a luxurious inn in Sea Dragon Sacred City definitely wouldn't be ordinary.

The attendant naturally understood what Ning Cheng intended. But even though he wanted to avoid disaster from befalling the inn, he could not drive Ning Cheng away. Ning Cheng dared to almost kill Gong Chi, so who knows what Ning Cheng would do to a small fellow like him? Therefore, at this time, he could only send a message to the higher-ups managing this inn.

Mo wasn't good with words and didn't have a scheming heart. Therefore, when Ning Cheng pulled him in and saw Ning Cheng sitting down, he stood next to Ning Cheng. Ning Cheng offended people for him; if something happened to Ning Cheng, he decided to fill it with his own life.

"Do you think that if you hide here, the people from the Silver Dragon Clan will not come looking for you? Or that if you hide here, they won't dare to make a move?" The female cultivator with the veiled face followed in, stood opposite Ning Cheng, and asked calmly. Like most people, she thought Ning Cheng entered the inn to hide from the Silver Dragon Clan's experts.

Ning Cheng smiled and said indifferently, "Maybe it's to hide from them; maybe it's for something else? Who can say for sure when it comes to such a situation?"

"I'm Yin Yueshu from the Profound Aquatic Palace. You should know that the girl you taught a lesson to just now is Zhu Xiuxian, my Junior Apprentice Sister." The veiled woman spoke up with a cold tone.

Ning Cheng's spiritual consciousness swept out and saw Deacon Xia, whose expression kept changing, standing outside the inn. He then unhurriedly took out a teacup, poured a cup of spiritual tea and handed it to Mo.

Mo shook his head, indicating that there was no need. Ning Cheng didn't remain polite; he took a sip from the cup and placed it on the jade table before him. "Oh, my bad. You want to teach me a lesson in their stead, then?"

"This place is not very far from my Profound Aquatic Palace. So I wanted to invite this dao friend to visit my Profound Aquatic Palace." Yin Yueshue stared at Ning Cheng and said.

She felt certain that Ning Cheng was only a Dao Sculpting cultivator at best. Yet a Dao Sculpting cultivator almost killed a middle-level Dao Raising Holy Emperor with a single punch. If someone had said that to her, she would never believe it. Therefore, if Ning Cheng did not agree, she would immediately take action. She had to rush to take away Ning Cheng before Silver Dragon Clan's people came.

After she and Aunt Xuan attended the Alchemy Discourse, she warned her not to go back into seclusion. Instead, go out and cultivate like Junior Apprentice Sister Zhongmeng Yuxiu. She understood why Aunt Xuan said that to her only after she did that. She should have felt that she wasn't very mature in dealing with the world, so she forced her to go out.

In fact, she also wanted to come out, but mainly to look for Ning Cheng. She had boasted that she would ensure that Ning Cheng worshipped at her feet and willingly worked for the Profound Aquatic Palace. Unfortunately, she didn't have the chance to display her skills because, after the Alchemy Discourse, she never saw Ning Cheng again.

But after several years of experience, she also eventually realised her shortcomings. At least she no longer had the same arrogance as before; otherwise, she would never have even considered forming a friendship with the Silver Dragon Clan's Gong Chi. Coupled with being born with superior intellect, she quickly formed her view of the people and things around her. Because of that, she also wanted to take Ning Cheng away before the Silver Dragon Clan's people arrived. Ning Cheng was such a powerful Dao Sculpting rogue cultivator, which meant he had to have a powerful secret. Since he had a secret, she couldn't let it fall into the hands of the Silver Dragon Clan.

Ning Cheng's heart moved. It wasn't a bad idea to go to the Profound Aquatic Palace. After all, he had acquaintances there. Plus, they still owed him a favour. It's just that Deacon Xia was still outside, waiting for him. Once he came out to head to the Profound Aquatic Palace, Deacon Xia would immediately make his move.

"I can come to your Profound Aquatic Palace with you, but I have offended quite a few people. What would you do if someone tried to intercept us on the way to the teleportation array?" Ning Cheng replied after a moment. But simultaneously, he also noticed Deacon Xia walking in as if ready to act.

Yin Yueshe was slightly taken aback. She didn't expect Ning Cheng to be easy to talk with. She was ready to use force, but Ning Cheng didn't need her to force her hand. In fact, Ning Cheng agreed right after.

“Don’t worry, the Silver Dragon Clan will still give me this bit of face. I promise I won’t let them hurt you if you come with me.” Yin Yueshu said proudly.

After a few years of trials, she matured greatly in her approach to the world. However, that in-built pride of a genius still remained in her heart. Moreover, as an early-stage Dao Transformation cultivator from a major faction, she wasn’t afraid to face off against any late-stage Dao Transformation cultivator belonging to a no-name force.

What’s more, would the Silver Dragon Clan’s Dao Essence Holy Emperors dare to attack her, Yin Yueshu? None would dare unless they wanted to create an irreconcilable feud between the two factions.

“Mo, if you have nothing to do, you should come with me.” Ning Cheng turned his head and said to Mo. Mo was a martial cultivator without any backers. Therefore, once he left, Mo would be toyed to death by Gong Chi and that witch, Zhu Xiuqian.

“Okay.” Mo didn’t say anything else. He didn’t want to implicate Ning Cheng even further in his mess. But even though he didn’t speak much, he wasn’t stupid. It didn’t matter whether Ning Cheng got involved in his matter; once involved, it wouldn’t matter if it was only for a moment or till the end. Speaking about not being involved now would be meaningless and nonsense.

Ning Cheng walked to the counter, took back the 9,000 spirit crystals he had given to the assistant, and walked out of the inn with Mo following Yin Yueshu. Seeing Ning Cheng finally walking out, the attendant sighed in relief.

“Stop.” Just as Yin Yueshu and Ning Cheng walked out of the inn, they were stopped by a yellow-robed man.

Yin Yueshu’s eyes turned cold, “What’s the matter?”

She could tell that this yellow-robed man’s cultivation level was higher than hers, a Dao Essence expert. But why did it matter if he was a Dao Essence Holy Emperor? Would he dare to move against her, Yin Yueshu, in the Sea Dragon Sacred City?

“That person went too far, inflicting severe injuries to Silver Dragon Clan’s Dao Friend Gong Chi. I can’t pretend to not see it and must seek justice for Dao Friend Gong Chi.” Deacon Xia pointed at Ning Cheng and said in a hateful voice. He knew this excuse was far-fetched, but unfortunately, he simply couldn’t think of anything better.

Yin Yueshu gave a cold snort, “This matter started because of my Profound Aquatic Palace’s Zhu Xiuxian, so this matter will be resolved by my Profound Aquatic Palace.”

Deacon Xia’s expression turned gloomy. He never expected Yin Yueshu to be from the Profound Aquatic Palace, another of the ten major factions. What a blunder; he should have jumped ahead to stop Ning Cheng from seriously injuring Gong Chi.

“I received a life-saving favour from the Silver Dragon Clan in my early years, so I must ask this fairy from the Profound Aquatic Palace to forgive my actions. Once I repay this favour, I will personally hand him over to this fairy.” Deacon Xia took in a deep breath and clearly enunciated each word.

After finishing his words, he raised his hand to grab Ning Cheng. He knew that dragging things wouldn't do him any good; taking away Ning Cheng as quickly as possible was the most practical thing to do.

Yin Yueshu didn't expect this to happen after she assured Ning Cheng. If this wasn't a coincidence, she would have thought she was being used. Only Ning Cheng knew that Yin Yueshe was really being used by him.

"Boom....." The Mountain and River Disc that Yin Yueshu brought out couldn't even manifest a mountain or a river before it got blown away by the rainbow light that Deacon Xia had casually cast. In fact, the force was so mighty that even she was blown away, spewing out several mouthfuls of blood. Even the veil covering her face got blown off by the powerful surge of spirit essence, revealing her delicate and beautiful face.

Despite being proud of her strength, she couldn't last even half a move in front of Deacon Xia.

Still tumbling through the air, Yin Yueshe immediately threw out a message talisman. It was no longer a matter of her pride. This bastard dared to make a move against her in Sea Dragon Sacred City, which meant he was a sworn enemy of her Profound Aquatic Palace. Moreover, this kind of person wasn't something she, an early-stage Dao Transformation cultivator, could fight against.

Deacon Xia acted as if he didn't see the message talisman and once again extended his hand to grab Ning Cheng. He wanted to take away Ning Cheng as fast as possible; once he waited for the Silver Dragon Clan and the Profound Aquatic Palace, escaping with his life would become impossible.

Chapter 1038: Killing Dao Essence

Ning Cheng knew that Deacon Xia would take action and reacted almost instantly. Unfortunately, he couldn't resist Deacon Xia's horrifying power.

"Click" Ning Cheng's domain shield shattered instantly. However, unlike Yin Yueshe, who got blasted away, Deacon Xia's domain focused on suppressing Ning Cheng to the point that he couldn't move.

Just behind Ning Cheng, Mo saw Ning Cheng's suppressed to the point of his bones creaking and was about to be caught by Deacon Xia's huge handprint; he immediately rushed up, blasting down with an iron rod.

An Eternal-equivalent martial cultivator going against a Dao Essence Holy Emperor's spirit essence suppression was even more outrageous than an egg hurling at a stone.

"Puff" Before his iron rod could even reach anywhere near Deacon Xia, Mo instantly got blasted away with all his organs and bones crushed. The force was so much that he coughed up bits of internal organs as his body flew back uncontrollably like a kite. He finally stopped after hitting the defensive restrictions of a store on the other side of the street and collapsed, unable to move.

All this because he touched the edge of Deacon Xia's spirit essence handprint. Moreover, it was when Deacon Xia didn't even bother with him. Otherwise, even a hundred Mo would have turned into nothingness.

Although Mo's attack didn't affect Deacon Xia, it did help Ning Cheng a bit. Deacon Xia's spirit essence handprint had fully suppressed Ning Cheng, and under Deacon Xia's law-infused spirit technique, he couldn't even think of a way to resist. He could only wait to die unless he could somehow use the spiritual consciousness bead in time under suppression.

Ning Cheng naturally didn't want to wait for death. He had also prepared the bead beforehand, but when he was about to use the bead, Mo's iron rod blasted over, and then Mo was blown away, life and death unknown. At the same time, Ning Cheng also received a message from Ba Meng that Ba Meng was on his way. It's just that Ba Meng was too far and would require some time, so he had to rely on himself right now.

Under Mo's iron rod, Deacon Xia's originally perfect spirit essence suppression revealed a trace of law-infused dao rhythm, which Ning Cheng instantly grabbed onto.

It was like an ant biting a huge cow, causing the muscles of this cow to twitch slightly. Deacon Xia was this huge cow, and his law-infused spirit technique was the one that twitched, which Ning Cheng instantly pounced open.

Ning Cheng's Time Wheel Spirit Technique instantly condensed, unleashing dozens of time wheels onto that revealed trace, forcing a gap to open in front of Ning Cheng. The next moment, Ning Cheng rushed out, but the powerful force from Deacon Xia's suppressive spirit essence once again made Ning Cheng spit out a few mouthfuls of essence blood.

Fortunately, it was enough for Ning Cheng to escape Deacon Xia's suppression. He wouldn't use the bead if he didn't need it.

"You?" Yin Yueshu finally recognised Ning Cheng, as Ning Cheng's changed appearance blew off under Deacon Xia's attack, just like her veil.

Ning Cheng's figure turned into a shadow and flashed past Yin Yueshu, who could only hear the voice transmission left behind by Ning Cheng on his way out. "Help me care for my friend; I will owe you a favour."

When Yin Yueshu reacted, Ning Cheng had already disappeared from the street.

Ning Cheng had pushed himself to the limit to rush out of Sea Dragon Sacred City. After all, staying in Sea Dragon Sacred City would only mean a dead end for him. Besides, he deliberately chose a direction to bring him closer to Ba Meng.

Ning Cheng breaking free from his spirit essence suppression had shocked Deacon Xia beyond measure. Ning Cheng was far more powerful than an average Dao Sculpting Holy Emperor. But seeing Ning Cheng break out of the Sea Dragon Sacred City, he felt slightly relieved. As long as Ning Cheng left the Sea Dragon Sacred City, he could catch Ning Cheng again.

Sea Dragon Sacred City was no longer the same sacred city as it was in the distant past. It wasn't hidden in the sea anymore but suspended in the air just a bit over the surface of the Grand Essence Sea. It looked like a huge mountain peak from a distance.

Therefore, after Ning Cheng rushed out of the Sea Dragon Sacred City, he appeared directly above the Grand Essence Sea. But with Deacon Xia chasing after him a bit too close for comfort, he could only push

his Twin Wings of the Heavenly Cloud to the limits. He didn't have the time to take out the Starry Sky Wheel.

However, the Twin Wings of the Heavenly Clouds couldn't maintain their speed for a sustained flight, which meant that it was only a matter of time before Deacon Xia caught up with him.

Ning Cheng sighed helplessly as he kept flying at full speed. Yet, he didn't want to use the Spiritual Consciousness Bead that he kept ready. At the same time, he also didn't know how long it would take for Ba Meng to get here.

"Don't worry, I, Ba Meng, am here." Ning Cheng was still thinking about when Ba Meng would be able to come over when a voice transmission reached Ning Cheng's ear.

There was no airship or a flight-type weapon under Ba Meng's feet, yet his whole body seemed to pierce through the void and appear before him with dao rhythms circulating around him. He didn't show any indication of covering up his aura.

Ning Cheng felt overjoyed; Ba Meng had finally advanced to the Dao Essence Realm. However, considering how his dao rhythm overflowed, Ba Meng hadn't fully stabilised his cultivation level at the Dao Essence Realm.

Without any need for a reminder from Ning Cheng, Ba Meng brought out his Sun and Moon Tower, which immediately erupted with two bright flashes of light. These two flashes of light instantly expanded in the sky and shot towards Deacon Xia.

Deacon Xia was in a hurry to chase after Ning Cheng and was almost on the verge of capturing Ning Cheng. As long as he caught Ning Cheng, he would have immediately fled. But unexpectedly, at this time, someone had suddenly made a move against him. It wasn't only Ning Cheng who didn't sense Ba Meng's arrival. Even Deacon Xia couldn't till Ba Meng had already taken action.

Ba Meng's dao rhythm and foundation weren't fully stable yet, but he was a bonafide Dao Confirming Holy Emperor who had entered the Second Step. What's more, Ba Meng lived in the Grand Essence Sea all year round, making him accustomed to killing, which made him no weaker in strength than Deacon Xia.

With the Sun and Moon Tower suppressing him, how could Deacon Xia still dare to continue chasing after Ning Cheng? The artefact in his hand flew out and manifested several flashes of light to block Ba Meng's Sun and Moon Tower. Ning Cheng, however, didn't continue to flee and finally looked at Deacon Xia's artefact clearly, a Six-sided Flower Bead.

"Boom....." The two attacks clashed and swept the surrounding sea, creating a ten-thousand-foot vacuum, even blasting a huge trench into the bottom.

Even space trembled because of the resulting explosion. Ning Cheng immediately took advantage of this, swallowed a Burst Spirit Pill, and activated the 5-coloured Star Splitter Arrow.

When Deacon Xia saw Ning Cheng's 5-coloured Star Splitting Arrow, he felt his scalp tingle. He wouldn't be afraid of Ning Cheng's 5-coloured Star Splitting Arrow if alone. But with a Dao Essence powerhouse with a cultivation level similar to his helping Ning Cheng, coupled with Ning Cheng's 5-coloured Star Splitting Arrow, if he held out, where else could he go besides falling?

No matter how many good things Ning Cheng had, none of them was as good as keeping his little life.

Therefore, Deacon Xia immediately grabbed a talisman and was just about to activate it.

Facing Ning Cheng alone, even if Ning Cheng's 5-coloured Star Splitter Arrow locked him in place with Ning Cheng's current cultivation, he could still activate the talisman and escape. Even if he couldn't escape, he had another method to defend against the arrow.

Unfortunately, there was an additional Ba Meng. Ba Meng was slightly surprised when he saw Ning Cheng bring out the 5-coloured Star Splitter Arrow before focusing on the opponent again. Since Ning Cheng had the Seven Bridges Spirit Technique, what was the big deal about him having a 5-coloured Star Splitting Arrow?

Therefore, when Deacon Xia activated the talisman, Ba Meng's Sun and Moon Tower's sun and moon image flashed, causing a sun and moon wheel filled with dao rhythm to form and blast down, suppressing the multicoloured aura coming out of Deacon Xia's Six-sided Flower Bead. In fact, the Sun and Moon Tower even locked down the surrounding space instantly.

Deacon Xia's expression changed greatly when he realised he couldn't activate the escape talisman in time. He understood that he had made an unforgivable mistake; the longer one dragged their feet in the face of the 5-coloured Star Splitting Arrow, the less likely one was to escape. He should not have immediately activated the talisman; he should have first escaped from the 5-coloured Star Splitter Arrow's killing aura lock range, then activated the talisman to escape.

The grey killing aura gathered instantly, and the majestic and violent 5-coloured Star Splitter Arrow's killing intent grew countless times more violent. Its arrow intent exuded a dense aura of death, seemingly containing a sense of displeasure. Displeasure about one of its targets escaping, displeasure that under its killing intent lock, there was still someone who would dare to activate a talisman to escape.

As the arrow faded, the five colours spread out, the killing intent gathered, and the aura of death permeated the atmosphere.

"Stop. I apologise. You can't kill me; I'm a deacon of the Sea Sky Pavilion. I'll even give you everything from Sea Sky Pavilion I....." After realising that he was completely locked in place by the 5-coloured Star Splitting Arrow, Deacon Xia finally began to lose his mind. For the first time in his life, he felt panic, and for the first time, he felt terrified.

How he longed to redo it all again. He would definitely not come alone to hunt Ning Cheng if he could. He would have pulled in a few helpers to deal with Ning Cheng.

Unfortunately, Ning Cheng's killing intent towards him was as firm and unquestionable as the 5-coloured Star Splitting Arrow. Even if Deacon Xia begged and cried, it would not dampen his determination to kill Deacon Xia.

"Swoosh!" The black arrow, almost entirely disappeared by now, tore through the void with endless killing power and bore down on its target.

The same instant the arrow shot out, the projection of the multicoloured longbow faded into the void. And in the area around Ning Cheng, one would only find a majestic and endless killing intent that seemingly covered heaven and earth, a grey expanse representing death's aura.

No bow, no arrow, no star left unbroken!

Even if Deacon Xia was a Dao Essence powerhouse, he was still not as powerful as a star. The grey killing intent pierced through his forehead before exploding, leaving behind Deacon Xia's unwilling eyes still left open. His eyes had lost their sparkle, replaced by despair and remorse.

Ning Cheng raised his hand and grabbed Deacon Xia's ring and the Six-sided Flower Bead, feeling immensely relieved. Deacon Xia was like a nail thrust into his back, making him uncomfortable. With Deacon Xia dead, it was only natural to feel relieved.

A few moments later, the surroundings returned to their previous state as if nothing had happened. Only Ba Meng knew Ning Cheng had just killed a Dao Essence powerhouse. If someone said it aloud, no one would ever believe that a Dao Sculpting Holy Emperor could kill a Dao Essence powerhouse. Yet, he had seen Ning Cheng kill a true Dao Essence powerhouse with his own eyes.

One could argue that Ning Cheng couldn't have achieved this feat without Ba Meng restraining that Dao Essence powerhouse. But the fact is, even if he had helped restrain a Dao Essence powerhouse, replaced by a Dao Transformation Holy Emperor, they would still be unable to kill a suppressed Dao Essence expert even if they chose to burn their lifespan.

"Brother Ning Cheng, I haven't seen you for a few years, yet your strength has already taken another huge leap. I'm afraid I might not even be able to match up to your shadow in a few years." Ba Meng put away his artefact and walked over to Ning Cheng.

Ning Cheng simply laughed and shrugged it off. "Brother Ba, congratulations on reaching Dao Confirmation's Dao Essence. And congratulations on Ba Luo returning to your side again."

Ba Meng likewise smiled, "Fortunately, I always keep a talisman ready for such occasions. Plus, I wasn't very far from you, so I rushed as soon as I received your message. Otherwise, you might have been in a much worse situation."

He naturally understood what Ning Cheng meant. Since he reached Dao Confirmation's Dao Essence Realm, it must have meant that Ba Luo had finally woken up. Otherwise, if his dao heart remained imperfect, he wouldn't have reached Dao Confirmation's Dao Essence Realm this quickly.

"It wouldn't be as bad as you think, but it wouldn't have gotten rid of that thorn in my heart. So this time, I really have to thank you for saving me." Ning Cheng showed a warm smile.

Ba Meng brushed it off, "Why should we brothers have to say thanks. If we had to exchange thanks, I don't know how long I would have to keep thanking you. Anyway, how did you get trapped in the netherworld and get out in the first place?"

"This matter is hard to explain. Let's return to the Sea Dragon Sacred City and talk about it. I have a friend there who is also injured." Ning Cheng replied.

Chapter 1039: Looking for a Bodyguard

The two had just returned to Sea Dragon Sacred City when Ning Cheng saw three people quickly walking over, looking like they wanted to stop him from leaving the city. One of them, a tall silver-haired woman, had come with Gong Chi earlier. Along with this silver-haired woman was a Dao Essence Holy Emperor and a Dao Transformation Holy Emperor. As for Yin Yueshue and Zhu Xiuxian of the Profound Aquatic Palace, Ning Cheng didn't see them.

"That's him; he's the one who injured Brother Chi." The tall, silver-haired woman pointed at Ning Cheng and shouted. This silver-haired woman had been staring at Ning Cheng from the side when Deacon Xia made his move. Therefore, she had naturally seen when Ning Cheng's disguise tore off. That was why she could recognise Ning Cheng immediately.

Ning Cheng hadn't put up his disguise. In any case, with Deacon Xia dead, he knew no one would suddenly move against him. Plus, now that he had Ba Meng with him, a Dao Essence Pill Sage, he didn't need to change appearances anymore.

"Were you the one who injured my Silver Dragon Clan's, Gong Chi?" The Dao Essence Holy Emperor stared at Ning Cheng and asked in a cold voice.

He would have immediately taken action against Ning Cheng on sight any other time. But now, he found things had exceeded his expectations with another Dao Essence Holy Emperor like Ba Meng beside Ning Cheng. Although he could see that Ba Meng's Dao Essence Dao Rhythm had not yet stabilised, Ba Meng was still a genuine second-step Dao Confirming Holy Emperor.

"Yeah, I did it." Ning Cheng gave a simple reply. He had purposefully not killed Gong Chi for this exact situation. He believed this matter would easily resolve if he took out Gong Huayu's token.

"Wait, you're the Red-haired Ba Meng of the Border Sea. You reached Dao Confirmation's Dao Essence Realm!" The Dao Transformation Holy Emperor in the silver-haired woman's group finally recognised Ba Meng beside Ning Cheng and spoke up in surprise. His tone even had a hint of envy. A holy emperor who was once in the Dao Transformation Realm like him had now reached a higher standing than him, which made him feel jealous.

Ba Meng said calmly, "Yeah, I'm Red-haired Ba Meng. Ning Cheng is my friend, so his business is also mine.."

Ba Meng didn't know that Ning Cheng had a friendship with Silver Dragon Clan's Gong Huayu. But seeing people stop Ning Cheng and accuse him of injuring Gong Chi, an important person from Silver Dragon Clan, made him understand that Ning Cheng had caused quite a lot of trouble. However, he didn't care. Ba Meng and his son would have departed for the yellow river without Ning Cheng. Now that Ning Cheng needed his help, he, Ba Meng, naturally would go all out without any qualms.

The Dao Essence Holy Emperor from Silver Dragon Clan casually looked at Ba Meng before shifting his gaze to Ning Cheng and speaking in a light tone. "No matter who it is, whoever injures a disciple of my Silver Dragon must give an explanation. You are no exception."

Anyone could tell Ba Meng's words didn't make this Dao Essence Holy Emperor let go of Ning Cheng.

Ning Cheng smiled indifferently, "Naturally, I will explain it to your Silver Dragon Clan. But I have to see my friend. Once I confirm that my friend is fine, I will give you the explanation."

The Dao Essence Holy Emperor looked at Ba Meng before nodding. That would be fine with him if Ning Cheng didn't attempt to escape.

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When Ning Cheng returned to the original place where it all started, Mo immediately stood up. Except for his somewhat depressed demeanour, his injury didn't seem serious.

"It's you?" Mo looked at Ning Cheng in confusion.

"You recognise me?" Ning Cheng asked.

Mo nodded, "Back in Boundary Essence Spirit Sea City, I went to buy a jade strip, and you followed me. I didn't expect to see you again in Sea Dragon Sacred City."

There was another sentence he didn't say. Back then, Ning Cheng's strength was at most at par with his, but now he was far behind compared to Ning Cheng. At this moment, Mo also understood why Ning Cheng helped him, despite seemingly not knowing each other. It turned out to be due to sympathy. Ning Cheng appreciated him, and he also appreciated Ning Cheng's temperament in doing what he wanted to do.

Ning Cheng secretly sighed that Mo's memory was too powerful. Back then, he had only followed him out of curiosity, they hadn't even exchanged half a word, yet Mo could still remember it so clearly.

Beside Mo also stood Yin Yueshu and Cen Ruxuan, along with Zhu Xiuxian, with her head bowed, standing at the far end, apparently reprimanded.

"Greetings to Pill Sage Ning." When Cen Ruxuan saw Ning Cheng coming, she immediately walked over with a smile while also giving Ning Cheng a proper cultivator's salute.

"Yueshu greets Pill Sage Ning." Yin Yueshu, on the other side, also hurriedly came over and saluted; the arrogance on her face disappeared, replaced by a soft meekness.

Ning Cheng hurriedly returned the salute and said, "Many thanks, Senior Apprentice Sister Cen, for helping my friend. And many thanks to you, Junior Apprentice Sister Yin."

Ning Cheng was now appearing as a Dao Essence Pill Sage, so it wasn't a violation for him to address Cen Ruxuan as 'Senior Apprentice Sister'. As for Yin Yueshu, calling her 'Junior Apprentice Sister' was just out of passing courtesy.

Cen Ruxuan didn't point out that it was inappropriate for Ning Cheng to call her 'Senior Apprentice Sister'; and Yin Yueshu as 'Junior Apprentice Sister'. Instead, she giggled and said, "I wonder if Pill Sage Ning is free. If you are, my Profound Aquatic Palace would like to welcome Pill Sage Ning for a grand tour."

Ning Cheng smiled faintly, neither agreeing nor refusing, but only said, "Let's all find an inn to sit down and chat slowly."

Ba Meng originally thought there would be a vicious battle, but he never expected Cen Ruxuan to treat Ning Cheng with such respect. Not only that, Ning Cheng even called Cen Ruxuan 'Senior Apprentice Sister', yet Cen Ruxuan took it as normal. Who was Cen Ruxuan? Ba Meng naturally knew; a Dao Essence powerhouse from the Profound Aquatic Palace.

Ba Meng already knew that Ning Cheng was an alchemist, but the question was, how could Ning Cheng be a Pill Sage?

Not only was Ba Meng full of doubts, but the group from Silver Dragon Clan also looked at Ning Cheng and Cen Ruxuan in complete confusion. The Dao Essence Holy Emperor from the Silver Dragon Clan even frowned as he tried to comprehend the situation. With Cen Ruxuan and Ning Cheng so close, he most likely wouldn't be able to exact any justice for Gong Chi's injury.

Wait, Pill Sage Ning? The Dao Essence Holy Emperor instantly came to his senses. Didn't someone with the same title refine the Six Yin Soul Pills for the young master?

Moreover, didn't 'Pill Sage Ning' shoot into the limelight because of this at the Alchemy Discourse? Earning the spot to represent the Grand Essence Realm to participate in the Five Grand Realms' Alchemy Competition.

After thinking about this, dots suddenly connected in his mind, and cold sweat seeped out from the back of this Dao Essence Holy Emperor from the Silver Dragon Clan. Fortunately, he hadn't taken any action against Ning Cheng; if he had done so, it would have marked the end of his life.

After understanding Ning Cheng's identity, this Dao Essence Holy Emperor hurriedly stepped forward and cupped his fists, "I'm Silver Dragon Clan's Gong Ximao; greetings to Pill Sage Ning."

Ning Cheng had helped Silver Dragon Clan's Young Master Gong Huayu refine a furnace of Six Yin Soul Pill. However, not everyone in the clan knew about it. But seeing Gong Ximao greet him with such respect, the other Dao Transformation Holy Emperor and the silver-haired woman hurriedly clasped their fists to greet Ning Cheng.

Gong Chi had a high position in the Silver Dragon Clan, but no matter how high it was, it wasn't higher than the position of the young palace master, Gong Huayu. Unless they were idiots, no one from the Silver Dragon Clan would dare to even think of crossing paths with Ning Cheng, who Gong Huayu considered his most valuable friend.

As Ning Cheng's friend, although Ba Meng had several questions, he didn't ask. It wasn't the time or the place for it.

Seeing Ning Cheng and his group enter the nearby rest inn, Gong Chi, who stood at the side, turned blue in anger. He was also a direct descendant of the Silver Dragon Clan, but now he understood that, compared to Gong Huayu, he was even worse than a dog.

His father, Gong Jiufei, was Gong Huayu's eldest uncle. If Gong Huayu hadn't overtaken him, the position and the status of Silver Dragon Clan's Young Palace Master would have belonged to him, Gong Chi.

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After the group entered the inn, Gong Ximao immediately apologised to Ning Cheng formally, and then Zhu Xiuxian, Yin Yueshu and the others all stood up to apologise to Ning Cheng.

After another round of polite greetings and introductions, Cen Ruxuan said, "I heard from Yueshe that someone wanted to trouble Pill Sage Ning. I wonder if my Profound Aquatic Palace can put in a little effort to ease things?"

"Count my Silver Dragon Clan too. Pill Sage Ning is my Silver Dragon Clan's most esteemed guest. It boggles my mind that someone is so unenlightened and dared to cross Pill Sage Ning." Gong Ximao didn't hold back and immediately stood up to express his stance with bootlicking.

Ning Cheng smiled faintly, "That person later realised he was in the wrong, so I managed to persuade him to leave."

Cen Ruxuan glanced at Ba Meng sitting beside Ning Cheng and said to herself. At least tell it outright that you killed him. If you, Pill Sage Ning, could suffer a loss, you wouldn't be the Pill Sage Ning I know.

"Dao Friend Ning should be preparing to participate in the Five Grand Realms' Alchemy Competition, right?" Gong Ximao also wanted to draw a relationship with Ning Cheng and picked a different topic.

Ning Cheng nodded and said, "Yes; unfortunately, certain circumstances made me stray too far. So I wanted to rush back using the Sea Dragon Sacred City's teleportation array. I would have also had to use the teleportation arrays of Silver Dragon Clan and Profound Aquatic Palace for assistance."

Without waiting for Cen Ruxuan to speak this time, Gong Ximao hurriedly said, "That naturally wouldn't be a problem. Pill Sage Ning can use my Silver Dragon Clan's transmission array anytime. The young palace master hasn't come out of retreat yet, so if Pill Sage Ning wants, you can always stop by my Silver Dragon Clan to rest."

Ning Cheng saw that Cen Ruxuan seemed to want to speak, so he spoke up first, "My friend, Sheng Houtian, was poisoned, so I urgently have to return to Heaven Essence Sacred City to see, so I....."

Ning Cheng's words stopped abruptly after he said only half of what he wanted to say.

The sudden thought of why Sheng Houtian got poisoned popped into his head. Wasn't it to lure him out? Now that he revealed his trail in the Sea Dragon Sacred City, would the parties involved in luring him out let him reach Heaven Essence Sacred City safely?

Thinking of this, Ning Cheng sighed internally. He had just killed Deacon Xia, who had chased him for hundreds of millions of miles, only to find that he was still not safe. If still under disguise, maybe he could have a shot at reaching Heaven Essence Sacred City safely. But now, there might be some hiccups along the way there.

Cen Ruxuan and Gong Ximao were old foxes, so the two instantly figured out what was happening when Ning Cheng's words suddenly stopped. Ning Cheng spoke about Sheng Houtian before suddenly stopping, meaning he must have stumbled upon something.

Sheng Houtian was struck by Ripple Bone Poison, and Ning Cheng was the only person who could refine the Renewing Heaven Ripple Bone Pill, which was a fact known to everyone. No one would believe it was a coincidence and had nothing to do with Ning Cheng.

“Dao Friend Ning, my Profound Aquatic Palace’s Palace Master Luan will be taking a trip to Heaven Essence Sacred City, and I will also be accompanying Palace Master Luan. If Dao Friend Ning is willing, we can travel together.” Cen Ruxuan immediately decided after seizing the point in question.

Gong Ximao also understood the problem but couldn’t do anything about it apart from feeling anxious. The Silver Dragon Clan’s sole Dao Fusion Holy Emperor was still in seclusion, while he was only at the middle-stage Dao Essence Realm. Ning Cheng already had an early-stage Dao Essence powerhouse next to him, so he didn’t know if Ning Cheng would even agree to let him follow him.

Regardless of whether Ning Cheng would accept him or not, Gong Ximao had no choice but to clasp his fist and say, “I also plan to go to Heaven Essence Sacred City, and my Silver Dragon Clan is willing to fully support Dao Friend Ning in participating in the Five Grand Realms’ Alchemy Competition. I wonder if Dao Friend Ning would accept this old man as a companion on this journey?”

Ning Cheng knew what these two people meant, but he was also not in a position to refuse. Therefore, he stood up and cupped his fists before speaking, “Heaven Essence Sacred City is a long way from here, so it would be safer to travel there in a group. After we arrive at Heaven Essence Sacred City, and once I get some time free, I wonder if there will be anything I can help Senior Apprentice Sister Cen and Brother Gong with?”

Cen Ruxuan and Gong Ximao felt overjoyed. The only reason they had lowered themselves this much was to hear those precise words from Ning Cheng.

Chapter 1040: Sheng Huotian’s Residence

Ning Cheng was a Dao Essence Pill Sage; therefore, whoever wanted to look for Ning Cheng would naturally have something to do with his alchemy. It’s just that Cen Ruxuan and Gong Ximao had only asked to refine a few furnaces of pills but didn’t specify what they wanted. It showed that they both didn’t want the other party to know their intended uses by revealing the names of the pills.

Ning Cheng didn’t need to think too hard to understand this point. Unfortunately, the conversation quickly became speculation as everyone chimed in this discussion.

Therefore, Ning Cheng, not wanting to stay in Sea Dragon Sacred City for long, swiftly turned around the conversation and proposed immediately heading out for Heaven Essence Sacred City. With Ning Cheng expressing his intent to leave immediately, Cen Ruxuan and Gong Ximao naturally wouldn’t raise any objection.

“Mo, my name is Ning Cheng, and I can also be said to be an alchemist. Do you want to go to Heaven Essence Sacred City with me now, or do you want to stay in Sea Dragon Sacred City?” Ning Cheng looked at the lone martial cultivator Mo beside him and spoke with a friendly tone.

Mo bowed to Ning Cheng and replied, “After leaving Sea Dragon Sacred City, I plan to explore the Grand Essence Sea to gain more experience.”

Hearing Mo didn’t want to go to Heaven Essence Sacred City with him, Ning Cheng decided not to push for it. He stood up and gave Mo his goodbye and wished him luck. Mo was a martial cultivator, and

martial cultivators were well-known for their ascetic-like life of licking blood from the edge of their blades.

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Thousand Leaves Sacred City. The northernmost part of the Grand Essence Domain and on the southern coast of the Grand Essence Sea.

It was also the city with the most teleportation arrays. Whether teleporting from the Grand Essence Sea to the Grand Essence Domain or from somewhere else to the Grand Essence Domain, everyone would have to pass through Thousand Leaf Sacred City. Since Ning Cheng had teleported from the Sea Dragon Sacred City, he would have also had to pass through Thousand Leaf Sacred City.

In Ning Cheng's group of five, in addition to him and Ba Meng, Gong Ximao and Cen Ruxuan, there was also an additional Palace Master Luan, the only Dao Fusion expert among them.

Palace Master Luan's appearance was no worse than Yin Yueshu's, and she could even pass off as her younger sister. Unfortunately, she sported a pair of fierce almond eyes, which ruined her beauty and made her appear cold and aloof.

Since Ning Cheng first saw Palace Master Luan in the Profound Aquatic Palace, he hadn't heard her speak more than a few words. Rather than saying it was companionship, it was better to say it was for fulfilling her duty as a 'bodyguard' so that Ning Cheng helped them refine pills.

After arriving at Thousand Leaf Sacred City, Ning Cheng turned even more careful. He knew that if the person who wanted to lure him out wanted to act, it would be in the Thousand Leaf Sacred City. Other than the Thousand Leaf Sacred City, he couldn't figure out a better option.

Although Thousand Leaf Sacred City and Heaven Essence Sacred City were in the same Grand Essence Domain, the distance was still too huge. So large that the teleportation array from the Thousand Leaf Sacred City to the Heaven Essence Sacred City could only be used once daily. Therefore, if anyone wanted to use the array after activation, they would have to wait a full day before it could be refuelled and operated.

Unfortunately, by the time Ning Cheng's group reached the Thousand Leaf Sacred City, the teleportation array to the Heaven Essence Sacred City had already been used for the day. Therefore, they had no choice but to wait until the next day.

The forced overnight stay was the key. As Ning Cheng realised this truth, Cen Ruxuan and others understood it. Therefore, that night, the five of them decided to stay awake to discuss the Dao for the rest of the night.

As one night passed, no one came to cause any trouble for Ning Cheng. They couldn't figure out if it were because they didn't receive news of Ning Cheng's return or if they realised that the 'bodyguard' beside Ning Cheng was too strong.

Regardless, that one night of dao discussion genuinely benefited Ning Cheng, as he had the lowest cultivation level among the five. Whether it was Cen Ruxuan or Gong Ximao, their experience and cultivation insights weren't something he could compare to.

Unfortunately, Palace Master Luan never spoke up, so Ning Cheng didn't obtain any benefit from her.

The next day, the group of five passed through the Thousand Leaves Sacred City's teleportation array without any risk and arrived at Heaven Essence Sacred City.

Heaven Essence Sacred City was a den of powerhouses and experts, but even if one were a Dao Fusion Holy Emperor, they wouldn't dare do anything to Ning Cheng here. That's because as soon as he made his presence known, it would immediately attract an equally powerful counterattack. It's just that it would also expose his identity.

Therefore, Ning Cheng's arrival at Heaven Essence Sacred City was, in theory, the safest option.

Coming out of Heaven Essence Sacred City's teleportation array, Cen Ruxuan and the others bid farewell to Ning Cheng, saying they would return to visit Ning Cheng in a few days. Ning Cheng also understood the underlying intent. They all knew Ning Cheng had come here to help heal Sheng Huotian's injuries at the Pill Union. Their 'return a few days later to visit' was, in essence, a reminder for Ning Cheng to honour his promise.

As Ning Cheng and Ba Meng sent off the others, he started to yearn for great strength with even more enthusiasm. Sure, with his alchemic prowess, he could find a strong bodyguard, but that wouldn't be his strength. Besides, bodyguards wouldn't always follow you around; even if they did, it would only be because of the benefits.

"Brother Ning Cheng, I didn't expect that you were a Pill Sage. What grade of Pill Sage are you?" After everyone finally left, only then did Ba Meng ask Ning Cheng.

Ning Cheng smiled slightly, "Originally, I was just a Dao Transformation Pill Sage, but soon I will be a Dao Essence Pill Sage?"

Ning Cheng said this because he was sure that what the Profound Aquatic Palace and the Silver Dragon Clan wanted him to refine would be something other than a Dao Transformation Dao Pill. Even if they wanted Dao Transformation Dao Pills, it would only be a small portion of their request. Since these two forces 'befriended' him, they wanted him to refine Dao Essence Dao Pills.

But Ning Cheng believed that even if these two forces wanted him to refine Dao Essence Dao Pills, it wouldn't be a difficult-to-refine pill like the Six Yin Soul Pill. Although he had refined the Six Yin Soul Pill, only Ning Cheng knew the process. But because of that, he was infinitely close to becoming a Dao Essence Pill Sage, just not an actual Dao Essence Pill Sage.

If he went by conventional inference, these two forces, most likely, wanted him to refine strategic pills to enhance their respective family's strength. Most likely, they wanted Dao Pills that aided in sensing the Dao Essence Realm.

With the depth of such large forces as the Profound Aquatic Palace and the Silver Dragon Clan, they naturally wouldn't have a shortage of materials required for refining ordinary Dao Essence Dao Pills after countless years of accumulation. Therefore, he could follow the normal distribution of halves; to refine one furnace of pills, they needed to come up with two furnaces worth of medicinal ingredients.

This way, he would have enough divine grasses for practice, so Ning Cheng mentioned that he would soon be a Dao Essence Pill Sage. If Cen Ruxuan and Gong Ximao had a problem with their head and wanted him to refine a Dao Essence Dao Pill that was too difficult, he could only admit defeat.

Ba Meng hemmed and hawed a bit but ultimately chose not to ask any more questions. He had witnessed too many impossibilities in Ning Cheng; the fact that Ning Cheng came out of the netherworld unscathed already made him question reality. Plus, Ning Cheng possessed the Seven Bridges Spirit Technique, the 5-Coloured Star Splitting Arrow, and the Six Yin Soul Pills....

“Brother Ba, you go look for an inn; I will go to the Pill Union to see Union Master Sheng.” Ning Cheng would be lying if he said he wasn’t worried about Sheng Huotian’s injury. After all, Sheng Huotian’s poisoning a few years ago most likely had something to do with him. It’s just that Ning Cheng believed Sheng Houtian wouldn’t lose his life this easily. Afflicted with the poison for countless years, didn’t Void Star Sect’s Ancestor Kang still recover with the help of Renewing Heaven Ripple Bone Pill?

Ba Meng shook his head, “Although this is the Heaven Essence Sacred City, I will still go with you.”

Ning Cheng understood Ba Meng’s intention and felt grateful. Friendship and trading favours were two entirely different things. He and Cen Ruxuan’s group were only involved in an exchange of services; the exchange was to escort him to Heaven Essence Sacred City for his alchemical services. Now that he was already in Heaven Essence Sacred City, Cen Ruxuan’s group wouldn’t show up unless to collect on their favours. However, Ba Meng was his friend; no matter what time, he still worried about his safety.

“Okay, then let’s go together.”

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Sheng Houtian had a special status compared to the other elders from the Pill Union in that his residence was within the Pill Union’s headquarters.

“Pill Sage Ning!” A surprised voice called out when Ning Cheng arrived at the Pill Union, followed by a beautiful figure running over eagerly and bowing to Ning Cheng.

“It’s you? Congratulations on the promotion.” Ning Cheng also recognised this female cultivator. She was the same person who had led the way for him when he came here to take the Pill Union’s qualification examination. Looking at this female cultivator’s clothing, Ning Cheng understood that she had become the person in charge of this area.

The female cultivator quickly replied, “Hejie is here today solely because of Pill Sage Ning’s light. Since Pill Sage has just returned, what are your orders?”

“Take me to see Union Master Sheng.” Ning Cheng gave a simple nod and replied.

Hearing that Ning Cheng wanted to see Sheng Houtian, Hejie wasn’t surprised. However, a hint of wariness flashed on her face.

Ning Cheng immediately noticed it and frowned. “What?”

“Nothing, Pill Sage Ning; please follow me.” Hejie had absolute respect for Ning Cheng, someone she knew as capable and not as arrogant as others.

After passing through the Pill Sages' examination halls, entering the backyard of the Pill Union, and then walking for a full minute, Hejie finally stopped at the entrance of an independent abode before bowing to Ning Cheng. "Pill Sage Ning, this is Union Master Sheng's residence."

Ning Cheng nodded and moved the restrictions at the entrance of the residence.

Once the restriction opened, Ning Cheng didn't see Sheng Houtian but a middle-stage Dao Essence Holy Emperor. Ning Cheng had seen this fellow before, sitting next to Sheng Houtian at the time of the Alchemy Discourse. Ning Cheng felt doubtful; this fellow wasn't friendly to him or Sheng Huotian, so why was he at Sheng Huotian's residence?

After Le Xizhen had finished refining the Supreme Essence Arterial Pulse Pill at the Alchemy Discourse, this person was the one who pressed him on why he was still not refining pills. At that time, Ning Cheng only knew that this fellow was a high-ranking person in the Pill Union; as for the fellow's name or position, Ning Cheng knew nothing about it.

When this Dao Essence Holy Emperor saw Ning Cheng, he said indifferently, "Pill Sage Ning, Union Master Sheng just got poisoned; you've come right on time."

He obviously wanted to mock Ning Cheng. After all, it had been two years since Sheng Huotian's poisoning, yet Ning Cheng only showed up just now.

Ning Cheng didn't care about this fellow's ridicule; he told Hejie before walking inside, "You can leave first; thank you for bringing me here."

Hejie saw through the unfriendly atmosphere and hurriedly bowed before retreating.

Ning Cheng suddenly felt that Ba Meng had done the right thing by accompanying him.

"Wait...." This Dao Essence Holy Emperor stopped Ba Meng from entering with Ning Cheng and spoke with the same indifferent tone, "This is the Pill Union; irrelevant people are not allowed to enter. Ning Cheng, you can go in, but those who came with you can only wait outside."

Ning Cheng's gaze turned cold as he looked at this Dao Essence Holy Emperor before him, "I'm going to count to three; if you don't get lost, don't blame me for taking action."

"You dare....."

This Dao Essence Holy Emperor had just said two words when Ning Cheng's long spear materialised. Ba Meng didn't even need Ning Cheng to speak; when Ning Cheng made his move, he immediately summoned his Sun and Moon Pagoda, and a powerful aura enveloped him.

A Dao Essence Holy Emperor had suddenly unleashed his killing intent in the Pill Union, which many powerful people around Pill Union instantly sensed.

This middle-stage Dao Essence Holy Emperor's face turned blue from anger. He couldn't imagine that Ning Cheng would be so bold as to dare use his artefact in the Pill Union. He wasn't afraid of Ning Cheng attacking; it's just that even if Ning Cheng made a move, he couldn't hurt even half a hair of Ning Cheng, not because of a difference in strength but because of Ning Cheng's identity as a Dao Essence Pill Sage. After all, Dao Essence Pill Sage's status in the Pill Union was much higher than his own.

“Three.... Do it....” Ning Cheng counted the word ‘three’, and the spear in his hand stabbed outwards. The Sun and Moon Pagoda also erupted in Ba Meng’s hand with a bright light that pressed towards this middle-stage Dao Essence Holy Emperor.

Even if Ba Meng deliberately did not let his momentum overflow, the surrounding formations and prohibitions emitted a burst of clicking sounds as if they would crack in the next moment.

“Ning Cheng, hurry up and stop....” Sichen Qiutian’s voice came from inside, just in time.